

A
VOICE
TO
THE FAITHFUL.

“He that striveth for the mastery is temperate
in all things.”—1 COR. IX. 25.

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A Voice to the Faithful.

JOHN'S GOSPEL.

CHAPTER XVII. 8-17.

BUT this privilege that had been granted to them, depended upon another one, or rather was realised in another one, which was greater still. The Lord had given to them all the intimate communications that the Father had made to Him as Son down here. It was all that belonged to this position about which we are here occupied; that of the Son upon earth. "I have given them the words that thou hast given me." Immense grace! It was indeed placing them in His own position before the Father. He had revealed to them the Father's name; and this was placing them, in title and fact, in His own relationship of Son with the Father. But Christ, having been Son here upon earth, and come to finish the work that

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the Father had given Him to do, had justly received intimate communications from Him, in order that all might be done in a perfect and unfailing unity with the Father. It was, for the Saviour, the blessed part of His life. Now, having placed the disciples (He speaks here of the twelve) in the same relationship with the Father in nature and right, their place would not be sterile and barren, but full of all the communications which belonged to it, and which Jesus enjoyed. And this is the grace given them. Before going further, it may be well to make a few remarks here.

This part of the Saviour's words (verses 6-10, and even up to verse 19, although this last portion considers the disciples from another point of view) applies to the eleven, as companions of Christ upon earth. He had revealed the Father's name to them; He placed them in the relationship in which He was Himself with the Father, as Son, but dwelling upon earth. The communications which He Himself received

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were made to Him as being in this relationship, and He communicated them to the disciples. I have no doubt whatever that Jesus spoke of what He knew, and bore witness to that which He had seen, nor do I doubt that the fact that He could say of Himself, "the Son of man that is in heaven" (John iii. 13), had an essential influence upon His ministry. But He was the manifestation of grace and truth down here, and up to the time that He was speaking, it had not been a question of giving to the disciples the consciousness that they were with Him in heaven; that was going to be. In verse 24, this thought, not of union, but at least of association with Him in heaven, begins to shew itself. His purpose assuredly was not to maintain Judaism, but to present that which manifested the Father, grace and truth come in Him, God's character in a Man down here fully manifested. It was not, either, the development of God's counsels and the mysteries of grace, as Paul teaches them to us; it was one of the fruits of the glorifying

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of Jesus. The sun had shone behind the clouds in the previous dispensations; even now it is faith that lays hold of it; at the end, its manifestation will have an earthly character; but here the clouds clear away, and the sun itself appears. The Father in the fulness of grace, sends the Son; the Son manifests the Father perfectly, and glorifies Him, and the disciples understand that all that the Father had given to Jesus was the Father's gift to the down here Son (not, as I have said, Jehovah's gift to the Messiah) whom the Father had sent in sovereign grace, and who had come from the Father.

This is the basis of Jesus' prayer. He prayed for His disciples, not for the world. The world was judged, but the Father had given Him His disciples; most precious truth, source both of our blessings and of what characterises them. The Lord, in leaving His disciples, prays for them, and with the most touching motives, which open up to our view also the sphere into which we are brought. All belongs to this revelation of the

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Father in the Son, the Father's Object, and at the same time the Revealer of His most tender love, and to the introduction of the disciples into the same relationship.

The first motive is to be found in these words: "I pray for them, because they are thine." For the beloved Son, the Father was everything; He lived to glorify the Father, and He prays that the Father may be for those who are His, a Father such as He Himself knew Him.

The second motive is the Son. The Father cared for the Son's glory; because of this, He should take care of His disciples, for now that Jesus was going back to the Father, it is in them that He should be glorified. The Father would keep them because these were His, and the Son should be glorified in them. They must be kept if the Father cared for the Son's glory. Now there was no separating the Father's interests and glory from those of the Son. All that the Father had the Son had, and all that the Son had the Father had.

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What a bond between the Father, the Son, and the disciples! They belonged to the Father, the Father had given them the Son, and it was in them that the Son was to be glorified. Their actual place, which was the occasion of the question, was that Jesus was going away from the world to the Father, and leaving His disciples down here.

Then Jesus gives the name in which the Father should keep them: "Holy Father;" He should keep them according to a Father's love, and the holiness of His nature. Christ had kept them Himself in this name during His stay down here, and now He gives them over to the immediate care of the Father, according to the love towards them that was common to the Father and to the Son, and always in the name of "Holy Father." "Holy Father, keep them in thy name that thou hast given me."* Christ was down here the Son of the Father, and as such, He

* This is the best reading; the text (received) has, "those whom thou hast given me."

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answered to the Father's holiness in all His ways and His thoughts. The Father's will was exemplified in His walk; He manifested in Himself the Holy Father. Now He prayed that the disciples might be kept by what the Father was in this relationship with Jesus. The Lord was in it, and lived in it; he who had seen Him had seen the Father. As with Israel, He could have said: "Obey his voice, provoke him not; for my name is in him." (Exodus xxiii. 21.) Thus the Father and He were one, not only in nature, but in thoughts, acts, motions, and will. Christ, in His life, was one with the Holy Father.

Christ prayed for His own, that they might be kept by the Father in that name. He was by nature in this place; it was His place upon earth; they needed to be kept there. He had kept them all the time that He was in this world, and now He gave them over to the Father, that He also might keep them, that there might be the same thought, the same purpose, and that

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all their words and actions might answer to it ; that the expression of their life to all and to all together, might be that of the Lord in His relation to the Father, according to the meaning and value of this name. The Lord will speak soon of the mediatorial means ; here, it is the fact that He presents. The disciples should be one—a single vessel of the life, of the thoughts, of the revelation of the Father Himself, as Christ had been. “Father” the name of God in grace in sending His Son, the Son revealing Him as such ; and “holiness” according to that which the Father is—this is what should characterise them, and by the power of the Holy Ghost,* all, as a single being, should be only this in the midst of the world ; they should represent Christ in His relation to the Father. It is evident that if there were amongst them different thoughts or purposes, they would fail as to this

* The Holy Ghost is not the subject here, but He is nevertheless the power that should produce this life in the disciples.

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position. The Father and the Son were thus one when the Son was down here ; this is what they were to be amongst themselves according to the relation in which Christ had been. It is the name of "Father" that had been given to Him, that He might manifest it in this world, and, according to His holiness, there was nothing of this world in Him to darken the revelation of what the Father was.

Such was their position ; it was not yet their mission. Being such, it was to have Christ's joy fulfilled in them. Indeed, it was the Saviour's joy, as man down here. Infinite grace for them, and in a certain sense for us all. (Compare 1 John i. 1-4.) The sum of all, is that the relation of Son down here with the Holy Father, the name in which He had kept His disciples when He was down here, should be their safeguard directly on the Father's part.



HINDRANCES TO SERVICE.

THE first hindrance to service is being out of communion. Any soil on the conscience breaks communion, and then there is not the enjoyment and support of the Lord's company. The effect of His company is that the service is rendered with a grace and unction which the Lord only could confer. This could not be explained to any one who had not known communion. Communion is first known, when I am so assured of my acquaintance with the Lord, that I am, whatever be the measure of my growth in divine things, enjoying His company at whatever stage in my spiritual history His grace has brought me to. It is not so much the grace that is before me, as the One who has secured the grace to me ; so that wherever I am, historically, whether leaving Egypt, in the wilderness, or in Canaan, it is not the stage which I have arrived at, that occupies me, so much as the One with whom I am in company, and who is the source

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of it all to me. Communion leads me into His mind and thoughts with regard to the place of blessing which I am enjoying, so that when I serve (for I cannot serve beyond the measure of my own growth), I serve in the vigour and freshness of one in actual association with the Lord in effecting this blessing for me.

It is a great thing to be in company with the Lord as to His own feeling, and also His value to God in His service known to me. This is the reason that the one with a smaller measure of truth, is often more effective in the enunciation of it, than one more advanced in knowledge ; simply because the former is in company with the Lord, as to His own heart in the work.

Once communion is known, the soul feels, that like the holy anointing oil, there is nothing to be compared to it. It cannot be imitated ; and it cannot be regained, if there is a soil on the conscience, until the soil has been removed. One may not always be

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conscious of the particular soil which has interrupted the communion, but there is never restoration without a conscious washing by the word. When this takes place, there is an exercise of soul; the Spirit of God leading the heart and conscience into what the ashes of the red heifer over the running water (Num. xix.) typified; even calling to remembrance what Christ has gone through on account of my sin. There is no restoration to communion apart from this exercise.

There is often much service, when communion is not known, and, alas! when it has been interrupted. When there is service without communion with the Lord having been known, the servant, however gifted, never rises beyond man, as the object of his service. It is quite true that man is the one to be served, but the servant's duty is to come from God, as His servant, upheld by the Lord Himself. When there is not this, service takes very much the form of philanthropy. Man's need, and the benefit to man,

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and to his soul, is the aim of the service.

Now when a servant who has known communion continues serving when out of communion, there will be a rashness in testimony, like Peter cutting off the ear of the high priest's servant. There is an effort to do something—a confidence in one's personal love to the Lord. There is often much personal affection to the Lord where there is not communion, and this affection is sometimes regarded as an evidence of communion, while very often the effort to do something visibly for the Lord, indicates that the servant is not in communion ; and when it is so, the right thing, which affection dictates, is done in the wrong way.

Martha desired to serve, but it was only her affection which led her, and though she overtaxed herself in serving she did not meet the Lord's mind. There may be affection without communion, but the deepest affection is enjoyed in communion. The servant in communion can wait like Mary, till

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the fitting time comes for expressing her affection. Communion always leads one to think of the Lord first in everything; whether I am an evangelist, or a teacher, when I am in communion, it is the Lord I am magnifying, it is He whom I have before me, not merely benefit, nor the one to be benefited. Hence the one out of communion, though he does not lose His affection for the Lord, has not the influence of the Lord's company to regulate and direct it. The servant in communion is governed by the Lord's presence; he cannot tell why he does this or that, he is so consciously near the Lord, that he does not act independently; and he waits in patience; he does not make haste; and when he acts, it is with marked self-surrender for the Lord, and the house is filled with the odour of the ointment.

The one impelled by affection for the Lord, but who is out of communion with Him, would have called fire to come from heaven. The difference between the affection which would

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silence every opponent, and the affection which in complete self-surrender, would be in sympathy with Him, is great. The servant in communion is sure to grow up into his true place with the Lord, and as he does, he is more and more effective as His servant.

There is however another order of hindrance to a servant, which is, alas ! too common, and that is, his having taken a wrong step ; for instance. being in the wrong place, or engaging in an unsuited employment. It is not so much the nature of the thing as the simple fact that he has been betrayed into a wrong step. It was a wrong step for Peter to have gone into the high priest's house, though doubtless it was affection for the Lord which led him to follow Him to it. It was a wrong step for Abraham to have gone down into Egypt ; a wrong step for David to have dwelt at Ziklag ; but I need not adduce more examples ; it is enough if we see that the wrong step must be retraced or obliterated, before

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there is any real or distinct advance for that servant. Abraham had many instances of divine favour after the birth of Ishmael, but he was not in the vigour of testimony, until the bond-woman and her son were cast out. When Jacob reached Bethel the last link with his mother, who had first led him into planning for his own advantage, died. "Deborah, Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak, and the name of it was called, Allon-bachuth." (Genesis xxxv. 8.)

As the servant advances, he is emancipated from that which once enthralled him. Peter first gives up his fishing to follow the Lord, from affection. (Luke v.) Finally he does so to follow a risen Christ in communion with Him. (John xxi.) Many a servant is hindered from having taken some wrong step; indeed the wrong steps on account of which servants are hindered, are more than could be described or enumerated; and until these are retraced, or abandoned, they

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will be hindered ; for then and then only, will that servant be able to follow his Lord fully. I may be told that would entail great suffering—great loss and pain to one's family and friends. Yes, surely ; so did Mary's act, to the very disciples of the Lord. But I am bold to say, that there can be no testimony without suffering and loss in this evil world.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY:

GOD'S APPROACH TO US AND OURS
TO HIM.

“THE day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.” The judgment of death fell on man when he ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. “By man came death.” But because of the evil and violence of men on the earth, it is written, “the end of all flesh is come before me.” “It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth.” Hence he was not only doomed to die, but because of his

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wicked works, there must be an end of man in the flesh. Thus we have man the sinner under the doom of death, and as in the flesh, intolerable to God.

We have now to see how the blessed God can approach him, and how man can approach God. Abel in faith sees that the only way of approach was by a victim, not chargeable with his offence, bearing the judgment of it; and at the time of bearing it, having a personal excellency. Therefore he "brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof." Enoch in another day sets forth the faith that pleases God; not only believing in His existence, but in His nature to reward for seeking Him, the distinct contrast to what Eve had done; while Noah is practically saved, and begins a new history in divine favour in the place where he had been under judgment. In Abraham, righteousness by faith is declared. I need not pursue the expressions of faith, recorded, as it were, in a chain, in Hebrews xi., until Rahab, by faith, is in the land; typically the Gentile

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in heavenly places. I adduce these witnesses of the true nature of approach, for it is helpful to see that God never left Himself without a witness, and in this way the history of their testimony is very interesting.

The law did not really offer an approach to the sinner. It expressed God's righteous demand ; and thus it became to fallen man "the ministration of condemnation." But consequent on Israel's idolatry—practical apostasy from God before the law was given, the offerings were appointed by the Lord from the tabernacle of testimony.

Now the offerings did set forth in type the manner and nature of our approach to God, and the ground of it ; but in none of them was there definitely set forth the nature and scope of His approach to us. The offerings are of extreme interest, because they open out in detail the nature of our approach, when as yet there was no real ground for it. So much so, that if we had only the book of Leviticus, or if we were confined to our own approach

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to God, we should measure our acceptance with God by the measure of our growth in apprehension of what Christ, the true offering, is. For instance, a godly Jew after offering his burnt-offering went away with the sense in his soul, a true one too, that he was accepted by God. "God testifying of his gifts." An enjoyable sense I admit, but exclusively confined to himself as the offerer. It was all on his own side, even that he was formally accepted through that offering being accepted of God. There was nothing beyond the sense that he stood well with God at the moment. There was no idea that God could approach him. So that if a Christian limits the work and offering of Christ to the types, however fully they may set forth his acceptance, it is still merely an atom in comparison with the measure in which the blessed God can approach him. This latter is not set forth in the types. In the offerings from Abel down, the one great thing is that the offerer may obtain an acceptance with God. He

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may, as I have said, be assured through grace, of acceptance, as were Abel, Noah, Abram, Manoah and others ; but in none of these is set forth that the initiative is on God's side. It is on the side of the man, either without law or under law.

There is however distinct intimation on the part of God, that He desires the approach of man and rejoices in it. Numerous passages in the Old Testament express it. "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." (Jer. iii. 22.) "Is Ephraim my dear son, is he a pleasant child, for since I spake against him I do earnestly remember him still, therefore my bowels are troubled for him." (Jer. xxxi. 20.) "And I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord." (Jer. xxx. 21.) "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts." (Psa. lxxv. 4.) We also find several instances in the

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Old Scriptures of the *measure* in which He could approach to man. "The Lord appeared" we read continually. "The God of glory appeared unto our father Abram." To Moses He appeared in the burning bush, and still more in the Mount ; as also to the prophets ; but while all these cases evince desire on the part of God to come near to man, He had as yet no ground to come near, so as to have man before Him without fear. True, there are reassuring utterances to the prophets and others, to be at ease in the presence of God's glory ; in most cases it was like Daniel, who though told to stand upon his standing, only stood "tremblingly ;" while in the manner in which God drew near to Abram, or placed Moses in the presence of His glory, we are taught His desire and purpose to have us near Him in love.

But it is evident that there was as yet no way in which God could draw near, so as entirely to disarm man of fear, because of the gracious loving way He approached him. He could not

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approach in His love, until He had a perfect warrant for the expression of it in righteousness. David failed in receiving to favour his rebellious son, without any due expiation or atonement for his guilt. God loved, but He could not receive back the sinner, even if the sinner were willing to come, until He could be just and a Justifier. This is the light which shines forth when Jesus Christ comes, the Just for the unjust to bring us to God. God so loved the world that He sent His Son. He came to bear the judgment on man, to remove that which hindered God's approach to man. He is the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. The blessed God has found a way in which He can approach the sinner in the most touching manner. The Father ran to meet the prodigal, pronouncing in the most affecting way, that there is nothing but love on His side ; that is, that He can come to the sinner, having so secured His majesty, righteousness, and glory, in His love, that His love is in full sway in all its

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delight ; and is, as it were, backed up and supported by all that He is. It is not only that there is grace where there was judgment, as with Isaiah, who when sensibly undone before the throne, was relieved by the activity of grace, and placed before the throne entirely consistent with it ; but the prodigal (Luke xv.) was approached by the Father in the tenderness of His love. The one was set free before the throne, the other was introduced to the heart of God in that full perfect way in which He can now approach the returning sinner. “ God is love.” And to reach the sinner in this—His nature, is what His love delights in. He could not reach him to make known His love in anything but love. God is light, and in His light He discloses the sinner’s need of His grace, and at the same time the fulness of His grace. “ God so loved the world that He gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” He came not to condemn the world, but to save the

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world. It is not the sinner that seeks God, but Jesus has come "to seek and to save that which was lost." The love of God rules Him and He gives the Son. He obtains through Jesus—the perfect sacrifice, a way in which He can come to the sinner in all His love, in all its fulness and delight. Love delights in doing its best for its object. The sinner is God's object, blessed be His name, and cost Him what it may, He not only reaches him, but does for him not only all that he needs, but all that His love desires to do for him. Who can tell what the Father's love does for the prodigal? Love must satisfy itself according to its power or ability. No one could effect this for God but the Son of His love, and He could say, "How am I straitened until it (death) be accomplished." Once the obstruction was removed, what a volume of eternal blessing would flow forth to the sinner!

In considering God's approach to the sinner, we must bear in mind that it is God's love that is acting. It is

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not merely His mercy. True there *is* mercy, but His mercy is, “because of his great love, wherewith he loved us.” Jesus is the only One who ever knew the love of God to the sinner, and He undertakes to remove everything resting on man which bars him from the love of God ; but He affords that love a full warrant in righteousness to come to the sinner, and enfold him for ever in the arms of everlasting love. Jesus is not only the sin-offering, He is also the burnt-offering. God is glorified in a Man ; He delights in a Man. And now He can come to every one believing in that Man,—in Jesus. He can come in the delight of His love, in the full satisfaction of His heart, and fall on his neck and kiss him. While we must not lose sight of the unspeakable gain, and endless delight to a sinner to be brought to God, we must keep prominently before us the source from which it all comes. It all comes from the love of God. What God delighted to effect has been accomplished by His Son, and He can

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now come to the weakest and youngest believer in all the delight of His heart. His righteousness, glory, and every attribute of His nature, giving strength and support to His love. The ground for His approach is perfect, and therefore His approach is as full and complete at His first expression of it to the sinner as it ever will be.

Now, on our side it is quite different; we are not only at a distance, but we are alienated from God by wicked works; and unless God in His grace, compelled us to come in, we should have remained at a distance; only hardening our hearts like Pharaoh, after every fresh conviction, produced by a manifestation of His power. But God in His grace seeks the sinner. He commends His love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Our eyes are opened, we are turned "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." We are compelled to come in, while on God's side, "all things are ready."

When I am awakened, I am sensible

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of the danger that I am in ; that I am on the verge of everlasting misery, and that I deserve it. " We indeed justly ; for we receive the due reward of our deeds." I see myself guilty, and as such, inevitably lost. It is a moment of unequalled distress ; but it only enhances to my soul the greatness of the grace which beams on me through faith in the blood of Christ. I can " arise and go." I begin to know that through the blood I am safe from judgment. Like Israel in Exodus xii. I am sheltered by the blood. This is my first positive step. When I feed, and as I feed, on what Christ suffered on my account, when bearing my judgment, like Saul of Tarsus, during the three days when he was " without sight, and neither did eat nor drink," the more can I draw near to God. My approach to Him is increasing, while His to me could not be any greater ; it is already commensurate with His own nature. Every step of my advance is marked by a distinct break from the flesh so offensive to

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Him. As a convicted sinner, like the thief or the leper, I condemn myself while I enjoy in wonder His grace. But like the prodigal, though His love is expressed to me in the most touching way, I cannot enjoy it, because I am so sensibly occupied with my unworthiness. I feel I am not worthy. It is repentance and contrition with me ; and it is only as He invests me with garments suited to Himself, superseding what I am in myself, that I can enter into His house. Every believer who enjoys through the Spirit this new home knows very well the gradual way in which he has approached to God, and what exercises, and bitter suffering he has passed through, in breaking away from the flesh, and losing all confidence in it. What is expressed in a few words with reference to the prodigal, may have taken days of bitterness as with Saul of Tarsus, or even years ; but be it long or short, suffering it must be.

God has wrought from Himself, and He can now not only work in the

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sinner, He can approach in His glory, and in all the acceptance in which Man is placed before Him, in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ ; but man righteously is detached from that in himself which has been set aside in judgment in the cross. How could I retain what Jesus in His death removed from the eye of God ? The grace could not flow out until He, the Just, suffered for the unjust, to bring us to God. Hence in the history of souls, there is always a repudiation of the flesh, according as there is nearness to God. If, as with Israel, there was an escape from judgment because of the blood ; there was in connection with it, and as it were in evidence of it, a distinct intimation in their manner and appearance, that they were leaving Egypt. Their loins girt, shoes on their feet, staff in hand, they declared a break from the place where they were under judgment. But they were not clear of the Egyptian,—of the one who had involved them in judgment, until they had passed through the Red

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Sea. Until I have in faith reached to the reality of Christ being raised, I am not really at liberty before God. I could not say that I was brought to Him. I am not in the joy of the song of redemption. Thus my approach to God as it advances, does not define the measure of His approach to me ; but the nearer I come to Him, the more convinced I am, that His estimate of Christ's work is immeasurable, and therefore the vastness of my acceptance with Him in consequence, is more and more assured to my heart. In proportion as I enter into the acceptance, do I apprehend the magnitude of it. It increases in its moral greatness as I grow acquainted with it ; but this certainly with a corresponding severance and distance from the flesh, which has come to an end before God, in the very One in whom I am accepted.

THE PERCEPTION OF LOVE.

THE house was fill'd to every ward
With odours excellently sweet ;
The perfume of most precious nard,
Pour'd on His feet.

One soul among the rest had felt
The pressure of the coming wave,
The loving one the cypher spelt ;
“ Death and the grave.”

Iscariot who would generous be :
“ Why was not all this ointment sold ?”
Cared Judas for the poor ? Not he,
Whose god was gold.

The rest ! Some felt perhaps surprise
To see the alabaster break,
None understood the sacrifice
That love did make.

All follow up the traitor's word ;
The Master's voice confounds them all,
Solemn, amidst their murmuring heard :
“ My burial !”

Blest Lord ! we read this story o'er
E'er with fresh wonder and delight !
“ Dead, but alive for evermore ”
In glory bright.

Give unto us (to Thee we cry)
The quick, perceptive power of love,
To serve Thee, Son of God most High,
And Thou approve !

E. L. B.

JOHN'S GOSPEL.

CHAPTER XVII. 14-21.

THE Lord sends them into the world, having confided the Father's word to them ; this revelation, not of God's dispensations in His government of the world, but the revelation of the Father in grace—a revelation, not of God's counsels for the future in Christ, but a revelation which made known the Father Himself, as having sent the Son, and putting us in relationship with God according to His nature, which will be the eternal blessing when there will no longer be any dispensation.

Now this is what drew the world's hatred upon them. Their presence, representing the Father in testimony, told the world that everything did not belong to it ; that what belonged to God was not of the world. There were men who were in relationship with the Father ; but the consequence of this was that they were not of the world.

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Judgment was not executed, but the separation was made.

Christ did not pray that they might be taken out of the world, although they did not belong to it, but that they might be kept from evil, negatively from the influence of the world that surrounded them. Not only so, but that they might be sanctified, set apart in heart and in reality by the Father's word; it was not prophecy, nor the government of the world, but the revelation of the Father in His grace in Christ: the eternal joy of His communion. It is the fixed, eternal truth: Christ had been this and is it for ever, but they were to be witnesses of it, being sent into the world by the Son, as the Son had been sent into it by the Father.

Now for the accomplishing this sanctification in them, an object is introduced in the Person of Christ Himself, Christ, I believe, glorified; yet His Person remains the same. One might have supposed that the Son, eternally One with the Father in His

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divine nature, and who had been Son down here, introducing that relationship into human nature, but being always able to say : " I and my Father are one ; " one might have supposed, I say, that He would have laid aside this human envelope in leaving this world, in order to enter again into His position simply divine. But no, He keeps this in the glory. He sets Himself apart in the glory as man ; always Son, but in the glory that He had with the Father before the world was, in order that this relationship with the Father, in which man is placed in His Person might be truly revealed in its perfection and fulness to the hearts of the disciples, in order that these hearts filled with what Christ was, might be at the same time sanctified according to this perfection, and thus made meet to be the vessels of it in their testimony. Thus the truth of what the Father was,—the truth that sanctified them, was not, so to speak, a dry doctrine, applied to their souls to form them, judging evil and communicating that which was

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suited, but a living reality which placed them in this position, with all the affections connected with a Person in whom they were and who was in them, a Saviour known and beloved, who had been intimate with them in grace. All the fulness of the result of this relationship established in its perfection in heaven, formed their heart according to this perfection.

This completes that which Jesus asks for the disciples before the Father, and in testimony before the world: the revelation of the name of the Father known in the Person of the Son, Man in this world and in the glory. But the prayer does not end there; blessed be His name for ever!

Jesus prays also for those who should believe through their means; but the request is not the same as that which *He made for the disciples*, although it depends upon it. He asked for them a oneness analogous to that which existed between the Father and the Son in the work of redemption; the same thoughts, the same counsels, the

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same truth. The Son accomplished the Father's thoughts in the unity of the same nature. They should act in the work of testimony by the absorbing power of the Holy Ghost, as being absolutely and entirely one. No divergence existed between the thoughts, the counsels, and the will of the Father, and the testimony and obedience of the Son; and, by grace, the disciples became the depositaries, one and all together, of the testimony of the revelation of the Father in the Son. Also, as the Father's word had been confided to them, their duty was to communicate it to others. They were communicators of these truths; the others, for whom the Saviour now prays, received this testimony, and thus entered into communion with those who were in the unity of this grace. (Compare 1 John i. 1-4.) They enjoyed all that of which the disciples were the depositaries. The Lord prays that they may be one with them, the Father and the Son. It is always the Father revealed in the Son that is the

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basis of their union. Now this revelation gave them a heavenly object, one single and same object that absorbed the heart's affections, and thus destroyed the influence of the earthly objects that would have tended to divide them, such as their social or national position, or what was still more difficult, their religious position. They were Christians, sons of the Father, associated with Christ; their country was heaven. Pilgrims and strangers down here, they declared plainly that they sought their country. Now, in this, they were necessarily one; one in their origin, one in their object, and that with Christ Himself, the Son of the Father. "He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one." (See Heb. ii. 11.) They were a part of the company of those to whom the Saviour had said: "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, unto my God and your God." In this position spiritually, they were one in the Father and in the Son, who were one in themselves, and all together lived in this communion.

“MY MOUNTAIN.”

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Thus in 1 John i., we read: “that ye may have communion with us: and our communion is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ,” and then we have communion “with one another.”

 “MY MOUNTAIN.”

PSALM XXX.

“LORD, by *thy favour*, thou hast made *my mountain* to stand strong.” These few words contain a mine of most precious truth—truth much needed at the present moment. There is a strong tendency in all of us to get occupied with, and rest in something short of God Himself. Frequently we find ourselves using the very mercies and blessings of God in such a way as to rob us of the sense of His blessed presence, and obscure our soul’s vision of the source from whence these mercies and blessings emanate. We rest in the stream, instead of getting up to the fountain and abiding there. We get

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occupied with *our* strong mountain, instead of with the divine favour that made it strong.

This is a very serious mistake, involving most disastrous consequences. It is a positive snare of the enemy, a device by which he seeks to interrupt the current of the soul's communion with God. It operates in various ways ; but its object and practical effect are ever the same, namely, to bring something between the heart and Christ, to darken our spiritual horizon, and rob us of our joy in the Lord. Thus, in this lovely psalm, we read, "*In my prosperity* I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favour, thou hast made *my mountain* to stand strong." Here, the "prosperity" and the "strong mountain" fill the soul's vision. And what follows ? "Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled."

This is very admonitory for the soul. It reminds us somewhat of the exercises of the heart as recorded in Canticles v. There is nothing more sensitive, more delicate, more easily interrupted, than

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communion. Not all the powers of earth and hell, men and devils combined, can snap the link of eternal life, our life in Christ. The smallest atom of self-occupation may interrupt the heart's communion. We may set it down as an axiom in the divine life, that self-occupation is the death-blow to fellowship.

Thus in Canticles v., we read, “I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.” What is the response to this touching appeal? “I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?” It is self-occupation. The Beloved is left outside, wet with the drops of the night. How sad! What terrible insensibility to the claims of His deep and tender love! What utter sluggishness of heart! What lamentable failure in meeting His loving heart!

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And be it noted, that what we have here is not a case of sin on the conscience. We do not find sin in the book of Canticles. It is the heart's failure in responding to the heart of Christ. There may be a very blameless walk, an unblemished reputation, a good deal of activity in service, a quantity of work, great zeal in the cause of religion and philanthropy, and yet the heart cold toward our adorable Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

We see all this very strikingly presented in the address to the assembly at Ephesus: "These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars; and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted."

All this looked very fair and im-

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posing. The Ephesian assembly might seem, to an unspiritual eye, to be in a very flourishing condition. But ah! the One whose eyes were as a flame of fire detected a grave defect. "Nevertheless I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love." The heart had slipped away from the freshness and bloom of early days; and no amount of labour and service could make up for the lack of that deep-toned personal affection, that heart-devotedness which our blessed Lord values beyond all else.

Now, what was true as to the assembly at Ephesus, is true as to the reader and writer of these lines. Our Lord Jesus Christ looks for an undivided heart. He loves us perfectly, and His loving heart seeks for a true response from us. It is simply marvellous that it should be so; yet thus it is, blessed be His name. His word is, "My son, give me thine *heart*." If the heart be given, all will be right. The heart is the centre of the whole moral being. Out of it are the issues of life. If then the heart be absorbed

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with Christ and His precious interests, the whole character, course and conduct will be according to God. But, on the other hand, if the heart be cold, if other things have been allowed a place in our affections, if "my mountain," or "my prosperity" be made an object, then the soul's communion is interrupted, and we get into spiritual darkness and distress. "Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled. I cried unto thee, O Lord ; and unto the Lord I made supplication."

All this is intensely interesting. The heart that has ever tasted the sweetness and preciousness of communion with Christ cannot go on without it. To lose the sense of His love is to get into ineffable misery. The love itself we never can lose, blessed be His name ! But the enjoyment of it we can. A single sinful thought is sufficient to interrupt our fellowship with the love of Christ ; and until that priceless fellowship be restored, the darkness and distress are indescribable. No "mountain," no "prosperity," no success in

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service, no outward privileges, nothing, in short, can possibly make up for the loss of realised fellowship with the heart of our precious Saviour. Hence the unspeakable importance of jealously watching against everything which might tend to rob us of that cardinal privilege. Without it, all is barrenness and utter desolation. No human language can adequately set forth the misery of seeking to go on with work, service, meetings, when the heart is out of communion. It is at once sorrowful and dangerous in the extreme. Think, for example, of going to the Lord's table with the heart cold towards Christ! How it must grieve Him! Yes; and He will make us feel it, just because He loves us, and is jealous of our love. His love does not change, but He changes His manner in order to bring us to a sense of our failure; and when this is done, and the heart pours itself out in true confession, the blessed current of communion is divinely restored, and the soul exclaims in joyful accents, “Thou hast turned for me my

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mourning into dancing ; thou hast put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness ; to the end that my glory may sing praise to thee and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever."

Christian reader, let nothing rob you of the deep joy of realised communion with your Lord. C. H. M.

"I WILL DECLARE THY NAME."

GOD, because He is good, reveals Himself. His name is the measure of this revelation. God makes Himself known, not only by His works in creation—stupendous as they are—but to His people He makes Himself known by a name ; that is, what He is intrinsically. The name is an appellation which describes the person, a term used to convey to the mind the nature and qualities of the person. Hence we read of Jacob asking the angel, "Tell me thy

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name.” The blessed God declared Himself by the name in which He revealed Himself. His name to Abraham was God Almighty; and the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, knew Him by that name. Great, truly, was the faith awakened in their hearts in knowing God as the Almighty, and many now might long to be in equal power. Surely we may well say that, as to fact, however advanced our privileges, or however enlarged our blessings, we have not come up, in practical walk, to those saints who only knew Him as the Almighty God. The name declared the measure in which God had revealed Himself, or could be then known, and however great the measure of any one’s faithfulness or devotedness, in that day, his relation to God could not rise higher than relation to Him as the Almighty.

It would be interesting to trace the privileges, power, and blessings which were known by the faithful in that day, in relation to God as the Al-

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mighty. Abram, believing in the word of God Almighty, left country and kindred for an unknown one. Abraham served his brother, risking everything to do it, knowing God only as the Almighty, and by Him was he blessed by Melchizedek in the name of the Most High. Abraham saw Christ's day, and was glad. Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness ; and yet he did not know God in any higher way than as the Almighty. Abraham offered up his son, Isaac, counting that God was able to raise him up from the dead, and, because of this, God said, "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice."

Thus, also, we read of the elders, in Hebrews xi., though knowing God only as the Almighty, they declared plainly that they seek a country. God hath prepared for them a city. "But now they seek a better country, that is an heavenly ; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God ; for he

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hath prepared for them a city.” (Heb. xi. 16.)

I need not add more to establish that a saint knowing God only as the Almighty, can be on the earth in a very remarkable way, so dependent on God, that at His call he can leave country and kindred, he can be a stranger in a strange land, he can risk his life to serve his brother, he can surrender the light of his eyes, in obedience to the will of God ; he believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. He could refuse the offers of this world, because, blessed by the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth. When one reviews the history of Abraham, one is ready to say, What more could any one be ? and yet, as we learn the life of the Son, we enter into far greater and deeper experiences of what God is, even the knowledge of the Father, for it is only in the life of Christ that we could apprehend the Father ; and in a way, as one has said, when we see any of Christ's acts down here we can say,

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the life in which they were done is our life.

Let us now turn to Moses, and those to whom God was made known as Jehovah, that is,—God in relationship through redemption, from Moses until Christ came. God appears, in grace, to Moses, Israel is redeemed out of Egypt. They were God's people, not only daily cared for by God in the wilderness, but eventually brought into the land. For, though they had broken the law, yet the Lord shewed by the nature of the offerings which they were to offer, that He desired that they should come nigh unto Him. The law came from Mount Sinai, but the offerings were prescribed by the Lord from the tabernacle. They are regarded by Jehovah as a redeemed people, and therefore they are instructed in the way they were to approach to God. Surely, when we bear in mind, and connect together, the great advance in the revelation of God to Moses, beyond that made known to Abraham, we might well conclude that there could be no

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more, as is often repeated: “I am the Lord thy God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and brought you unto myself.” Who can read before the Lord the history of Israel, from the day God brought them out of Egypt, and in any degree apprehend the bounties of His grace to them in every respect, and not be filled with a sense of the goodness and tenderness of the blessed God; and, in true adoration of heart, echo His own words, “What could I have done for thee that I have not done?” He could say, “He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.” It would not be possible, in this paper, to recount, in any adequate way, the grand, the tender, loving ways of the blessed God to Israel, and the deep enjoyment many of them had in Him, though knowing Him only as Jehovah, as continual expressions in the Psalms, and elsewhere, testify.

Now, when the Son of God comes, an entirely new and distinct thing is declared. “No man hath seen God at

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any time ; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Great, wonderful, and blessed as were the results to Abraham and Moses, with their lesser knowledge of God, they are infinitely surpassed in the life and ways of our blessed Lord on the earth ; as another has said, " When I turn my eyes to Jesus, when I contemplate all His obedience, His purity, His grace, His tenderness, His patience, His devotedness, His holiness, His love, His entire freedom from all self-seeking, I can say, That is my life." Hence, it is " eternal life to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." No one knows God as the Son knows Him, but the Son was ever in relationship to the Father, and when He became a Man, He (the Son) knew Him so perfectly, that He ever did the things that pleased Him ; and hence, when hungry, He would not act without direction from God. He said, " Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the

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mouth of the Lord, doth man live.” And yet, when it came to the darkest hour, He says, “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” And in this connection He said, “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him; if God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.” He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and He could say, “Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.” . . . Hence, when He rose from the dead, He said to Mary Magdalene, “Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” This is the new place, never known by any man previously, and known now only by Christ, who is our life. The life, in relation to God as Father, was never manifested in man until manifested in Jesus; and as in Him, everything that was due to God, in all its perfectness, was perfectly observed; so we, as we are in the power

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of His life, as sons to the Father, revere and serve God more than Abraham or Moses could do; we do it as the Son, whose life we have; and if Abraham and Moses fulfilled their responsibilities to God in a very beautiful way, how much more are we qualified to do so!

Hence, in John's epistle, where we are exercised as to our possession of eternal life, the grace in which we are set, as sons to the Father, is first brought before us. In Ephesians, where it is the counsel of God, in chapter i., it is God who is before us, but when it is our present enjoyment, it is the Father, in the prayer in chapter iii.

The Lord give us to see that the nearer we are to the blessed God in the relationship into which we have been brought by His own Son, the better we shall know what is due to Him, and the more purpose of heart there will be in us, as well as more power to discharge every responsibility to which we are called by Him.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY. 55

The more we walk in the spirit of sonship, the more distinctly shall we magnify Him in all His glory, right, and majesty.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY :

ETERNAL LIFE.

“THE life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.” (1 John i. 2.) The first point, is, that the eternal life has been manifested unto us by the Son. He became a Man, and it was manifested in Him. It was never manifested in a man till the Son came. It is in the eternal life only that we could have fellowship with the Father and the Son. It is every way of the deepest importance that we should see that the eternal life is an entirely new existence, never possible among men until the Son came,

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and then it was for the first time manifested. The nature and measure of the life which the saints had before the coming of Christ, I cannot determine ; all I can insist on, is, that the eternal life which was with the Father, as the very terms, "*with the Father*," shew, could not be manifested unto us until the Son came. The Son, a Man down here, manifested unto us the life that He had in common with the Father, and He then, as the "last Adam," gives us this eternal life. (John xvii. 2.)

We start, then, with the simple fact, that the eternal life was never manifested in a man until the Son came, and that He was the virtual and actual expression of that life down here. No man ever had precedence of Him.

Next, we have to learn that this life was an entirely new one on the earth. Men of God acted for Him here in divine power, according to the measure in which He was pleased to reveal Himself. He was never declared to any of them as Father ; until the Son

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came, this could not be. "The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, *he* hath declared him." The life of God is manifested by a Man on this earth. Hence our blessed Lord can say to Nicodemus, after stating, what had ever been true, that "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,"—"If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things? and no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life." The Son of man is to be lifted up, crucified, made an offering for sin, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have eternal life. This life is heavenly in its nature, tastes, and interests. The blessed Son humbled Himself, and became a Man. He came to do His

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Father's will. He freely offered Himself. He, who knew no sin, was made sin for us. He vindicates God on our side, that every one believing in Him may be in His life ; not reinstated in the condition which man lost in judgment, but in the life of the One who bore our judgment, so that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. This life is consequently entirely outside the ken of man. The natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God. "No man knoweth the things of God, but the Spirit of God that is in him."

From Adam to Christ, the work of grace in every man of God was to be faithful to God in the circumstances in which he was placed, God acting by him, and for him ; but when the Son became a Man, the very nature and ways of God were manifested in the Son of man down here. Nothing of the sort could ever have been seen in a man before. There was One now here who always did the things that pleased God. He was not trying to

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stand for God on this or that occasion, but He was in Himself a contradiction to everything that was not of God, as the light in the darkness. He was the exhibition of every divine beauty in every detail of His life. The life with the Father was manifested unto us ; and that in the One who, because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, “likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” There is no reinstating of the first man ; there is no attempt, as with servants of God, up to this, “to take the kingdom by violence ;” now, the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than any who had preceded. Hence, in John iv. 14, our blessed Lord announces to the woman of Samaria, one who was reduced to the most pitiable condition, that, through the *gift* of God, she should have a new and wonderful history in the very scene of her former

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misery. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." These words describe the state of existence that is to be enjoyed now, and which was not possible to be known by any one until the Son had come, and had Himself removed, by His death, everything which barred the full expression of the love of God. Where, in the whole range of the Old Testament, do we find any anticipation even, of the blessedness propounded by our blessed Lord to that pitiable woman? The very magnitude of it, I have no doubt, leads many to pass it by as an impossibility, or as meaning something not within the range of human comprehension. Where else is set forth anywhere such a state as "never thirst," but to have in him a well of water, springing up unto eternal life? Moses, David, and the prophets, had deep, earnest longings, but when was any one of them in pos-

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session of what is offered to this desolate woman of Samaria ?

But that is not all. As this chapter describes the believer's state *within*, so does chapter v. reach to the *outward state*, —the body superior to infirmities now, and the resurrection of life assured ; while in chapter vi. it is food of life that is presented. Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, there is no life in you." No one could have done this before Christ came ; and, mark, it is by feeding on His death that we enter practically into the enjoyment of His life.

Chapter vii. is the Holy Ghost given to us from a glorified Christ. We feed on Christ's death and we are in the power of the Holy Ghost here from Christ glorified. "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Never known before, because "the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

Chapters viii., ix. tell us of the light, how it exposes the secrets of men's hearts, but discloses His grace, not to

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condemn ; but when it was possessed, as in the case of the blind man, the momentous fact was disclosed, that no man, however near, like the neighbours ; or however religious, as the Pharisees ; or however naturally related, as the parents ; or even God's people on the earth, as the Jews, could grasp the source of the light ; and not only this, but they cast out the man who was the recipient of it. When, or how, could any such thing have happened to a man before ? The new standing of this man is described in chapter x. ; out of everything Jewish, and into everything of Christ. While, in chapters xiv. to xvii., our present portion and power, consequent on the rejection of Christ, are declared to us. Impossible, as well as unknown, to any saint previous to His rejection.

I have only to add, that it is evident, from John's epistle, that very soon the church lost the true idea of eternal life ; so much so, that the apostle tells us, that " these things are written that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life."

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Let any one read 1 John i., and in any degree apprehend the "fellowship with the Father, and his Son, Jesus Christ" (impossible to be enjoyed until the Son had come), and surely he will admit that the eternal life is an existence entirely apart from human ken. Many believers have no idea of this life. They are assured, through grace, that their immortal souls will be happy in heaven—which they surely will—but they have no idea of possessing a new existence, capable of enjoying God answering to His nature, and sharing in His thoughts and interests, one, too, in which we have fellowship with one another, and in which we come out in the obedience and walk of our Lord Jesus Christ on the earth.

In this new existence we can, through the Spirit's power, reach Him in heavenly places, where He is ; we can be "beside ourselves," and break from everything here, cross the Jordan, and enjoy the scene of light above, again to resume, with a deeper apprehension of His grace, our duties down here, as He

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has been pleased to set us here, but always with an increasing sense of the ineffable delight that He is our life, and that "when he shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory."

FRAGMENT.

A SAMUEL continues faithful to the end; he thinks only of God. A Jehu exhausts himself in the long run. Any energy that is not divine, is great at the beginning, but subsides into an extreme on the wrong side. Divine energy is daily gaining strength, so that its end is its brightest time. Moses was kept up in the Mount with God, and thus prepared for the crisis.



JOHN'S GOSPEL.

CHAPTER XVII.

THUS, as Christians, brought to a knowledge of the Father and the Son, the motives that animate and govern the world, disappeared: "As is the heavenly, so also are they that are heavenly." In this case, John never speaks of the inconsistencies that may be committed in the walk, nor does the Saviour speak of this, but He speaks of the thing in itself. Now the world should see this unity (compare Acts ii. and iv.), and the disappearing of all the motives that govern this world, a clear testimony to the revelation of the Father in the Son. This was the testimony that the Father had sent the Son into the world; for there would be seen a people formed by a power that was not at all of the world, and which, in overturning all human barriers, would give them one heart and one soul, so that they should be irrefutable of the

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reality of that which governed them. Such are Christians, brought by the word to the Father, subject to the influence of this word, and living by it.

Note, that it is not a question here of the unity of the church—John never speaks of this—but of the family of God. It is not God's counsels, but the effect and the realisation of the revelation of the Father in the Son sent by Him; but in everything they are identified with Christ.

The third unity is glory. The first was expressed by the words "*as we*" (ver. 11); the second, by "*one in us*" (ver. 21); and this one, by "*as we are one*" (ver. 22), and by "*I in them, and thou in me;*" thus perfected, brought to perfection in one. This is the result in glory.

We have seen that the teaching of this chapter, even about eternal life, is the knowledge of the Father, and Christ sent by Him. This is accomplished in glory. First of all, Christ as man, Son of God in glory, is the source of the sanctification of His

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own according to that knowledge, the disciples and those that should believe by their means being brought into the place where Christ was. Secondly, this relationship of association with Christ is transported into the place of glory with the Father; not as it is now, realised by faith, but they themselves shall be transformed into this glory. It is union, perfect in nature, thoughts and state—"as we are one." Christ in them, so that their position was fully realised; and the Father in Christ, so that the spiritual order that we have seen all through the chapter—the Father revealed in the Son, and Christ revealed in the disciples and believers—was now not only known spiritually, but gloriously accomplished.

But let us here notice what is striking and important. The three unities refer to the world. First of all the word of God had been confided to the disciples as responsible depositaries of the truth, so that the world hated them (vers. 11–14); then, secondly, we have the unity of communion, that the world

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might believe (ver. 21) in seeing the effect and the power of the present testimony ; lastly, in the third place, the disciples and believers are made partakers of the glory given to the Son as Man ; He in them, and the Father in Him, so that the total sum of all these thoughts of infinite grace that unites the Father, the Son as Man, and believers, being manifested in glory, the world will know (not believe) that the Son had been sent by the Father, and that believers were loved by the Father as the Son Himself. The proof would be there : the Son manifested in glory, and believers in the same glory with Him. This will be the visible fulfilment of the teaching of the wonderful truth which the chapter treats : the Father in the Son as Man, and believers glorified with Him. But whether it be a scene of testimony or of glory, it is the world that is before our eyes.

In what follows, it is not the case, and this gives quite another character to these last verses. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given

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me shall be with me where I am, that they may see my glory, the glory that thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." We see here, as we have seen everywhere, that Christ speaks of Himself as man, though at the same time as Son of the Father ; as man, stripped outwardly of the divine glory in which He had been ; "the form of God" as we read in Philippians ii., having taken the "form of a servant" in humanity. The Father has given heavenly glory on high to the Man Christ. He had, He says in this very chapter, had this glory with the Father before the foundation of the world, but He was going back into it as man, for as man it is clear that He had never had it. He was not yet glorified. Never, down here, though He said and shewed that He was one with the Father, and "I am" (John viii. 59), and saying to the Jews : "Destroy this temple, [that is, His body where God dwelt] and in three days *I* will raise it up ;"—never would he go outside this

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place of Servant. He took a body in order to be obedient to His Father (Psalm xl.) ; and a man who was not obedient, would have been by the very fact, in evil. It was into this that Satan sought to lead him. (Matt. iv.) The Father had proclaimed : " This is my well-beloved Son ;" and in His first temptation, Satan says to Him : " If thou art the Son of God, command these stones, that they become bread ;" but the Lord withstood his wiles, refusing to leave the place of obedience : " Man," He says, " shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Thus in speaking as Man in the midst of His own, He speaks of the glory into which He was going to enter, as given to Him of God. Nevertheless He presents it here objectively as His own personal glory.

He had been loved before the foundation of the world. We saw, at the beginning of the chapter, that He had had with the Father, before the foundation of the world, the glory into which

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He was going to enter as Man. It is not that there are two glories, but I do not think that human eyes down here can bear the glory as it is seen in heaven. The glory seen upon earth will be like that in which Moses and Elias appeared upon the mountain—the kingdom glory. But we read in Luke ix. that the disciples entered into the cloud, that is the shekinah. Moses had spoken to God, when God came down in the cloud, but he did not enter into it. But we shall see Him there as He is, in the Father's house. The disciples had suffered upon earth, and had seen Him suffer. He was going to be crucified, and He asked therefore that they should see His glory on high, with the Father. It was the answer to the shame to which He had been exposed for our sakes, and for His Father's glory.

But this request refers also to another solemn truth. He was going to suffer ; the history of His sufferings begins with the next chapter. The world had rejected Him ; the Father must decide

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between Him and the world. He had fully revealed the Father, and the world had not known Him who had manifested Himself in Christ. It was a moral blindness that only saw the carpenter's son there, where the Father had been manifested in all His grace and goodness. But Jesus, as man in the world, had known the Father, and the disciples had known that it was the Father, who had sent Him. Now the end had come, the close of His earthly career; the result would shew itself. The Father's righteousness was about to place Christ in His house, and the world was left without God, who had been there in grace, and without the Saviour.

Notice that when He prays for His own, Jesus says, "Holy Father." He wished them to be kept in the power of this name. Sons with Him, and sanctified according to this revelation of the Father that Christ Himself enjoyed and of which He was the vessel for others. Now He says, "Holy Father!" The Father should decide

“CONTEND EARNESTLY,” ETC. 73

between Him and those who had received Him on the one hand, and the world that had rejected Him on the other. A solemn moment for the world, when He who came in pure grace (2 Cor. v. 19) prayed, after having faithfully manifested and glorified the Father, that the Father Himself should decide in righteousness between Him and the world. The answer soon followed, when Jesus sat down on the Father's throne.

“CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH.”

It is very evident from the fact, that we are told to “contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints,” that there would be a sustained effort to deprive us of it. First, then, we require to know what the faith once delivered unto us really is ; and next, we have to learn the proper way to contend for it. I am sure the better the faith is known

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and held to, the more desperate will be the attempt of the enemy to reduce and extinguish it. With every converted soul a measure of the faith must be held, but Satan soon gains a place with each, if he seek to have an easy time here; because the less of the faith he holds, the less obstruction will Satan cast in his way. There is always a present gain from the god of this world to one professing the faith, greater in proportion as he is less in the power of it; that is, the one who contents himself with the minimum of the faith, will be given by the enemy the maximum of the world.

The faith embraces all that is revealed to us by God which we now enter into by faith, and all that God has called us to in this period. It is the period of our Lord's rejection and we cannot be in the finality of anything yet, except by faith, through the Holy Ghost. Everything is through grace, and therefore by faith, and not by works. The power of the enemy prevailed to cast out Christ from the earth. But the Holy Ghost

“CONTEND EARNESTLY,” ETC. 75

has come down from the exalted Christ to lead His own into His life and nature, and though still on the earth, to unite them to Him in heaven. Now everything in this scene is against the faith once delivered to the saints, the whole compass of it. There is no help, but the contrary, from everything down here. Hence the life of the man of God, as he is true to the faith, is one continuous struggle.

It is necessary to form a true estimate of the state of things here where Christ has been rejected, and, consequent on this, to realise that the only power to sustain one in such an unequal conflict is the Holy Ghost, by whom we know that the prince of this world is judged. Thus we have to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered, in a scene where everything is against us, and we are only preserved by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. The faith we contend for is opposed by the whole world. One might assert that the material world does not oppose: not actively it is true, but there is no support from it

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for the man of faith ; nay, if it in any measure influences him, he is so far hindered and damaged. The contenders for the faith must devote themselves to the whole circle of Christ's glory as revealed to faith and the calling of God for Christ's own during the period of His rejection, and in the very scene of it. They have but one circle of interest before their hearts, all that is embraced in the faith ; and as God has called His people to this, as lights, entirely distinct, and apart from every element around ; so, like the light, the more truly and fully they are in the faith, the more demonstration there is of the novel and supernatural character of the power by which they are maintained here. The world cannot be passive spectators. Cain hates Abel, because his works were evil and his brother's righteous. The more the world are impressed by this company, so entirely contrary to them, and morally condemning them, the greater their exasperation ; but according as the world is in any believer, in that proportion

“CONTEND EARNESTLY,” ETC. 77

will he side with the world. What a man loves most, he holds to most.

The church now is very similar in its position here to that occupied by our blessed Lord, only that He was not fully rejected when He walked here. He was here to give, and yet not to receive from anyone. We must first see that the faith is a circle of light and blessing, entirely apart from and independent of everything of man, and that the more earnestly we contend for it the more exclusively must we be apart from every natural thing ; but as we keep separate from the world it is arrayed against us. The effect of the enemy ever has been to introduce some element of the world into this isolated circle of the faith, complete in itself, because it has the completeness of Christ. It is here the enemy has succeeded, so that the teaching that has least of Christ in it, though still retaining a sufficient measure to be called christian, is the most popular. The speaker who limits the gospel to the shelter of Exodus xii. will have a greater company of followers than the

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one who sets forth, that as Christ is now, so are His own in this world. The former can have no taste of heaven except expectation of it when he dies, and hence he can enjoy the world until his end here comes. The latter does not belong to this world, for as he is here as Christ is above, the rest and joy of his heart is to share in spirit the place where Christ is.

To contend then for the faith we must contend for a circle of blessing entirely of God, and apart from everything ever before connected with His name on earth. Of course, if the faith as to its scope and nature be not known, there cannot be a right contention for it. True, a man might contend for it as far as he knew, but in this contention there is generally a mixture of carnal religion of some kind, which very often is accepted where there is a victory, while the real thing is overlooked. I mean that when a zealous contender for the faith gains attention and works conviction, it is generally the system of religion with which he is connected

“CONTEND EARNESTLY,” ETC. 79

that is accepted, rather than the item of faith which provoked the contention.

Well, we have arrived at this: that it is the faith, the whole scope of the revelation of God's will, and God's calling for Christ's own during His rejection, that is the thing to be contended for, and the better it is known, the more definite is the contention.

Next, we have to ascertain the measure of fitness which qualifies for this contention. Surely this is a very grave inquiry. I have already remarked that if a servant contend for the faith knowing it imperfectly, he must give an uncertain sound, and his followers will propagate the deformity, which the more it grows, the more it discloses its malproportion. It is essential therefore for the contender for the faith, to have a true conception of the faith, however small and feeble it may be. If a really divine one, it will be like the good grain, sown in the ground, stage after stage developing its nature and worth.

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Well, when one has a right idea of the faith, he knows what he is to contend for. Next, he must be personally fitted for this work. He must be a good witness of the truth for which he contends. How could a worldly man, ministering to his tastes according to his means, be competent in such a work? he certainly would damage the cause he attempts to support. Perhaps nowhere has there been more signal failure than in connection with zealous men assuming to contend for the faith, while they themselves were not in the power of it. Such are like a Peter to our Lord, or a Barnabas to Paul, or an Aaron to Moses, or a Joab to David.

If there is a readiness to do battle without being in armour ourselves, the enemy can asperse us, as no examples of the faith we profess to contend for. How can one hate the garment spotted by the flesh if one's own garment—that is, our surroundings—are worldly and carnal? If such be the case, however zealous we may be, we cannot help the testimony. Hence the apostle writes

“CONTEND EARNESTLY,” ETC. 81

to Timothy : “Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life ; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. The husbandman must labour before partaking of the fruits.” (2 Tim. ii. 1-6.) First, he is to be “strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” It is not a common matter that he has to attend to. Next look out for trustworthy companions ; he is not to isolate himself ; “commit the things thou hast heard of me to faithful men,” who (have this great characteristic) are able to teach others also. And then he gives him three illustrations of the three qualities necessary for a servant in the testimony in

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this day ; that of a soldier, a wrestler, and a husbandman. The soldier endures hardness, and has no entanglement to hinder him from any duty. The wrestler has to contend lawfully, and the husbandman must work before he can have any returns. These are the qualifications for one contending for the faith.

May we all be eager to contend for it, but may we have a deeper sense of the condition of soul we must be in to contend for it properly.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY:

WHAT IS POWER?

THE apostle writes, "I will not know the speech of them that are puffed up, but the power." Power was thus the virtue which would determine their proper value. Power, divine power in helpless men, must easily be seen. The power of God in the earthen vessel must make a very distinct mark. The

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nature of that power is our present inquiry.

With reference to the apostles it was spoken of when our Lord said, "tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." That was the power of the Holy Ghost. We read of Stephen, "a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost." And a little further on it is said, Stephen was "full of grace and power." The power was literally that of the Holy Spirit. It was the power of God; not something that a man could do. Everything done by the Spirit of God is power. Thus power is in advance of faith. Faith counts on God and reckons on His intervention, but power enables me to be something that otherwise I should not be; an act divine in its character and not merely human. Divine power is known by the way in which it enables a man to be divinely above his own immediate circumstances. Like Elisha, who when he received power from Elijah as he went up, immediately took hold of his own clothes (typically his

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natural surroundings) and rent them in two pieces. This is the first mark of the power of God, at least in the eyes of others. A soul can have gleams of peace through faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, but when there is power through walking in the Spirit, there is a distinct practical freedom "from the law of sin and death." It is a wonderful day when I am able to put Christ before me instead of myself. It is not only that Christ suffered for me, and that I have faith in God to interfere for me, but "I am crucified with Christ, and no longer live, I, but Christ lives in me."

Unless I am at liberty from myself, I cannot be in power. Here the Christian differs from all who went before him. The men of God aforetime continually so counted on God in their acts, that He interfered for them. Samson slew a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass. David killed Goliath with a smooth stone from the brook. When faith counts on God, He manifests Himself on behalf of His servant ;

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but power sets me in practical superiority to the circumstances in which I am. It is not deliverance out of them, but I have superiority to them.

When David indited Psalm xxxiv. he was in the sense of power, because he was with God above the circumstances, though he did nothing. Samuel was in power when he retired to Ramah. Power must begin with that which is nearest to me, or there would be no virtue in it. In faith I am supported by God, and things are granted to me, but when I am in His power I am solely dependent on Him, and conscious of His sustainment, though nothing be done on my behalf. Our blessed Lord slept in the storm because He was in power; He rebuked the storm in faith.

When I am in the Spirit's power I have liberty from myself, and I can devote to Christ the things I would have ministered to myself; like the woman in the Pharisee's house (Luke vii.) who expended the alabaster box of ointment on Him. This is only an illustration, but power is marked by a delight to

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make much of Christ at my own expense. I gladly put Him in the place of myself, and where this power is, it is apparent to every Pharisee.

But power advances. There was still greater power in Mary's act. She anoints the Lord's body for His burial. I mean that the power to surrender one's personal honours for Christ, grows into a greater and a deeper thing—even to bury them with Him—as there is an advance from reckoning oneself dead to sin, and being dead to the world, which order of power is known in the Romans and in Colossians respectively ; and, though it is not the highest order, still if you were to meet a man of this order you could not fail to perceive his power. Christ would not only be thought of instead of himself, but he would be markedly weaned from this scene where Christ had died. The one in this power, while in no way monastic, would give no uncertain sound ; however great in mind or means he would “ carry his bed ” in the circle of daily life. A practical pilgrim, this

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earth could not be the scene of his interest, for he would be an entire stranger to it. He would not use natural means in mere self-consideration, and none of the embellishments of things here would interest him. His house and the ordering of his family would bear witness that he was a man of power. Truly it humbles us to find how little we are in power—the Spirit's power—as we walk down here. No man is in power if not in faith, and as I am in power so am I in faith. The more I am practically superior to everything around me, which is power, the more do I reckon on God to do His will in spite of all opposition, seeing that through His grace I am not opposing His will but concurring with it.

We may indeed feel how little we have in effect this power, yet it is what can be known on this side Jordan, and not the highest order of power which is ours through grace: and in considering the subject of power I must endeavour to set forth what is the highest order.

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The apostle says "that I may know him and the power of his resurrection," and the latter part of the prayer in Ephesians i. is that we may know "what the surpassing greatness of his power towards us who believe, according to the working of the might of his strength in the Christ, raising him up from among the dead." The power which brought Christ up from the dead is the same power which has brought up each of His members, so that now one can say

"The Spirit's power
Has oped the heavenly door,
Has brought me to that favour'd hour
When toil shall all be o'er."

When I know this power, I am sensibly enjoying Christ's life in the sphere where Christ is. I am in a region of light, detached for the moment from everything connected with this present life; and when I resume my connection with it and my duties here, I do so with the assured sense in my heart that I belong to another sphere, which,

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in the power of the Spirit I have entered into ; and I resume my duties here with cheerful alacrity ; not as a small-minded man suddenly elevated to supreme distinction might scorn to enter on the small duties and works he was engaged in and bound to do before his elevation. On the contrary, as the Christian enjoys divine power, first for his own blessing and joy in company with the Lord, so does he earnestly and truly use the power in which he was elevated, for doing everything here, whether it be with reference to the church, the circle of Christ's interest on earth, or his own domestic circle. It is in this twofold way that the man of power is fully declared. First, and above everything else, the church as a whole is his concern, both as to the preservation of the unity of the Spirit, and its edification by gifts and joints. A man in whom the power of God works, his paramount interest will be the church, which is Christ's treasure and pearl here. This is the service which peculiarly and

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singularly distinguishes the man of power at this present time. Difficulties are great, but he is greater, because of the power that worketh in him ; and it is true of him, as Paul writes to Timothy, he has "fully known my doctrine."

If a man has not power in the lower level, of course he cannot have it in the highest ; but if he has it in the highest, one unmistakeable trait of it is, that he devotes himself to preserve the church in its unity, and to seek its edification. He has no concern prior to this. He regards everything as it affects the church, be it leaven or gangrene. He has one simple motto, "Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever." His own individual conduct among the saints, as Ephesians iv. to v. 21 enjoins, testifies that he practically upholds what he advocates, and he can truly say with regard to discipline cases, "not for his cause that did the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered the wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you,"

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“commending yourself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” Every act for the church by the man of power is plain and convincing to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. All the godly will readily approve. Woe betide the servant of God who attempts to act beyond his faith or power. Nothing is more grievous than any assumption in the church of God ; assuming to have faith or power which one has not. Not only is the Lord dishonoured by the miscarriage, but the servant is disqualified from prominence afterwards in the matter in which he has failed.

But in connection with this trait of power, marked devotedness to the interests of Christ here, there is besides the beautiful walk among the saints to which I have referred, another sphere where the man of power is pre-eminently distinguished. I refer now to his own domestic circle. As to spiritual oversight in the church, we know that if a man be unable to rule his own house how can he take care of the

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church of God ? But it is more general here. A man of power, heavenly power, is to behave in the ordinary relations of life in quite an unknown way. He is to love his wife as Christ loved the church, he is to bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. He may say that he fails, that everyone fails, but this only proves that he is not a man of power. "If thou hast run with the footmen and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses ? and if in the land of peace wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan ?" When branches wither, there is a failure of vigour in the tree ; when we fail in the domestic circle we may rest assured that we are not in true vigour in the circle where all Christ's great interests are and which is, *par excellence*, the one nearest to His heart.

It would be discouraging to be made aware of the little power we have if it were not through grace as much within our reach as ever it has been, and the

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real benefit of being awakened to our lack is to stimulate us to accept that power which through grace is ours.

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A LETTER.

“THE path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” A great man among men has said, “Youth is a dream ; manhood a struggle ; old age a regret.” Through grace we can say, our youth (as believers) is faith in God ; our manhood is His power that worketh in us ; and the delights of His house are nearer and brighter as we terminate our journey here.

When you were converted, you were like one wandering over a desolate waste in thick darkness. Suddenly a beautiful light shone across the dreary plain ; and while it disclosed to you on the one hand the deep precipice and interminable abyss which you were

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on the verge of, it, to the unspeakable delight of your heart, revealed Jesus your Saviour to your heart. He poured oil and wine into your wounds (Luke x.), and set you "on his own beast." You received divine life in the power of the Spirit of God, and being brought to the caravan,—the travelling company—you were "taken care of in the inn," where there was a wonderful refreshment room; where you heard great things of your Saviour; past, present, and to come. A living voice declaring to you; at one time, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." At another time,—the gospels,—what His life was down here; and again—the nature and fulness of His grace to the church; and lastly,—what is to come. All this has been, as I might say, portrayed before your eyes—the eyes of your soul in this great refreshment room. There you rested, as lying down in green pastures, and led by still waters. Invigo-

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rated there, you pursued your journey home.

He never leaves you, nor forsakes you. You have His sympathy along the road. The light which first saluted you in your misery and desolation keeps steadily increasing. It comes from the Father's house ; and it not only increases, but as you journey towards it, everything changes. Things naturally attractive are supplanted ; visions of the coming glory are brighter and more numerous, like messengers welcoming you home. In the company of the Lord, and upheld by the Holy Ghost, you are like the Queen of Sheba, no more spirit in you, because so entranced with His things ; as He said, " He will take of mine, and shew it unto you." Thus the last day, like Elijah's, is the brightest here.

What a comfort to our hearts to know that the ray of light which reached us in our desolation in the vast howling desert of this world, came from the Father's house and that the more we approach to it, the better we

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know our Saviour who has saved us, and the new power in which He has set us; and the delight of His Father, and our Father, to have us in His house for ever. Therefore He has sent messages of His love to us along the road, more numerous and touching, the nearer we come to it; the ray of light which first reached us, expanding into the heavenly glory from which it emanated.

May all this be fully realised by you.

FRAGMENT.

THE error that separates the soul from Christ is more terrible than the sad fruits of practical separation from Him. J. N. D.



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CHAPTER XVII. 26.

BUT we have something more to notice here. First, the union of the Son's divine Person, and the Saviour's humanity. The Father had loved Him before the foundation of the world ; Him, the Son of the Father, before the world was. But in contrast with the world, He had known the Father, that is, as Man down here, and He associates the disciples with Himself, asking that they might be there where He was going to be, yet recognising His personal glory. He prayed that they might see His glory, the glory that He possessed as being loved of the Father before the world existed. It is the precious truth, that runs through the chapter like a thread ; but here, that which is brought specially into relief, is His Person as Son of the Father, and Man, and His disciples' association with Himself. But what grace we have here ! We shall be with Christ, like Christ ; we shall see His

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glory, the glory of Him who was humbled for us: the glory that He had with the Father before the foundation of the world—but Man for ever and ever.

This is not yet all. There is our relationship with the Father, the same as Christ's: "I go to my Father and your Father; to my God and your God;" that is, there, where Christ is still as Son, and as Man. We enjoy already this relationship; and when Christ comes again, the world will know that we have been loved, as Christ; but we have the enjoyment of it already, down here. The Father's name was already declared when Christ was upon earth, although little understood by the disciples. But, since the descent of the Holy Ghost, who came down in virtue of the presence of the Man Christ in heaven, this name is declared again, and the Spirit is the Spirit of adoption.

What immense grace, how perfect and intimate! Love, which is the love as God loves, infinite, perfect in its nature, shutting out all that is not;

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intimate, for it is the Father's love for the Son Himself, and Christ in us to draw it to our hearts, and make us capable of enjoying it, and that in its perfect intimacy, for it is Christ in us, to give it its proper character in us.

The world will know objectively the character of the love with which we have been loved, when we shall appear in the same glory with Christ; we know it, as being the conscious objects of it; knowing this love in the Father, in the Son as being its worthy and infinite object, and we, He being in us—participating in it in the same way that He enjoys it as Man. God alone could have such thoughts.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WE have been through the wonderful chapter in which is presented the development of the communion of the Son with the Father about the object of their common interest, the children; that is, believers put into relationship with the Father by His revelation in the Son. The more we think of this,

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the more wonderful does it seem to us to be admitted to such communications.

But let us continue our study of the Gospel. That which follows, is the account of the last events of Christ's life, as also of His death, of His resurrection and all that belongs to them. The sufferings of Christ are not the subject of John's Gospel, but rather His divine Person, and this character is found here. We do not find sufferings either in Gethsemane or upon the cross, but a direct testimony given to His divinity, as also to His perfect human obedience. There is another element less important, but which comes out clearly ; that is, the moral setting aside of the Jews, a painful subject for the Saviour Himself and for us, which the sovereign grace of God will remedy ; but here they fall into marked contempt, even from the Gentiles.

The sufferings of Christ not being related, there is far less detail. Great principles, great facts, are not set forth in this history, or at least come out clearly in it. I feel sure that it will

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not be hazarding too much for our souls to pass in review the different accounts in the gospels of what took place in Gethsemane and upon the cross.

In Matthew, Christ is the Victim ; there is neither comforter nor consolation, but the disciples' sleep, and treason with kisses in Gethsemane ; and upon the cross,—“ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.” Mark gives very much the same facts in connection with this. In John, as we shall soon see, sufferings are not in question, either in Gethsemane, or upon the cross ; it is the Son of God who gives Himself. In Luke, we have more human anguish in Gethsemane, but none upon the cross. We will speak further on of what is related in John's Gospel. In Matthew's Gospel, it is simple : it is the Lamb led to the slaughter, the Lamb that opened not its mouth, except to recognise the fact, and as abandoned of God for us. In Luke, we see the Son of Man, and each particular corresponds to the

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character of the Gospel. There, as Man, His genealogy goes up to Adam ; He is the Man that is always praying ; in Gethsemane, in sight of the terrible cup that He had to drink, He is the Man that realises beforehand that which He would have to suffer, as being made sin. He was in an agony (this is in Luke alone) but that only served to shew His perfection ; He prayed the more urgently ; He was as man with God : He went through all the anguish in His soul. Upon the cross, no sufferings at all are mentioned. All the rest (that is, what we see in the other Gospels) remains true, but it is seen from another side ; it is in another aspect that the precious Saviour is presented. The sufferings are past ; He asks forgiveness for the Jews ; He promises paradise to the thief ; and then, when all is finished, He gives His spirit into His Father's hands. It is grace and peace in His soul, when it has felt all. The forsaking of God had taken place, but this is not the side of the history that Luke presents.

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It is well to remark too, that the three other Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) relate the Lord's controversy with the different classes of the Jews at His last visit to Jerusalem, when the Jews' unbelief is brought out clearly. In John, when this unbelief has been shewn as to His word (chap. viii.), and as to His works (chap. ix.), and that He has declared that He is come to seek His sheep, Jews or Gentiles, and that God has borne witness to Him as being the Son of God, Son of David, and Son of man (but as such He must die), then it is no longer a controversy with the Jews, a thing already judged, but communications to His disciples about the privileges and the position they should enjoy when He would be away. This brings us back to the history.

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EPHESIANS I. 11-14.

I WISH to say a little as to the way heavenly truth is presented in the

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scriptures of the New Testament, especially in the Epistle to the Ephesians.

There is a false idea current, that the knowledge of our present heavenly portion is not essential. Now, although heavenly truth is what is designated as "high truth," it is intensely scriptural, simple, and practical.

We often pray—and rightly so—to be preserved from high talk and low walk. In Ephesians we have high talk and high walk, in consequence of our high position, and if the high or heavenly truth is refused, we shall be earthly-minded, trying to make ourselves comfortable in a world that cast out Christ, and endeavouring to surround ourselves with the choicest gifts earth can afford; in short, we shall seek to be happy millennial saints.

The magnificent doxology in this chapter begins upon the highest note: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who *hath* blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ." This is true *now*, it is not a future thing, nor true

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of only advanced saints, but of all in Christ who are sealed with the Holy Spirit. Why is there so little joy? Saints do not live up to their income, if they did, there would be more joy, and more worship.

Seven spiritual blessings are unfolded in this chapter: first, We are taken back into God's eternity, where He made choice of us in Christ ere ever the world's foundations were laid, that we should be holy, and without blame, before Him in love; secondly, God marked us out beforehand for adoption, through Jesus Christ, to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will; thirdly, God has taken us into favour in the Beloved. We are told that verse 6 does not mean what it says. I warn you against trusting to Greek. On the cross the accusation against Christ was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. I am not speaking against languages, but against trusting them. Trust to the Spirit's teaching. Are simple saints, all over the world, to lose the preciousness of this verse

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because they do not understand Greek ? Do not allow yourselves to be robbed of the blessedness of being accepted, or taken into favour, in the Beloved. It is not necessary to know Hebrew and Greek to understand the word of God. Saints need more heart, and a subject mind. These things are hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed to babes ; “As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.” Fourthly, We have redemption through Christ’s blood. Fifthly, We have the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God’s grace. Sixthly, In Christ, also, we have obtained an inheritance ; and, seventhly, Having heard and believed the gospel of salvation, we have been sealed with the Holy Spirit. What a rich cluster of blessings is ours now, as the fruit of God’s grace and the redemption-work of Christ !

In John iii. 13 Jesus said, “No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even *the Son of man which is in heaven.*” Here is the

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perfect pattern of *a heavenly Man upon earth*, for He was upon earth when He uttered these wondrous words, and yet He could say, “the Son of man which *is in heaven* ;” and we are here to represent Him as heavenly men upon earth. Hence He says, “*As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*”

Acts ix. 4. A voice from heaven says, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” Where was the One who thus addressed Saul? In heaven. But Saul was not there. What, then, do these words mean? Who was Saul persecuting? A despised people, who were, nevertheless, one with Christ in heaven, united to Him by the Holy Ghost. Is He in the heavenlies? So are we, for we are one with Him. The Head and feet are united, and the Head cannot say to the feet, “I have no need of you.” If you hurt my feet, you hurt me. This is the first time the Holy Ghost reveals the truth of the one body.

1 Corinthians xv. 48. “And such as

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the heavenly [one], such also the heavenly [ones.]" This is new creation. By the Holy Ghost we are one with the heavenly One, and are consequently heavenly ones now. We may not have very heavenly manners, but if we believed, and remembered always, that we are heavenly people upon earth, it would produce heavenly ways.

In Ephesians there are five mentions of the heavenlies :—

(1.) God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ. (Chap. i. 1–3.)

(2.) God has wrought in raising Christ from among the dead, and setting Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, as Head of the new creation. (Vers. 1–20.) Adam was the head of the old creation; he was not the head of a million creations; he *was the one head of the one old creation*: "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." All connected with the first Adam came in for death; so also all connected with Christ, the last Adam, come in for life,

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and eternal life too. "If any man be in Christ, new creation;" not only of a new creation, but that he is brought into new creation, of which Christ, risen and glorified, is the Head.

(3.) "And hath raised us [Jews and Gentiles] up together. and made us *sit* together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus." (Chap. ii. 6.) Observe, the words made *sit together*, not standing, before a throne, forgiven and justified. On state occasions, when the Queen is in the throne-room, the Prince of Wales stands before the throne, and he dares not, at such a time, call her mother, he is there in the position of a subject to the sovereign. There is no relationship before the throne. But we are *seated* in the heavenlies in Christ, in present restful enjoyment of the place and portion that His redemption-work has won for us, and in Himself the Person who has done it all. (Chap. ii. 6.)

(4.) We are a lesson-book, in which the inhabitants of the heavenlies are to learn in us the manifold wisdom of God. (Chap. iii. 10.)

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And lastly, our conflict is in the heavenlies. (Chap. vi. 12.) This Epistle has given us the grapes *in* Eshcol, and now we find there are giants to withstand our enjoyment of the place we are in.

I cannot forbear turning you to three other scriptures bearing on this point. "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." (Gal. i. 4.) Christ gave Himself on purpose that we might be freed from our sins and this evil age, and be a heavenly people: as another has said, "He will have a heavenly people, redeemed according to that love which has given us a place on high with Himself, and a life in which the Holy Ghost works, to make us enjoy it, and cause us to walk in the liberty and in the holiness which He gives us in this new creation, of which Jesus Himself, risen and glorified, is the Head and the glory."

Again, in Philippians iii. 20, 21, we have our home and our hope put before

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us. "For our conversation [or citizenship, or commonwealth] is in heaven." We are born again from above, we are therefore citizens of heaven, and all our politics and living associations are there. Soon He will come for whom we wait, and then we shall be there, not in spirit, as now, but actually, in bodies of glory, like our glorified Saviour's.

And now, lastly, in 1 John iv. 17 : "Herein is love with us [margin] made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment ; because, AS HE IS, SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD." Is He free from our sins ? So are we. Is He free from death ? So are we. Is He free from judgment ? So are we. Is He accepted by God ? So are we—He is the measure of our acceptance. Is He heavenly ? So are we in this world.

You may think of other kindred scriptures, but I content myself with these, and I ask, with this magnificent range of scripture which we have viewed, as presenting our present blessed

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portion in Christ in the heavenlies, will you suffer yourself to be deprived of the present enjoyment of them?

I would just ask you, in closing these remarks, to observe the seven mentions of walk in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and see how heavenly truth touches our walk, and all the relationships of life. (1.) “Ye *walked* according to the course of this world [or age],” &c. (Chap. ii. 2.) This is what characterised us in the past, when we were unsaved and earthly. (2.) “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained [or marked out], that we should *walk* in them.” (Chap. ii. 10.) This is what is to distinguish us now that we are heavenly men. (3.) “I . . . beseech you that ye *walk* worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.” (Chap. iv. 1.) The vocation is unfolded in the second chapter. (4.) “This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth *walk not* as other Gentiles walk.” (Chap. iv. 17.)

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Their walk is to be our warning, and Christ's walk our pattern. Our blessed privilege is, henceforth to live not unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us, and rose again. (5.) "Be ye, therefore, imitators of God, as beloved children; and *walk in love*, as Christ also hath loved us." (Chap. v. 1, 2.) Here the heavenly walk of the heavenly Man is presented to us for our imitation. (6.) "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: *walk* as children of light." (Chap. v. 8.) The grace of God, and redemption-work of Christ, have brought us into the light, and we are there, according to the nature of God. "God is light," and "God is love." Light has opened the way into love, and love keeps us there; our walk now, is, to be according to God's manifestation of Himself in Christ as light and love. (7.) "See, then, that ye *walk* circumspectly." (Chap. v. 15.) God describes the whole scope, or circle, of heavenly walk in these seven mentions of it.

Heavenly truth reaches down to the

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very dust of earth, and tells me how I am to walk upon it. It touches the tongues of the formerly untruthful, and says, "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another." It touches the hand of the one who used to live by thieving, and says, "Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." It teaches the wife to submit, the husband to love, and the children and servants to obey. Oh, how holy and practical is heavenly truth! God give us a state that shall better answer to our standing—a condition that shall be a more truthful echo of our position. H. M. H.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY:

CARE FOR THE CHURCH.

IN order to care for the church, we must first be in simple rest of heart in the Lord as to our own place with

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Him. We can never understand what the church is to Him until we have learned individually the nature of His love to us and consequent interest in us.

The order of growth to this is very interesting. We first know His love in dying for us, and then, like Jonathan, whose "soul was knit with the soul of David," we are in heart bound to Him, for the great and eternal service which He has rendered to us by His death for us.

Next, in all our trials and difficulties He is so necessary to us, and He becomes so endeared to us, that like Ruth, we can leave our natural place to follow Him to His place : we cannot live without Him. Then we are ready for the truth that we are united to Him, and entranced with it. Then at length we are fully settled, restful : all our own interests perfectly secured ; and now communion is the crown of joy to our hearts.

Our union to Him would be only a title if we were not in communion with

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Him to enjoy the reality and closeness of our alliance. In communion with Him we share in His interests, and are occupied with them as He pleases. It is only as we are in His secret, His "friends," that we can truly understand how to care for the church. We learn, as I have said, in our own individual experience, the nature and depth of His love and interest in the church, and then we find that His heart "doth safely trust" in us. We are called to share in His interest and care for the church according to the ability which He gives.

There is, I may say, preliminary to any right service, a measure of knowledge of two things, with regard to the church: one, as to what it is in the mind of God, and the other, what it is now in the hands of man. If we do not know what it is in the mind of God, and how it came forth from His hand, we of course cannot see how much it has suffered in the hands of man; and if we *only* see the church as it is in the mind of God, we are

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unable rightly to care for it now in its ruin.

Here I must remind my reader, that the church is spoken of in a twofold way in scripture, namely, as the house of God, and as the body of Christ, and it is very essential that we should comprehend it in these two aspects. In the house aspect, it is the habitation of God through the Spirit, and as such it was committed to man's responsibility. It was the sphere where sins were remitted. The true building is Christ's own work. He says (Matt. xvi.), "*I will build my church.*" Each living stone is put into its true place by Christ Himself. This is the church or assembly in its executive character here on earth; and as such, it was committed to the hands of His people here, "the pillar and ground of the truth." But on the other hand, the house of God has become like "a great house," where there are vessels, "some to honour and some to dishonour." (2 Tim. ii.) Through the subtlety of Satan and the remissness of the saints, "certain men

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have crept in unawares." It is still the house, but when it has reached the state of a "great house," the one caring for the church purges himself from the vessels to dishonour, not to pursue a solitary or isolated path, but to "follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Thus it is here intimated that there would be always in the house those who preserve what is due to God in His own house ; and any one who does not comprehend this course, and act according to it, could not truly care for the church. Further on, I hope to refer to the twofold character of the Shepherd's care for the flock, but before entering on that part of my subject, it is needful to say a little on the church in its aspect as the body of Christ.

In its essential state the church is baptised by one Spirit into one body. Christ is the Head of it ; but as the house of God, there is individual responsibility, though that action, when of the Spirit, cannot be independent of

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the other members of the body. The body is never visible, the act of the individual is ; and therefore the assembly, as a habitation of God, is the place where the concerns of Christ, in connection with this scene are determined, while the essential state (that of the body), upholds and strengthens each individual in acting for the Lord, though visibly he is only a unit. The house is Christ's council during His absence ; and everyone built thereon by Himself is a member of His body, and has essentially a corporate position of the highest order, to which each individual, as he is in the Spirit, must defer ; because Christ is the Head, and one cannot defer to the Head, without embracing every member of the body for its good. In like manner when he fails, he disregards the Head, and all the members suffer. If a saint does not understand the church in these two aspects, he cannot on the one hand see it in its unchangeable nearness and value to the Lord Jesus Christ, as God's present object on the

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earth: and on the other, if he does not see how it has become like a "great house," and how the name of God has been dishonoured in His own house, as it was in Israel of old, he cannot rightly care for it, because he does not apprehend the nature of the position which the faithful must adopt in such a crisis. In the one case he does not see the unceasing interminable flow of grace, from the Head to the body, ever and always, whenever and wherever, the members of His body seek Him, and own His rightful and natural place in relation to them. It is an unfailing consolation to everyone caring for the church, that Christ's heart is the same towards it now, as it was when He uttered John xvii., and that He is the same Head to it as ever He was. If one did not know this, where would one's resource be in a day like this? While if one did not see the house, though in ruins, to be God's dwelling, how could one rightly consider for His glory, or promote the "holiness" which "becometh thy house, O Lord, forever"?

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Having learned what the church is in the mind of God, next, as directed by Him, and in communion with Him, there are two things in many varied branches which will engage the one who cares for the church. The first is food, or teaching ; the second, discipline. We cannot fail to see that these two are closely connected, and that the growth and blessing of our brethren, is the one object common to both. We start with this, that we are to love one another as Christ has loved us, and "this also we wish even your perfection." Once we ascertain the great principles which are to guide us in caring for the church, it will be comparatively easy to determine the special service of each.

"Meat in due season" is necessary for growth ; "As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby ;" and discipline in its full scope, is necessary to check the budding or activities of the flesh. The one is to promote the advancement of the "new-born babe ;" the other to remove

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the leaven, or the snare which interferes with and hinders progress. To the servant who cares for the church it is simple and easy, if led of the Lord, to feed the saints with "food convenient" for them. As he is in communion he is sure to be instructed; "out of his belly will flow rivers of living water:" that is, that the Lord's mind, and the truth suited to their state, will be supplied to him from the word. Often from the same chapter, he will be led to dwell on one part at one time, and on another part at another time, according to the need of souls. The Spirit leads him to supply through the word, the particular instruction which the Lord would impart. Now, though everyone is not a teacher, everyone as he is walking in communion in word and ways, helps and promotes the new nature in each one with whom he is in contact. Here let me say, that one caring for the church, will not only be watchful in the congregation not to grieve the Spirit, and thus make all to suffer, but he will remember that

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wherever he is, he is a member ; and if the joint be hindered, there is a damage to the whole body, though the members may be scattered all over the universe.

It only remains now to add a word on discipline. The aim of all discipline is the welfare of the church, while at the same time it seeks to effect the welfare of the offender. If I care for the church, I must seek to purge out all leaven. So long as the Lord retains His place in an assembly, my duty is to urge on the assembly to look for His help to put away the one who leavens when there is no possibility of eradicating it. When the Lord has been displaced in an assembly, which is generally when evil doctrine [or gangrene] has been taught and countenanced ; then there is no option but to purge oneself from the vessels to dishonour. The necessity for this indicates the disordered state of the house, but also declares the ability of every believer to preserve a space in it suited to God, in His dwelling-place ;

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and such a company is ever, thank God, to be found.

So far I have dwelt on what is generally called church-discipline, where we can see the principle of it in the clearest way. But besides this, it is incumbent on every saint to exercise discipline towards his fellows with whom he associates. There are some so bad that he is to "turn away" from them—"receive him not into the house, and greet him not." There are others whom he must not receive socially; "have no company with him, that he may be ashamed; yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." Then, finally, each one is responsible to "wash each other's feet." That is, that in love I am charged to remove from my brother the soil on his conscience which interrupts his communion with the Lord. A most blessed service and an endless one. Every check to his joy and blessing claims my attention, in order that I may co-operate in helping him to his proper and happy place with the Lord. The

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ministry of the word, when effectual, is the means by which the cloud is cleared away, and then the word becomes food through the grace of Christ to "nurture and cherish."

May each of us enter more into the blessedness of caring for the church for the Lord's sake.

THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM.

JERUSALEM on high,
Where God Himself doth dwell ;
O scene of rest and bliss so nigh,
Who can Thy glories tell ?

There God in light displays
His wondrous thoughts of love ;
While songs of joy and ceaseless praise
The bride's full blessing prove.

There on those streets of gold,
From all defilement free ;
With Christ I'll walk, His face behold
Where all is purity.

God's glories there enfold
His saints on every side,
For there shine forth in full display
The Bridegroom and the Bride.

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Each heart is fill'd with praise,
No temple can be seen ;
God is the temple and the Lamb,
No cloud to intervene.

God's glory is its light,
The Lamb Himself its lamp,
No need of sun or moon to shine ;
All bears the heavenly stamp.

In it shall be the throne
Of God and of the Lamb ;
Then all His love we'll fully own,
In one eternal psalm.

While hosts in glory sing,
Eternal anthems raise ;
The heavenly courts shall ever ring
With songs of fullest praise.

My heart in deep delight
That scene anticipates ;
Where God in bright unsullied light,
His purpose consummates.

J. McF.

FRAGMENTS.

It is a wondrous consolation, and a profound depth of joy that we can say as we walk about this world, Christ is my life—yes ! I can point to Him and

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say, that is what my life is. If we look to ourselves we see failure. The measure and pattern is ever spoiled in *me*. But we look to Christ and we see devotedness, purity, perfection. Oh what comfort and thorough joy, with the stamp of eternity on it, is there in thus seeing the eternal beauty of Christ—"And this life in his Son," 1 John v. 11.

My soul can look at the Son in all the perfect display in which He is in heaven, and then say, He is my life. And surely it is in the measure that we trust in Him and delight in Him, that we can see Him as this Life. True it is that He thus judges all that is inconsistent in *me*, but then, the consistent One is *mine*.

Being before the Tribunal in the life and glory of the Son, we shall learn and see with delight all God's ways of grace toward us.

May the Lord give us to be delivered from every reserve in our poor hearts as to the perfect power of life in Christ, (which is ours) to enable us to triumph

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over death, the world, and sin ; and to live, not unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again.

J. N. D.

THE burnt-offering is a great relief to the heart in all the din and dust of human strife. Christ in glory is necessarily the centre of everything to the heart. He was in the glory, and He came down to us—to bring us to a place that He knew, but which was quite unknown to us. Aaron only knew the Holiest as he went in. Moses knew more ; he knew it better, because he came out from it. Our blessed Lord is both. He knew what was within before He came out to bring us in ; and where He is, there we shall be also.



JOHN'S GOSPEL.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE few verses that speak to us of Gethsemane, shew us the Lord in His divine power, then giving Himself for His own, and then perfect in obedience as man. Nothing is said of what happened before Judas's arrival, but then when the Lord voluntarily avows that He is Jesus of Nazareth, the whole band falls to the earth overthrown by the divine power revealed in Him. He could go away, and escape from them ; but He was not come for that, and declaring again that He was the One whom they were seeking, He adds : "If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way ;" that the word, so precious to us also, might be fulfilled : "As to those whom thou hast given me, I have not lost one of them." He Himself stands in the breach, that His own may be sheltered from harm.

Peter draws his sword, strikes the servant of the high priest, and cuts

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off his ear. Jesus cures him, but in saying these words: "The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" This is perfect submission to His Father's word, although He shews at the same time that by one word from Him they can be made powerless, and He free.

In that which follows, we find, I think, that Jesus does not recognise much the high priest's authority. He does not explain His teaching to him, but refers him to those who had heard Him: Jesus had spoken in public, as far as His teaching was concerned. In the other gospels, we see that Jesus answered, when He was asked who He was. But here the high priest's authority disappears.

Peter's fall is related carefully, and then left. In the examination that the Lord had to undergo, Pilate receives a fuller answer from Him. We do not find again here the same reticence as before the high priest, and this is striking. With Caiaphas, He relies upon what he may have known by the

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crowd who had heard Him. With Pilate, He enters into conversation ; He recognises the governor's authority, but the Jews are set aside, put in the place of false accusers, and, when their hostility is proved, He explains to Pilate that, King though He be, His kingdom is not of this world, and never will be, even when He shall be established on earth. The heavens shall reign ; the world will acknowledge it. (Dan. iv. 26.)

Pilate would have liked to have left the case for the Jews ; he well saw that it was only envy and enmity without cause ; but the Jews must be instruments of Christ's being treated as an evil doer, and not even stoned as a blasphemer, as Stephen. In God's wonderful counsels, His Son must be put to death as a malefactor amongst the Gentiles—cast out of the vineyard. The guilty ones, the authors of this, were the Jews. (Vers. 29–32, 35.) What a terrible state of blindness was theirs ! They did not want to defile themselves in order to be able to eat

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the passover (ver. 28), at the very moment that they were giving up the true Paschal Lamb to be sacrificed. Scruples are not conscience. We must not break through scruples, if we have any, but conscience looks to God and to His word. Conscience did not prevent the Jews buying the blood of Christ for thirty pieces of silver ; but a scruple forbade them to put into God's treasury in the temple, the money rejected by Judas, because it was the price of blood. (Compare Rom. xiv.)

Pilate asks Jesus if He is the King of the Jews. The Lord explains that His kingdom is not of this world, otherwise He would have made good His rights as the world does. But in every sense, His kingdom, at this moment, was not being set up in this world as a worldly kingdom. Christ's presence as an accused man before Pilate was a proof of it. Jesus does not fail to confess openly that He is King, when Pilate asks it of Him. He will set up, later on, a power which nothing will be able to resist, but the

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time was not yet come. In truth, He was King, and He bears witness to the truth. According to the work of God at that moment, He was numbered amongst the transgressors. For Pilate, an infidel and a reasoner, what was truth? He was very guilty in giving way to the urgent demands of the Jews, but the Jews themselves were the instigators of the death of Jesus. They accomplished the counsels of God without knowing what they were doing, and Jesus was there in His perfect obedience. We have before us the truth, the King, the propitiatory Victim, accomplishing a far deeper and more important work than royalty; we see too the head of the Gentiles, representing the emperor, and then the furious hatred of the poor Jewish people against God manifested in grace, their Saviour. Everything bears its true character, God's counsels are fulfilled, and every actor in this scene takes his true place. But the actors, Jews and Gentiles, must disappear as judged, unless grace can save them;

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and the condemned malefactor, who disappears, humanly speaking, leaves the present scene in order to take His place as Lord of all, to sit upon the Father's throne.

Thus things go on even on a smaller scale, in this world. It is striking to see that these poor Jews use at the cross the same words that are put into the mouth of atheists and of God's enemies. (Compare Psalm xxii. and Matt. xxvii.) But wisdom is justified of her children.

Every one's position is clearly marked out. Pilate, a judge, convinced of the Lord's innocence, wished to get rid of the Jews' importunity, and avoid enmity without profit. The Jews rage against the Son of God come in grace into the world, and prefer a robber to Him. Jesus submits to everything: condemned on His own testimony, He must be cast out of the camp, and undergo that kind of death of which He had spoken, and the Gentiles must be guilty of it. But the acts of Pilate and of the Jews would shew still more

“OF HIM ARE YE IN CHRIST JESUS.” 135

clearly the spirit that animated them : Pilate without conscience, the Jews full of hatred. They wished at all cost, to put Jesus to death. This follows, as we shall see at the beginning of chapter xix.

“OF HIM ARE YE IN CHRIST
JESUS.”

WHEN the Lord Jesus Christ was a Man upon earth, He was surely a test for man,—for those among whom He walked down here in that wonderful path of light, and love, and blessing, every step of which told out what God was for man, and only brought with it as an answer, the hatred that was in the heart of fallen man for God. But He who was Son of God and Man of sorrows, went on unswervingly in that path, not only because there were poor lost sinners to be saved ; but because, first of all, there was the outraged glory of the God from whom and for whom He came, to be vindicated. Everything

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in which the first man who sinned and came short of that glory had failed, every responsibility taken up by him, only to shew how hopeless and helpless was his state, and how absolute the impossibility for him to meet the requirements of a holy God, must be made good, or that God would have been dishonoured without remedy in the world of His own creation, and by the creature of His own hands.

More than that, the man that had sinned must himself disappear from the scene, to make way for the second Man, who would for ever be the centre of a new creation, which neither sin nor death could stain or darken. But in order to be this, He must first pass through this scene where all is blighted by the failure of the first man ; pass through it for the glory of God ; and He could not be here without being a test to those among whom He was. Hence we find that in whatever company He found Himself, He made Himself the test. If men, in their ignorant speculation as to who He was,

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could only surmise that He must be either John the Baptist risen from the dead, or Elias, or Jeremias, or one of the prophets, He turns to His own with the searching question, “But whom say ye that I am?” To the poor sinner at Sychar’s well, it is Himself revealed to her. To the outcast whose eyes He had opened, He is the Son of God. At the grave of Lazarus it is what He is in His own blessed Person as “the resurrection and the life.” It is always in *Himself*. If it is a question of eternal life, He must be the object of faith. If He is lifted up from the earth, He will draw all unto Him. And then the path on earth comes to its close, but even in its closing scene there *must* come out what He was for God ; and the two simple words “I thirst ” are the fitting close to a life of devotedness that could not be ended till the word of His God was vindicated to the very letter. And in the death that came to Him when all was finished, and when He, whose life none could take away, yielded up His spirit to God,

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the life and history that belonged to us as associated with the man of sin and death is closed, closed for ever by the God who has written "finis" to a volume, every page of which was dark indeed, save those illuminated by the blessed path of Him who was the corn of wheat that would not abide alone.

Then there opens out to us another volume, beginning with the resurrection-life of the Man who had been obedient unto death for the glory of God.

And, blessed be His name, that volume can never come to an end. Its title page may be found in the wonderful message given to one in whom and for whom, He had broken the power of Satan, and who had a heart devoted to Him who had done it: "Go, and tell my brethren, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, my God and your God." And where do we see Him next? The Son of man in the glory of God; and *everything* there for us, and filling *everything* there for God. He is *the* Man, the one Man, now before God. God "looks upon the face of his anointed."

“OF HIM ARE YE IN CHRIST JESUS.” 139

And every blessing we have is in Him. Is not He our life, our peace, our righteousness? Was He not raised for our justification? Is it not by Him we are reconciled? Are we not accepted [taken into favour if you will] *in* the Beloved? Is not His love ours? Is not His glory to be ours (John xvii. 22, 23)? to be known and enjoyed in bodies of glory like His own? Where can we stop (not speaking of course of His own intrinsic glory as “God over all blessed for ever”) when we begin at that glorified Man, the Accomplisher of the purposes, the delight of the heart of God? And yet He ever stands supreme: “Object supreme of all, by all adored.” If we are His brethren, He is the Firstborn among us. And just as we are able, through grace, to see Him where He is, and measure all by Him, we can well afford to lose sight of these poor worthless selves, gone for ever before God in His death, buried in His grave; and to give up our poor thoughts of what *we* are before God, because *Christ* is everything.

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Again I ask, "Have we anything apart from 'the person of the Christ'?" If we had, or could have, would it not tend to make something less of Him, and to detract from the glory due to Him who finished for God and for us, that glorious work given Him to do? And surely in this day of man's doctrines, and creeds, and theology, the test and the remedy for all is the Person of Christ in glory; the one blessed reality that is a necessity for our peace, our deliverance, our joy, our hope, our strength, in a path of difficulty, and distress, and perplexity, down here. It was "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," that enabled Paul to overcome all that was against him in the wilderness-path, and to bear about in the body "the dying of Jesus." It is the light of that same knowledge of that same blessed Person that will carry us through all, and keep us humble indeed, while it enables us to test every theory and doctrine by Himself, the only true test now as He

“OF HIM ARE YE IN CHRIST JESUS.” 141

ever was, and to refuse all that will not bear that test. Yes, beloved brethren, bring *all* to that test, doctrine and walk, and we may have to refuse a great deal as to both; but we shall “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Can anything be more blessed than that, till we are with Him and like Him for ever. And does the exaltation of His glorious Person detract from His glorious work? Surely, the very contrary, for He is where He is because of what He has done—done for the glory of God and for our blessing. It is to His “precious blood” (as the Holy Ghost has written) that we owe all we are or have in Him. And is not all summed up in those words at the head of this paper, “Of him [God] are ye in Christ Jesus?” Can *anything* be better calculated than these words of our God for us, words which tell of the place we have before Him in His own beloved Son, to draw our hearts out in adoring praise and true devotedness, to the Christ to whom we owe it all.

P. G.

“BROUGHT TO GOD.”

NOTHING is so helpful and establishing to the true child of God, as to see God's righteousness maintained, and yet fully *satisfied* with regard to the terrible question of his sins. It is not enough for him to know that his sins have been *forgiven*, that the long catalogue of his guilt has been cancelled for ever, or that his purged conscience retains no stain of sin to make it miserable and unhappy.

We know that the work of Christ effected these blessed results. But it did *more—infininitely more*. “Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” Jesus Christ “presented himself” to God, “a sacrifice for sin, the just for the unjust, *to bring us to God.*” Yes. In that awful moment when Christ suffered the full penalty of the death and judgment due to *me*, God's justice and holiness were *fully* vindicated—all His righteous and holy demands *fully* acknowledged, and duly satisfied.

“ BROUGHT TO GOD.” 143

“ Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” Christ’s precious blood *must* flow as the atonement for our guilt. And blessed be His name, He did not shrink from the task He had undertaken. Over His holy soul passed all the waves and billows of God’s wrath. No marvel that earth and sky were shrouded in darkness as the awful question of sin was once and for ever settled in the sight of a just and holy God. From the lips of the dying Saviour fell those words of blessedness and peace—“ *It is finished.*” Peace, pardon, forgiveness of sins, could be offered now, “ without money, and without price,” to all those who should believe on His precious name.

But wonderful and blessed as all this was, it was not *enough* to satisfy the *heart* of God. He would have sinners *brought to Himself*. Now that He had been fully satisfied with regard to sin, His heart *must* come out in all the fulness of divine love. The beloved and sorrowing disciples, in their ignorance and unbelief, thought that all was over,

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Timid but devout hands, placed the precious body of the Lord Jesus Christ in its sacred resting-place.* But they had not grasped the great and wondrous fact that all God's holy and just requirements with regard to man's sin had been divinely *satisfied*. So God Himself must manifest *His* divine appreciation of the sacrifice which He had accepted. Hence we read, that "*God* raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heaven *far above* all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named." No honour too great to heap upon His well-beloved Son—He who had carried out the Father's will, and wrought out our "eternal redemption." And hence, added to the blessed message of peace, pardon, and forgiveness, through the death and resurrection of a crucified Saviour, we can listen in wonder and adoration to the voice of a *Father's* love. From the heavens, God

* "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel," they said in their unbelief,

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Himself speaks to us to-day—even to each one who has simply “believed” the “record” concerning His Son. Yes. To *us*, once so “*far off* by wicked works,” yet now *brought nigh* by the precious blood of Christ, He says that we are “*accepted in the Beloved.*” Wonderful thought! As the result of all that Christ wrought for me, I stand “*accepted*” in Him. And God would have me *near* Himself in all the happy consciousness of His divine favour. He would have me *know* and *enjoy* this as I tread the daily path which He has appointed. No blessing too great for the church for which Christ died—nothing too great for those for whom His beloved Son suffered. Even as God the Father’s smile rests for ever on the Son of His love, so would He have it resting upon “His own” those who now put their trust in Him. Yes. “He [Christ] suffered, the just for the unjust, to *bring us to God.*” He would have us *know* the *Father*, and *rejoice* in His love and favour. Dearly beloved, have we in any feeble measure grasped

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the boundless blessings that lie hidden for each of us in those wonderful words, "*accepted in the beloved*" ? Truly they have spoken peace, pardon, and forgiveness to our conscience-stricken hearts. But above all this, do they not speak of the blessed certainty that God *delights* to have His children in His presence, daily and hourly rejoicing in the fulness of His love ? *There* He would have them to remain, in the constant and *abiding* sense of having been "*brought to God.*"

"It passeth praises ! that dear love of Thine,
My Jesus ! Saviour ! yet this heart of mine
Would sing a love so rich, so full, so free,
Which brought an undone sinner, such as me,
Right home to God."

M. V. B.

 THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

TRUTH AND ITS EFFECTS.

EVERY truth has its own proper effect. Our blessed Lord was "the truth." The fruit of it was fully seen in Him. As we receive the truth we are

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sanctified ; we are set free from what we are naturally, and introduced into an entirely new order of being. It is therefore very interesting to note the separate and distinct effects produced, according to the measure or the nature of the truth apprehended in faith. Each truth has its own effect ; and no truth would produce the effect of another truth. There is no confusion. If the desired effect is not possessed, the truth that would produce it, is not in faith apprehended.

It is very evident that the truth of the death and resurrection of Christ laid hold of by faith could alone produce peace. But then, consequent on justification, I have to reach deliverance ; that is, that I am free in the life of Christ from the law of sin and death ; not only cleared from all guilt, but alive in the One who cleared me ; because He not only died for my sins, but God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh. I do not reach to the proper effect of justification

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until I have deliverance, and any one can notice that if justification be known, and yet deliverance—the practical experience that I am free from the law of sin and death—be not reached, the believer, in so far as he is conscientious, is occupied with his own state ; and he does not come up to the proper effect of justification.

The proper effect of one dead to sin and alive to God in Jesus Christ is the absolute surrender of the body to the Lord. It may be objected that many are very clear about the efficacy of the work of Christ, who do not present their bodies a living sacrifice. True, but if the proper effect of the truth has not been produced, it is plain that it is not the truth that is at fault, but the way it has been received. It is impossible that one should be clear from all sins by the blood of Christ, and free from the law of sin and death in the life of Him in whose death God condemned sin in the flesh, and not feel that truly the only reasonable service is, that the body should be a living

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sacrifice to the Lord. The effect of a truth always defines the measure of it that one has apprehended in faith. One might scan the whole range of revealed truth, but the exact measure of it that has been received in faith, will be defined by the effect that it has produced.

Hence, when there is any limitation of the grace that justifies, and sets us up free in the life of Him through whom we are justified, there must necessarily be always a corresponding lack in self-surrender to the Lord. We too often expect to find souls clear as to a truth, though in practice we see that they are far from it; and we are often too much occupied with their acceptance of the truth verbally, instead of judging by its effect on them, how far the acceptance is in faith. It is quite true that if there is defect in the knowledge of a truth, there must be a defect in its effect; though it is better, and conduces more to prosperity, when the effect of truth is in a *measure* beyond one's knowledge of it.

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If the truth of Romans produces such a very marked and blessed effect ; that is, if the knowledge of justification and deliverance produces the effect of my body being presented to the Lord a living sacrifice, let us now see what would be the effect produced by learning our approach to God as set forth in Hebrews, where we have the right of entrance into the Holiest, (the brightest spot with God) through the blood of Christ. In Romans I am clear of all sins, and in the life of Him in whom sin was condemned in the flesh. There can be no deliverance if this latter be not known ; but in Hebrews I can, through the blood, approach God ; my heart sprinkled from an evil conscience and my body washed with pure water. The two parts of Roman truth are thus assured. The effect of this nearness is, that I am running on to heaven in the power of faith ; while here on earth, and *visibly*, as in chapter xiii., we express the characteristics of God's people on the earth, from "brotherly love" up to "obey them that lead you ;"—the

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proper expression of Christians on the earth, and the effect of the truth that they have approach to God, in the Holiest, unseen by man; where the Lord Jesus is the great Antitype of the ark of the covenant which was all that ever was in that place. His blood entitles us to be there; and He is there Himself, the concentration of the glory of God, "crowned with glory and honour." He is there as the burnt-offering—glorified. Thus there is now the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

In Colossians we find a remarkable confirmation of how a particular truth has its own and peculiar effect. The Colossians were simple and earnest, noted for their "faith in Christ, and love to all the saints," but they were in danger of being carried away by religiousness. Now the truth which would preserve them from this was the mystery of God, even that the church is the body of Christ, and that from the Head everything flows, "from

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whom all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and united together, increases with the increase of God." There is no one when clear as to Romans, dead to sin and alive to God, who does not incline in some degree to religiousness, and devotionism, unless he apprehends the mystery; then he values nothing but Christ who is his life. "Christ everything and in all." He is not only dead to sin but dead to the world.

Again, surely we can easily admit that no one is heavenly in power and practice who does not enjoy in spirit that he is heavenly. Many desire to be apart from the ways and influences here, but no one can come forth in the tastes and power of a heavenly man here, who has not the truth first, that through grace his place is in heaven, and in spirit he has crossed the Jordan, and is in association with Christ where He is, a member of His body, in the sense and possession of the power which led him up there; so that he can come forth here to act in all the

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marvellous practice detailed in Ephesians iv., v., vi. Many try to be unearthly and unworldly, but nothing will produce the true type of a heavenly man in practice, but the truth that we are heavenly ; that our citizenship is there. And assuredly if the Holy Ghost has not led us there, as Stephen was led up there, we cannot have Christ's power here, to act for Him and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. We cannot have the works if we have not the faith ; and it is by our works that we shew our faith.

I may add, that when the Lord's supper is apprehended in faith there is a manifest effect. How could I really call to mind the death of Christ for me in the place where it occurred, without being in heart dissociated from that place ? How could the scene where He died, when His death was vividly, according to my faith, before my eyes, be the scene of self-gratification or distinction for me ? Must I not, as I enter into what He endured for me, long to be apart from all that in myself

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and around, for which He died? The more my heart is drawn to Him, because of His great love for me, the more do I shrink from all of man and seek to walk in His ways and for His glory.

One example more. Could any one in faith hold that the Lord is in the midst where two or three are gathered together to His name, and not have a very sensible effect from this truth, an effect that no other truth could produce? No one can define or imitate the influence of the presence of a loved one; how much more when that Person is the greatest and the dearest to us! The effect of His presence cannot be defined, but one is very conscious of it, and according to the measure of faith, He sways and controls every act and sentiment. Could I truly believe that the Lord was present, and not be controlled and influenced by Him, in conscious happy subjection to His will, and yet in gladness of heart, that while the One most loved is so near me, His light which cheers my heart, so keeps

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my flesh in check, that I am enabled to wait on Him, without distraction?

I need hardly give more instances, because, once a principle is apprehended the verity of it will continually be corroborated. If one has the truth of the kingdom of heaven in his heart, he regards everything on this earth as it is in the mind of God according to the effect of His word. His word becomes his rule for everything. Thus his faith in the kingdom is proved, and all that concerns the Lord here on earth, and in that relation is before him. The word of God is the sovereign authority to him for everything. The maxims and wisdom of man are refused ; he is here a pilgrim and stranger, in a land from which the King, his Lord, has been rejected ; and he will not in anything be swayed by principles in vogue here, even though the abrogation, as it surely will, should expose him to suffering. So also, if I hold in faith the truth of the Lord's coming, I am becoming more and more separate from everything here ; going forth to meet the Bridegroom.

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May each of our hearts be exercised, not only in ascertaining whether we hold this or that truth, but whether we so hold it that its effect is demonstrated by us—as “doers of the word.” May the truth in all its parts be more and more endeared to our hearts, rejoicing that as we hear His voice, some new and distinct effect is produced; for surely He has His own way of forming us into likeness to Himself. Amen.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.

THE effect of the blood on the day of atonement, was to set God at liberty to receive the high priest and his house in the Holiest, and that from there Moses and Aaron should come forth and bless Israel. Hence when Christ, both sin-offering and burnt-offering, gave up the ghost the veil was rent from *within*. God could come out and receive the prodigal to the brightest spot because Jesus had gone in with His own blood. Hence the standing of Christians is *within* the veil. Besides, through

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the value of Christ's blood ("the Lord's lot") God, as represented by Moses and Aaron, can come forth and bless the people *outside*, as Melchisedec will do in a future day. They were never placed inside the veil. The grace is the same, and the blood is the same as to value, but the standing of Christians or Aaron's house, and that of Israel is not the same.

Remember, too, that when Christ was the sin-offering, He was at the *same time* the burnt-offering; hence the mercy-seat, and the glory resting on it as God's throne, were fulfilled by "Jesus crowned with glory and honour." And ever since, the *one* object there on which the glory concentrates is Christ. Within the veil was the ark of the covenant, the cherubim overshadowing the mercy-seat and NOTHING ELSE. This was the throne of God, the type also of Christ in whom God is revealed, the true ark of the covenant with the mercy-seat over it"—and His house is set there with Him.

FRAGMENT.

“THE gold is divine righteousness, as in the nature of God. According to this, Christ, having glorified God in all that He is, is received within as man, and sits at God’s right hand; we, partakers of the divine nature, being of God in Christ Jesus, created after God in righteousness and true holiness, and renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created us, united to Him whom God has set on high, have our place at God’s right hand—(not personally, of course, that could not be but in Him)—in that heavenly place according to the delight of God’s nature, for that is in Christ. It is fellowship with this, or restoration to it, which is the character of our approach to God, as simply enjoying it in the new nature; it is not in contrast with evil; it is not forgiveness of what is past, save as that is in its place. I have, for faith—and shall have in fact—entirely done with the nature which

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sinned, and the whole state of existence in which flesh moved. I exist only in the new creation. Hence the apostle says he did not even know Christ after the flesh any more. It is the joy of the new man in the presence and blessedness and glory of God."

J. N. D.

 COMING !

THOU art coming, Lord and Master !

Yes, at last.

Storm and shipwreck and disaster,

Wave and blast,

Seas of anger—

Babel's clangor

Shall be past.

Thou art coming, blessèd Saviour !

Matchless love,

Measured not by our behaviour,

Strong will prove,

Till Thou gather

To our Father,

Us above.

Thou art coming, Strong Deliverer !

Changeless Friend !

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All who trust Thy love are ever
By Thy hand—
Held securely,
Shelter'd surely
To the end.

Thou art coming, Star of Morning,
For Thy Bride ;
Faithful ! from afar returning,
True and tried :
Who to save her,
And to have her,
Bled and died.

Thou art coming, Shepherd ! Ever
Good and Great.
None from Thee Thy sheep can sever,
But 'tis late !
And all shatter'd,
Torn and scatter'd
Still we wait.

Thou art coming, Mighty Jesus !
Then shall be
Death's hold plunder'd to release us,
Jubilee !
In the power
Of that hour—
Victory !

J. B.



JOHN'S GOSPEL.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN reality the judgment against the Lord had been pronounced. He had been given up to the outrages of the Roman soldiers. The details of this part of the story are to be found in Matthew xxvii. 24-31. The Jews, notwithstanding Pilate's timid resistance, had chosen Barabbas the robber and rejected the Son of God, and Pilate giving way to their urgent requests, had entirely given up his position as judge to please a turbulent people.

But Pilate was uneasy. The majesty of Jesus' ways gave to the accused a superiority over the judge. There was something supernatural in Christ that frightened Pilate; and we know too that he had received warnings that God had sent to him in such a way that a Gentile could receive them. (Matt. xxvii. 19.) But these relationships of the Jews (not with Christ,

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that is found more clearly and in a more terrible manner in Matthew) with the Gentiles, and those of the Gentiles with God, must be manifested with more evidence. Pilate brings Jesus back, and He is presented to us hated and rejected of the Jews, and condemned only by Pilate upon the words well known to all : "*Ecce Homo.*"

God presents Him to us in this way. Thus was the Son of God in this world. The world did not know Him, although it had seen Him, and His own received Him not. He was despised and rejected of men.

Pilate, uneasy from a mixture of fear and a bad conscience, and at the same time full of a feverish anxiety to maintain His authority, and to throw upon the Jews the guilt of the condemnation of Jesus, presents Him again to them, saying that he finds no fault in Him. This excites the Jews to cry loudly for His crucifixion. Pilate wishes them to do it, as he finds no fault in Jesus. Then the Jews, to whom the Romans had left their own laws (except the

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right of putting to death), insist that Jesus deserved death for making Himself Son of God : this increases Pilate's uneasiness.

He comes again into the judgment-hall and asks Jesus whence He was. Where was now the judge ? Jesus does not answer, as Pilate had publicly recognised that Jesus was not guilty. Pilate was not to be taught ; indeed he did not seek instruction ; he only appealed to his authority and power over Jesus, during His silence. Jesus then declares to Pilate that he would have no authority over Him if it had not been given to him from above ; for the Saviour's crucifixion was in the counsels of God, and Jesus was now giving Himself for their accomplishment, but that only augmented the sin of Judas, who, witness of the divine power of Jesus, had betrayed Him, as though there were no counsels of God.

From that time forth, Pilate seeks to deliver Jesus ; but to avoid a tumult amongst the Jews who reproach him with being unfaithful to Cæsar, since

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Jesus called Himself King, he resists no longer, but irritated, he insults the Jews whom he despised, and thinking neither of the truth nor of Jesus says: "Shall I crucify your King?" Thus he hides his uneasiness, his vexation, his weakness, and want of conscience. This opens the way for the public apostasy of the Jews, who declare, "We have no king but Cæsar!" God's counsels are being fulfilled; Pilate's hands are stained with the blood of the Son of God; the Gentiles who possessed power, are guilty of His death; the Jews abandon all the privileges that God had given to them, and Jesus with His innocence judicially recognised, occupies alone the place of truth and faithfulness, and gives Himself up (for He might have escaped as in the garden, or indeed at any moment) to fulfil the counsels of grace. The Gentiles are compromised without resource, the Jews lost for ever upon the ground of their own responsibility, and that not only as to the law, but as having renounced all right to the enjoyment of

JOHN'S GOSPEL.

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the promises ; and if God fulfils them later on for His own glory, they will be obliged to receive this blessing in the same way as poor lost sinners of the Gentiles. Jesus, condemned purely and simply for the witness that He bore to the truth, as had also been the case before the high priest, alone stands in His dignity and integrity in the midst of a world that lost itself in resisting Him ; that is, in resisting grace and truth come from God by Him who was in His bosom.

Here, Jesus recognises no authority in the Jews—they were adversaries—nor in the head of the Gentiles, except for the accomplishment of God's counsels. He explains first the state of things to Pilate, but denies his power, as far as that goes. To find His condemnation by the Jews, we must go to the other evangelists, as Matthew xxvi. 63-66, where we find Him condemned for the witness He had borne that He was the Son of God ; and Luke xxii. where the Jews take upon themselves the terrible burden of His blood.

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Here, in John's Gospel, it is only the adversaries that Jesus does not recognise. Jews and Gentiles both disappear in the dark shades of hatred, and of an injustice proceeding from a weak character and want of conscience, and Jesus is there alone, having borne witness to the truth, and accepting the consequences from God, in order to accomplish the unspeakable work of divine love for both Jew and Gentile. Oh ! may we know better to meditate and realise these things !

In the history of the crucifixion of Jesus, as we have seen too in Gethsemane, there are no sufferings related. If Christ is set between two malefactors, it is to throw contempt on the poor Jews. But if Pilate had given way without conscience to their violence, he cared nothing for the honour of their nation, and so he maintains, in an insolent manner, what he has written. God willed that this testimony should be borne to the state of the Jews and to the glory of His Son, rejected of the people, but King of the Jews. Pro-

JOHN'S GOSPEL.

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phesy concerning them is fulfilled even in the smallest details.

After that, we find One who fulfilled His blessed career ; that is, the Son of God. During His service down here, He did not recognise His mother. In truth, human relationships were not in question ; He was the Bearer of the divine word in this world, the expression of this word in His Person, and nothing else ; He was separated from everything for this. Now that His divine service is ended, He recognises the relationship with His mother, not as a bond with the Jews (this was all over) but as a human affection. He gives her into John's keeping, for John was the disciple He loved. It was no lack of natural affection, but rather His faithfulness that had always repulsed Mary, whether in His position outside the Jews (Matt. xii. 46), or in absolute devotedness. Now that His service is ended, His affection is free, and He shews it.

Then, the last little circumstance which was to be fulfilled in His death,

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according to the scriptures, having been accomplished, He gives up the ghost Himself, in perfect peace, declaring that all was finished. No one takes His life from Him ; He Himself gives it up. It is a divine act :—after having suffered everything in His soul by the forsaking of God, He testifies with perfect calmness that all is finished ; He Himself separates His soul from His body, and gives it up to God, His Father. This was a divine action that He had the power to accomplish. In Luke's Gospel, we have the human side of man's faith : "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." Here it is the divine side, where He lays down His human life.

The Jews, full of zeal for ordinances, although they neglected the mercy, righteousness, and love of God, desire that the bodies may not remain upon the cross on the sabbath, and a centurion is sent to kill the crucified ones. He breaks the legs of the two malefactors ; but Jesus was dead already ; not one of His bones must be broken ; but in

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order to be quite sure that he was not mistaken, and (although he understood nothing of it) that the world had got rid of the Son of God, he pierces His side with a lance. This is the last outrage the world committed upon Jesus, to make sure that it had done with the Son of God. The answer of grace was the blood and water that purify and save. God and man met ; the insolence and indifference of hatred, and sovereign grace that rises above all man's sin. Wonderful scene, wonderful testimony ! There where sin abounded, grace has more abounded. The thrust of the soldier's lance occasioned the divine testimony of salvation and life.

Notice also the opportunity of this circumstance. If Jesus' side had been pierced before His death, and that He had been killed, He would not Himself have given up His spirit. If they had pierced Him without putting Him to death, to shed His blood in this way would not have had the value of His death. But He gives His life Himself ; He died, and when His side was pierced,

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all the value of His death, in its two-fold aspect of purification and expiation, was manifested; that is, when the water and the blood came forth. (See 1 John v.)

How little the outside of what goes on in the world corresponds with the reality! Religious scruples and brutality hasten to take away the lives of the thieves: they did not think that thus they were sending the poor believer straight to paradise! The scriptures were being accomplished in every thing. Not one of Jesus' bones was broken, but His side had been pierced, and now God brings forward the rich man with whom Jesus was to be found in His death. Joseph of Arimathæa obtained the Saviour's body from Pilate, and he and Nicodemus placed it with aromatic drugs in a new sepulchre that had never been used for a burial. The sabbath was just going to begin (at six o'clock in the evening), and they placed the body there so as to arrange everything properly when the sabbath should be passed. What a

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solemn moment when the earth received the dead body of the Son of God, and the world saw Him no more down here!

Remark here, in passing, how iniquity carried on to the full, brings the feeble ones to shew themselves faithful. These two men who believed in Jesus, but whose position and riches hindered them from shewing themselves openly, or only allowed one of them to shew himself timidly and indirectly—now that all are afraid, except a few women—shew themselves boldly. This evil in the midst of the Jews had become intolerable to them, and their position was useful to them in their devotedness. God's patient grace and also His providence brought the rich at this moment to serve Him thus.

JESUS CHRIST THE SAME *TO-DAY.*

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day,
and for ever.”

THERE are many of God's beloved children who know little—compara-

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tively nothing—of their portion in Jesus Christ for *to-day*.

In the blessed Lord Jesus they have found forgiveness of their sins. They have received the message of His love towards them. They have owned a crucified Jesus—the Saviour who put away their guilt “by the sacrifice of Himself.” They know that the one, perfect, atoning, sacrifice of Christ *has* put away sin, and that “life and immortality are brought to light” by the gospel of the grace of God. In the sure and certain knowledge of peace with God, the purged conscience rests, while a song of praise flows forth for the wondrous redemption wrought out for them. As “children of God by faith in Christ Jesus ;” with adoring hearts they thank God for a settled *yesterday*.

Then, from that wondrous scene at Calvary, they can by faith look forward to a glorious future, which the perfect work of the holy, spotless Victim, the God-man, Christ Jesus *has* secured for them—the “inheritance incor-

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ruptible and undefiled, laid up in heaven" for them—"the city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God." Should they have to pass through death, with joyful triumph they can say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me." Neither time nor place can cast a shadow on the brightness of their "to-morrow." In sweet anticipation they joyfully sing:—

"We expect a bright to-morrow,
All will be well!"

Yes, they have learnt that the Jesus of the cross is the Lord of the glory. "Jesus Christ the same *yesterday*, and *for ever*."

But let each of us ask ourselves, How much do we know and enter into our blessed portion of "Jesus Christ, the same *to-day*"? Between the cross and the glory lie the sands of the desert—the wilderness through which we pass to "the rest that remaineth for the people of God." Around us we cannot fail to

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see the combined forces of evil. The enemy of our souls would fain worry, perplex, and distract us. And perhaps in no form are we so little prepared for his subtle workings as when they meet us in the wear and tear of our daily life. It is in the *to-day* of our history that Satan would rob us of that blessed portion which is ours fully to enjoy—even the consciousness of the constant, never-changing interest and sympathy of Christ with us *on the way*. Yet this is exactly what the Lord Himself seeks to make known to His own. There is not a trouble or a care which crosses our pathway but which He has destined for our blessing. But occupied with the danger or difficulty of the hour, do we not often miss the blessing, and grow disheartened and dismayed with the perils of the way! Our hearts are not slow to answer that such is too often the case, and that the cause of this is nothing less than our lack of knowing more of “Jesus Christ the same *to-day*,” in His ever-present sympathy. Shall not our hearts yearn

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then to know Him better, and shall we not at once give Him the place He longs for in the "to-day" of our history? What are obstacles and hindrances with Him? Let the Lord's own words reply: He says, "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." And, again, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end." Lovingly and tenderly He watches us from on high, delighting to make known to us His all-sufficiency for every hour of need;—His sustaining grace for every exercise through which we are called to pass. Let us avail ourselves of this rich provision for our daily need—the treasures made ours through faith in Christ Jesus. God's wondrous dealings with us in the *past*, and His assured blessings in the *future*, will but become more truly marvellous in our eyes, as we learn, in the power of the Holy Ghost, the efficacy and fulness of our present portion in "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, TO-DAY, and for ever."

M. V. B.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

WHY ARE THERE STRIFES ?

DIFFERENCES amongst Christians exist to such a lamentable extent, that every true-hearted one would gladly hail any attempt to account for their existence. It is plain that, if all were walking in the Spirit, we should be perfectly joined together, in the same mind, and in the same judgment. It is not necessary for agreement about any given thing that each should look at the same side of it. For example, one might dwell on the beauty of a bird's feathers, another on its song, another on its power of flight, while another might confine his attention to its usefulness ; but each, in a varied way, is occupied with the one object, and co-operating to a common end. Each star in the sky has its own distinct light and mission, and yet there is no clashing with one another—all work together for a common object. Christ and the church might engage many,

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and though there would be a variety of apprehensions, there would not necessarily be strife, if the one object were common to them all. Each of the apostles wrote on subjects diverse from the others, and yet they were in perfect concord.

If, then, a common object ensures a common interest, how is it that there is not concord between Christians who have Christ and the church as their object? If they have one common interest, we might conclude that there would be no discord. But we do not find it so. Many have Christ as the one common interest who are not agreed, but who, on the contrary, disagree much as to the way and mode in which this interest is to be expressed. This was the case with Martha and Mary. They had one common interest; but one sought to please the Lord according to her natural mind, while the other waited on Him for the unfolding of His own mind; and this was really the "good part" which should not be taken away. Hence, it is evident that

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there is something more required than a common object of interest, even though it is the greatest. There cannot be a common interest without a common object; but when, as in the Christian, there are really two powers in deadly opposition to each other, it is necessary for agreement that each should co-operate in the same power; that is, in the Spirit, and not in the flesh. The real cause of the disagreement between the two sisters, was, that one was occupied with the Lord in man's way, and the other was learning from the Lord His way.

Now this is the great cause of all the differences amongst us. There is far more real love to Christ amongst Christians than is generally allowed by one denomination to another: but the strife is often bitterest where there is most zeal. When the flesh is countenanced, and its means adopted, there must be direct collision with every one walking in the Spirit of God, for the more the aim of each is the Lord, the more openly must the contrariety in

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their modes of action appear ; and thus they are manifestly distanced. The purpose is right in a multitude of cases, but the way the purpose is carried out, discloses whether one is carnal or spiritual. The Spirit lusteth against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit, and these are contrary the one to the other. There must be strife, when flesh and Spirit come in contact. All the mistakes of the disciples, while personally attached to the Lord, arose from this. He was their object, but they, regarding Him with their natural mind, misapprehended everything. Thus Peter proposes to build three tabernacles on the mount of transfiguration, and at another time rebukes the Lord for speaking of His death, which drew from Him the severe censure, "Get thee behind me, Satan ; thou art an offence unto me : for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

Now in this lies the root of our strife in general ; that is, man's feeling or judgment sways, and not the Spirit of God.

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Every one, walking conscientiously, can see how easily he can slip into his own judgment or feeling with regard to the Lord, and thus be at the very antipodes of the spiritual mind with reference to the matter in hand ; and, as a rule, the natural counsel has many more approvers than the spiritual, because it addresses the natural mind, which, in its judgment, always makes man prominent ; and hence, every natural mind in the audience is in sympathy with it. “The natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God ;” on the other hand, the Spirit of God considers absolutely for God. The collision, in every case, is really between God and man. Is it for man you are considering, or for God ? From what arose all the distress and exercise of heart to the psalmist, in *Psalm lxxiii.*, but that he had made himself paramount in his review of all that was passing around him, for when he was in the sanctuary, where God was paramount, everything appeared quite differently ? The greatest

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contrariety existed between the psalmist, when he was outside the sanctuary, and when he was inside. There was not one single point of agreement between the two.

Let us learn from Isaac how a natural thing can influence us. He did eat of his son's venison, and hence he determined to bless him, entirely forgetting the word of the Lord—"the elder shall serve the younger." But he was delivered. It is a terrible moment when we have to cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light. "And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? Where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? Yea, and he shall be blessed."

If we are not walking in the Spirit, it is as natural to us as is the air we breathe to give self a prominence, even in the things of God. A thorn in the flesh was inflicted on Paul, lest he should be exalted above measure, because of revelations which were given

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him, where there was no recognition of him as a man in the flesh. Hence we find almost every servant of God makes mistakes when he is off his guard ; as Moses, speaking unadvisedly with his lips, or Paul, denouncing the high priest. Self is ready to be uppermost, and when it is, it is in collision with the Spirit of God.

Constantly we find in scripture, when two or more of the people of God are engaged in any service, that the man of faith, the man resting on God, is hindered in his service, and strife ensues, because his companion, or companions, seek to serve according to their own thoughts. Thus the greatest strife may ensue between the closest friends. Abraham suffered most from Lot. Lot followed his natural tastes, and, doubtless, at the time, encouraged himself with the feeling that he was more prosperous than Abraham. See the unhappy collision of Aaron and Miriam with Moses ; the two former seemed, to all natural sense, contending for what was right and proper ; but, alas !

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envy was at the bottom of it, and it was really with the intent of exalting themselves that they cast this reproach on their own brother, and God's most honoured servant. David was sore distressed by the sons of Zeruiah. In like manner there is strife between Paul and Barnabas, two men who had long worked together in the Lord's service, in the most blessed way. And why? Because Barnabas considered for his kinsman, and Paul for the Lord only. Barnabas evidently did not think that the Jewish tendencies of Mark were of so grave a nature that he was thereby disqualified from being a companion with him in the Lord's service; while Paul, who considered simply for the Lord and the good of His people, distinctly refused to accept his company or co-operation; and it seems, from the reference made to him in Colossians iv., that there had been orders about him, which were not to be enforced at the time the apostle wrote.

Surely, the more we investigate, the better we shall see that the cause of

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strife generally between any two Christians is, that one has allowed human consideration of some kind to sway him, while the other, with a more single eye, considers for the Lord only. I do not deny that a great deal of mixed motives intrudes, and the best of purposes may be grievously damaged by the allowance of human interference. Thus the bringing up of the ark, in David's time, was interrupted, and almost defeated, by the well-intentioned interference of Uzzah.

There would be no cause of strife, if we all were so simply devoted to the Lord, that our bodies were a living sacrifice, not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewal of our minds, that we may be able to prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God. The more positively abstracted we are from all here, and all that influences us here, and in association with the Lord, the more we are qualified, like Moses coming from the mount, to judge of what is going on here, and to judge of

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it as God judges of it; and as then Moses was at issue with Aaron, so it is now. The more any one is imbued with God's things at the moment, the more is he at issue with his closest companion in the Lord, who is literally in the midst of the things here, and thus more or less affected by them.

In any controversy, we can almost judge of the power which influences us, by the first sayings. The tongue betrays the heart. The utterance discloses the real state of it. When it is man that is most before the mind, the tongue expresses it; when it is the Lord, the language is unmistakable. There is, in the opening of the mouth, an indication of what is to follow. As it is said of the wise woman, "she openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness."

But this is not all. There is a great practical distinction between divine wisdom and the wisdom of this world. Divine wisdom always ministers to the soul first, and then insists on separation; as it is written, "Forsake the

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foolish, and live ; and go in the way of understanding ;" while the wisdom of man panders to man's tastes, and leads captive by giving expectations, where there is nothing real and true.

May we walk so continually in the Spirit, that we may be ready for every emergency, remembering this, that if we are not habitually walking in the Spirit, when a special need for help comes, He will, as it were, stand aside, to make us feel how feeble we are without Him, and how we become the occasion of strife, instead of union. The Lord help us to be faithful in that which is least, that we may be faithful also in much.

WHAT IS WISDOM ?

WE read that "wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding." There is no wisdom apart from Christ, He is the wisdom of God. When He is the controlling object, every effect is wise. "If therefore thine eye be single thy whole

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body shall be full of light." As the star guided the Magi, so are we guided by the One who absolutely controls us; we do not move without Him, and we are sure to find the wise way. The way of wisdom is pleasantness and peace. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after; to behold the beauty of the Lord."

Thus Mary Magdalene was led into wisdom. She was in great distress and there appeared no way out of it, but she persisted in the one thing; she wanted her Lord, and could not do without Him. "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." She loved intensely, and she proved: "I love them that love me and they that seek me early shall find me." She does not allow angels nor apostles to divert her from her one object. She proved that wisdom will bring thee to honour when thou dost embrace her.

Thus Mary of Bethany sat at His feet and heard His word; He was her object. Martha loved Him, but she was

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occupied with her service towards Him, and thus lost the good part which shall not be taken away. When we find the Lord, we find our Solomon, we see His wisdom—heavenly things ; His things are revealed to us as we are in testimony. We are in the circle of all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, we are coloured and formed in this association to see clearly what suits Him. It is true wisdom when I can see the course for Him in a scene of darkness, pretension, and the form of godliness. I cannot know what suits Him in this scene if I have not been in company with Him, where everything is suited to Him, where wisdom is unhindered in its influence. Then I come into this scene, not occupied with, or distracted by the things here, but, like Moses coming from the mount, or Mary of Bethany from His feet, or Mary of Magdala from His side, to declare and present that which is suited to Him, an entirely new order of things introduced into the midst of the confusion and disorder here.

No one has wisdom now but the one

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who knows what suits "the Christ;" because now no one can truly be according to God unless he has definitely before him the mystery of God in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

When the Lord is one and His name one, it is not only that I am led to act in every step for Him, but there is a very marked effect in myself. With Israel, where the cloud was, there the manna was. They watched for the cloud, and then they surely found the manna; so with us. The more the Lord is before my heart, the more I am rewarded by His present favour. If I can say, "My soul followeth hard after thee," I can surely add, "Thy right hand upholdeth me." And that is not all; I become a body of light, I become characteristic and demonstrative of the peace that governs me in my conduct and ways. I have "the wisdom that is from above, first pure, then peaceable gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." Surely, blessed

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Lord, we can say of Thy wisdom, "She is a tree of life to them that lay hold of her, and happy is everyone that retaineth her."

FRAGMENT.

IN the Epistle to the Ephesians the stand-point is ascension. God has "raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ." You are brought entirely into another world, and your privilege is to be so completely there in spirit as always to look down.

Do you look down upon things as Christ looks on them? Do you look down upon things at the present time in the church in the mind of Christ? Have you His thoughts about them? How do you think about your domestic circumstances? How does He think about them? He sees exactly. Does He find in you what would be an expression of your being a member of that body of which He is the Head? I believe the very question so put

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would realise to one's soul, and shew one the blessedness of what it is to be so with Him, and bring in the light on every step, that we should judge and refuse everything that is practically inconsistent with Him there. He has His thoughts. The word contains them. The Spirit of God wrote what those Ephesians should be. If they had kept it in their hearts they would never have forgotten their first love. He had a claim to everything from them. He who had left heaven and given up everything to bring them into that vital relationship, and fellowship with Himself, as member of His body; so that what the Head thought, the feet should do. G.V. W.

“THOU SHALT CALL HIS NAME
JESUS.”

MATTHEW I. 21.

WE search the records of Thy past eternity,
No tongue His name declares*
Beings angelic, great in power and might,
Not one Thy counsel shares.

* Proverbs viii. 22-31; xxx. 4.

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No whispering zephyr bore the precious
name along,

(Though joy their chants disclose) ;*

When first, in all its beauty from Thine
hand,

For *Him* † this earth arose.

Hid in Thine heart's affections lay that
peerless name

From everlasting days.

None were co-heirs to value it with Thee,

And sound His ceaseless praise.

And earth so fair, grew old, while ages roll'd
away

With ceaseless, silent tread ;

“Fulness of times” ‡ drew on, up-bearing
those

To whom th' unfolding sped.

“*Call his name Jesus,*” swift to earth from
heaven they bear §

His wondrous, glorious NAME ;

Faith owns it, and grace reckons him co-
heir,

For whom the Saviour came.

Filling with joy the vast eternity to come,
Each echoing voice still bears ;

“Name above every name” ||—well known
to Thee,

Known *now* to chosen heirs. ¶

H. C. A.

* Job xxxviii. 7.

† Col. i. 16, 17.

‡ Gal. iv. 4.

§ Mat. i. 21 ; Luke ii. 21.

|| Phil. ii. 10 ; Eph. iii. 21. ¶ Rom. viii. 17.

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CHAPTER XIX. 31 : XX. 1-9.

IN the invisible world, Jesus was in Paradise ; as to this world, an uninterrupted funeral, nothing more. Sin, death, Satan, God's judgment, had done all that they severally could : Christ's earthly life was ended, and with it all the relationships with this world, and with man as belonging to this world. Death reigned outwardly, even over the Son of God ; and godly souls who knew it were perplexed. But the world went on as usual ; the Passover was celebrated with its usual ceremonies. Jerusalem was just what it was before. They had got rid of the two thieves ; what had become of them, either of one or of the other, did not concern society. Its egotism had got rid of them, and, indeed, of Another that troubled it, in saying too much about it. One thief was in paradise with Christ ; the other, far away from all

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hope ; the soul of the Third was in the repose of perfect blessing, in the bosom of the Divinity. And as to the world, it had lost its Saviour, and would see Him no more.

But it was impossible, as to His Person, that Jesus could rest under the power of death, although He submitted to it for us. According to divine justice, He was not to remain there. True Son of God, the Father's glory was concerned in His not being holden of death ; He could not allow His Holy One to see corruption. The absolute darkness that had come down upon the world, spoke on God's part of the aurora of a new and eternal day that was going to rise beyond death, for God's glory, upon those who, attached to Jesus, saw in Him the Sun of Righteousness. Sorrow, where faith exists, may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. For the righteous, light arises in the midst of darkness. Man must be condemned, but God is sovereign in grace, glorious in righteousness. Christ, as man, had

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to die, according to that grace, and righteousness against sin ; but He must rise from the dead according to God's unfailing righteousness. This is the foundation-truth as regards Christ's work, but it is the principle of all God's ways with us. We must die with Christ, and rise with Him. If we live in this truth, as it is our privilege to do (Col. ii., iii.), we enjoy a life that is not of this world, carrying about always in our body the dying of Jesus. If, in anything, this life of the flesh is not mortified, death must be applied to it : we experience this, in the ways of God. It is the history of our christian life down here. As to the efficacious accomplishment, it was done, once for all, at the cross.

CHAPTER XX.

IN this chapter, the history of the resurrection, or rather of the Lord's manifestations to His own, is full of interest and of important principles. The first person who is presented to us is not even the Christ :--we find those

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who were to surround Him spiritually, and who had actually surrounded Him down here. It was good and meet that the state of their affections—and the affections strengthen faith—that this state, I say, as confidence in Him and attachment to His Person should be manifested, and that then He, revealed in resurrection, should be the answer to this state, and should lead them on further.

The first person that presented herself, whose story is of a profound and touching interest, is Mary Magdalene. Her name has become an expression denoting an evil life, or at least that of a woman come out of a disorderly life, but there is nothing to justify the tradition. But it is no tradition that she had been completely under the power of the devil : the Lord had cast seven demons out of her. Her state therefore had been most miserable, and she loved much. We find her with a woman constantly called “the other Mary,” (Matt. xxviii. 1) accompanying the Lord with others, and paying Him

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the assiduous service of a devoted affection. But sincere as the affection of these women was for the Saviour, it was greater for the heart of Mary Magdalene than for all the others. They took measures carefully, in buying aromatic spices and perfumes to embalm Him, to do all that was necessary to honour their Master ; but Mary Magdalene thought of Him. They waited therefore the most fitting time, and arrived at the sepulchre at sunrise. But Mary Magdalene's heart was altogether empty, except of grief at having lost Him whom she loved so much, and she was at the sepulchre whilst it was still night.

The Lord was already risen, and the great stone rolled away before the entrance into the sepulchre. She did not understand the meaning of what she saw, but went to Peter and John. These two, to see what had happened, ran to the sepulchre that they supposed carefully guarded. John looks into the sepulchre and sees the linen clothes in which Jesus had been wrapped, left

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there upon the ground. Peter, arriving directly after, enters in and sees the linen clothes also, and the napkin in which the Lord's head had been wrapped, folded apart. All spoke of calm and quiet; nothing indicated hastiness or precipitation. It seems that Peter was astonished at what he saw (Luke xxiv. 12), and hardly knew what to think of it. Then John, in his turn, entered; he saw and believed, but his faith was built upon what he saw, and not upon the word. They knew not the scriptures which declared that this must happen also. Alas! Jesus did not possess their heart, nor the word their understanding. They go *to their own house*; they look no further; they are astonished, John at least convinced; divine intelligence did not enlighten them, love for Christ did not move them; they went to their own house.



PROPOUNDING TRUTH BEYOND FAITH IS CARNAL.

EVERY utterance of divine things should be the offspring of faith. When I speak of any truth beyond my faith, it is no longer from God or towards Him that I hold it; I must then direct it to man. Man's mind is attempting to define the mind of God. Faith sees God, and when I see anything in the word, I must either see it as it is with God, or I must see it as suited to man. It is simply an action of faith or an action where there is no faith. This was the difference between Cain and Abel's offerings. Each of them offered, led by a sense of duty, but Abel offered in faith, and Cain did not. Abel had God before him, and therefore offered with the sense of what was due to Him. Cain felt it right to offer, did much to acquire a valuable offering, but failed entirely, because he had no faith; that is, he had not God simply before him

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in his offering: he was thinking more of how he could produce an offering valuable in the eyes of man, than of one suited to the nature and character of God, to whom he offered it. This is always the difference between doing a right thing in faith, or without faith. It is apparent even in the way one speaks of a truth. If God be before me, I must speak of a truth, and think of it, as it would place me before Him. When I have faith, God is before me, and He excludes everything else. When I have not faith, though essaying to do a right thing, man is necessarily before me.

Lot may have seen as well as Abram, that it was a right thing to be in the land, but though he did not leave Canaan, he shewed that he had not faith, for he considered only for his own advantage, in order to gain a desired end.

The ten spies had not faith, though they could speak well of the land; "Surely," they said, "it floweth with milk and honey," yet man and his

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greatness were more before their eye than God.

Thus a man may commend a truth, though he has not faith in it ; that is, he is not before God in the possession of it ; hence his exposition and commendation of it always lack evidence of his possessing it, for he does not insist on an immediate and valorous apprehension of it in power ; and thus there is something which discourages the hearers from a distinct purpose to enjoy it, and to act on it.

When man is before one, the exposition must suit man. The spies were the appointed and accepted guides of the people, but ten of them were carnal and had man before them instead of God. They can describe the goodness of the land, but as they have no faith, they discourage the people from going up to possess. They had not possessed in faith themselves, and they impart their own unbelief to the people. The more man is before the mind of any one when speaking of divine things, the more the carnal mind

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is interested and influenced. I can never address faith but by faith. The most touching and affecting description of a proffered blessing is vapid, and unproductive if there be not faith in God with respect to it by the one who presents or teaches it.

King Saul undertook a right service, but failed in it grievously because he lacked faith ; he thought of man—of the people, instead of thinking of God's word simply and exclusively. It is here that we fail in service. The right service may be entered on, while man is in some way before our eyes more than God, and then there is not faith. When there is faith there is an execution in the service, which declares it to be of God. There is no Ziklag (see 1 Sam. xxx.), there is a straight and effectual extirpation of what is opposed to God.

The captives through much suffering and exercise of heart returned to the land, but when opposed they ceased to build the temple ; God is not before them ; they have not faith ; they think

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for themselves, and it comes to nothing ; so that after all they have endured to reach the right place, they are not blessed, however laboriously they seek it, because they have no faith. The blessing is lost, though they are in the place of blessing.

Whether it be the right thing, or the right service, or speaking of the highest things, or in the sphere of the greatest blessing, if I have not faith, all is a miserable failure ; for if God is not before me, man must be. If God is before me, I have faith, and I have the confidence of His support, and what I do is carried on for Him, and has that peculiar mark. If it is man that is before me, there must be a considering for man, a yielding to him, an effort to win his acceptance by kindred power, namely, the natural mind, which addresses the natural mind ; whereas when it is God, it is (while plain to the natural understanding) directed absolutely to faith and to nothing else.

The growing evil of this day is the attempt to define a truth critically

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beyond one's own possession of it in faith. Hence the natural mind works on scripture, borrowing ideas from one expositor or another, and in this mental laboratory a system of doctrine is formulated, which, by its easy reasoning, commends itself to the untaught and ill-established, because it is within the compass of the natural mind. Faith proposes to faith. Faith says, "Stretch forth thy hand."—The cripple understands it well, but he needs faith.

Divine ministry is always greater in its source than in its expression: "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water;" there is more within than has come out; "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Therefore the man of God is an example in faith as well as in word; otherwise he is a "cloud without water." If we were careful not to speak of any truth beyond our faith, we should be a living testimony to its power; but when we speak of a truth without faith, it is not God who is before us, but man, and then we must suit man's mind, and

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that is carnal. Like the sons of Sceva the High Priest (Acts xix. 13), we assert truth in which we have not faith.

AS HE IS, SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD.

1 JOHN IV. 17.

THE death of Christ has closed for faith the existence of the old man—the flesh, the first Adam-life in which we stood as responsible before God, and whose place Christ took for us in grace. Our place, our standing before God, is no longer in flesh, *it is in Christ*. Christ, as man, has taken quite a new place, that neither Adam innocent, nor Adam guilty, had anything to say to (for “the best robe” formed no part of the prodigal’s first inheritance at all; it was in the Father’s possession quite a new thing). Christ has taken this place, consequent on putting away our sins, on having glorified God as to them, and finished the work. He has taken it in righteousness, and man in Him has got

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a new place in righteousness with God. When quickened, he is quickened with the life in which Christ lives—the second Adam—and submitting to God's righteousness, (knowing that he is totally lost in the first and old man, and having bowed to this solemn truth, as shewn and learnt in the cross), he is sealed with the Holy Ghost, livingly united to the Lord, "one spirit," he is "a man in Christ," not in the flesh, or in the first Adam, all that is closed for him in the cross, where Christ made Himself responsible for him, in respect of it, and died unto sin once, and he is alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. He belongs to a new creation, having the life of the Head of it as his life. . . .

Amazing and total change ! from the whole condition and standing of the first Adam (responsible for his own sins) into that of Christ, who—having borne the whole consequence of that responsibility in his place—has given him (in the power of that, to us, new life in which He rose from the dead) a place in, and with Himself, *as He now*

is, as man before God. . . . And if in Christ, the title and privilege of Christ, is our title and privilege. The man in Christ, has Christ for his title, and is entitled thus to all that Christ enjoys, to joys and glories which mortal apprehension cannot receive, and language formed by mortal thought and ways cannot express, that are not meet to be communicated, in this scene of human capacities—they belong to another sphere of things. . . .

Before God we have the “man in Christ”—blessed position—and which is perfection where we want it; and as to our place *before men*, besides Christ in us as life, the *power* of Christ, where we practically want it, in weakness and imperfection down here, resting on us for walk and service before men. The first is the basis of all our walk, but it does not suffice for power. This is had in daily dependence in which we walk, as humbled in ourselves, that Christ may be glorified, and the flesh practically annulled.

J. N. D.

WHO IS A "LEADER"?

WE learn from Hebrews xiii. 17 what a leader is, and how such are to be regarded. "Obey your leaders, and be submissive, for they watch over your souls as those that shall give account, that they may do this with joy, and not with grief," &c. Hence, it is of great importance that we should be able to recognise them. A leader is one who is the chief sufferer, or rather, as ahead of others in the race, the one to suffer first. He is not one assuming authority, a lord over God's heritage; he has not dominion over your faith, but he is a helper of your joy. A leader is one who first surmounts the fence or difficulty, and thus shews the way to the weakest of the flock. He is like a guide in an unknown and perilous journey, he goes first.

Our blessed Lord is the Leader. "When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice."

WHO IS A "LEADER"? 209

In Christendom the leader is more the ruler than the servant. In grace the greatest among you is he that serveth. It is really laborious service, not merely preaching, or propounding truth, but as they that "watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

Gideon could say: "As I do, so shall ye do;" and Paul could say: "We were ensamples unto you to follow us." The path of a leader in grace is the last thing the natural man would choose. A great man may, for fame, face the cannon's mouth; but the Christian, as he serves, accepts humiliation, contrary to all carnal feelings, and as he does, he leads. As in the case of the two goats who met on the narrow plank across the ravine, the one who lay down for the other to walk over him was the leader; so the real leader is the one who has suffered most to keep the path clear for the sheep and lambs.

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The greatest servant is the greatest sufferer. Like Abram, he puts his life in his hand, leaves all his earthly comforts behind him, and goes out by night, a true leader, to rescue his brother Lot. A leader asks no one to do what he has not done himself. He learns from our blessed Lord, who could say: "I am among you as he that serveth."

The Lord grant that there may be an increase of leaders in this day, and thus many of the flock may be helped and cared for more perfectly.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE MEASURE OF GRACE.

GRACE is the first ray of comfort to the soul, and though it is the subject first known, and most cherished, yet the measure of it, according to God's revelation of it, is little known.

Grace, according to popular teaching, is the undeserved favour of God, in saving everyone who believes in Christ.

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The soul's need defines the measure of the grace. Surely, were the grace of God no more than this, it would be marvellously blessed. But it is much more. If the grace were no more than my need required, though it would be sufficient, blessed be God, to rescue me from everlasting misery, it would not, while it saved me from all the consequences of my sins, have ever placed me in nearness to God. Having sinned, I could not restore myself to the position of innocence that Adam held. I could be a forgiven sinner, forgiven up to the last moment of my life here, and thus happy in heaven. Escape from judgment, and an assurance of everlasting happiness, is for the most part the idea which the word grace conveys to many Christians. If grace did not secure to me justification and everlasting happiness, it would not meet my need. Surely God intimated in the garden of Eden, when He clothed Adam and Eve with coats of skins, that He would not only in grace clear them of their sins, but that He would

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clothe them afresh by His own hand, that they should not be found naked. He thus set forth that there should be something more than forgiveness—escape from a lost state; that in His grace there would be in their future position a great advance beyond that which they had lost by transgression. This intimated the measure of the grace.

The condition of innocence being lost, grace, in answer to the faith of Abel, when he offered up the firstling of his flock and of the fat thereof, testified of his gifts, and thus he obtained witness that he was righteous. The grace was equal to the need; he is accepted of God, and his own death ensues, his condition in sin literally comes to an end.

Abram is counted righteous; that is, the grace is equal to the need. He believed God who quickeneth the dead. There was no hope from man as he was, but God in His grace could come in and do what was entirely outside of man. “And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now

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dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb ; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief ; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God ; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform." (Rom. iv. 19-21.) Thus there was a clearance of all guilt.

Now, in the case of Isaiah (chap. vi.) we find too that the grace is equal to the need : his iniquity is taken away, and his sin is purged, but this in connection with a live coal from the altar, which indicated that the grace could only be on the ground of the action of fire, in its sacrificial aspect. In none of these cases do we see that the sinner obtains more than a full clearance from his guilt. However, in the offerings in the book of Leviticus, a very important truth is presented to us, namely, how the sinner can come near to God. It is, I might say, the other side now. The offerings properly are for those who keep the law. Breaches of the ceremonial law are to be atoned for,

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and all uncleanness, but the main intention of the offerings was to indicate the place of nearness in which grace sets the believer. There is much more contemplated than simply clearance. There was a sense of acceptance, and consequently worship within—in the holy place, for Aaron and his sons, typically the church; and without, Israel the earthly people, blessed when the high priest came out, typically Israel in the latter day, when Jesus, the Melchisedec, comes out.

From this review we gather that the blessed God did not intend to limit His grace to our need, that is, to our sins, but that He had in His heart the purpose to superabound in grace, so that not only should our debt be atoned for, but that the grace which covered it, was of surpassing riches, so that not only was the man who owed 500 pence forgiven, but at the moment he was forgiven he received immensely more; “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” Like the four lepers in the siege of Samaria, they not only

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ate and drank, not only was the famine entirely over, but "they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it," and from the greatest dearth were greatly enriched. There is not only forgiveness of sins, but "an inheritance among them that are sanctified through faith that is in me."

There is great natural reluctance in the heart to reach up to any true sense of the greatness of the grace which has come to us, though our need makes us appreciate the measure of it that meets the need. Hence what meets the need is always first presented to the sinner, though in the mind of God there is no break in its blessed, endless stream. A woman who "had spent all her living on physicians and was nothing bettered," knows well the blessedness of grace, when she in faith touches the hem of His garment. Beautiful to a degree was her faith,

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and she finds the grace is equal to her need ; she is well, but she did not want to add to it, nor to learn the extent of the stream of blessing which had healed her. When she comes to Christ, she falls down before Him, and tells Him all the truth ; now she finds that the grace which cured her, is very much greater, she learns the One who is the Fountain of grace ; her soul is affiliated to the Saviour. This is a pattern of the way I part company with my old self to be with Christ. The leper that returned (see Luke xvii.) not only lived, but was consecrated by coming to Christ.

The great fact is gradually disclosed that not only is the sinner to be forgiven, but that he is to be made MEET to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. The sense of need is the only true condition of an awakened soul ; and therefore the relief of that need is the one thing desired ; but there is much more in the grace of God than to relieve the need. True, there must be a full clearance of

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all guilt before the awakened soul could have any rest before God, and when the grace is known to this measure, there is unspeakable relief, and hence a tendency to conclude, that as grace had conferred so much no more was to come, because no more was needed for the salvation of the soul.

Now, if grace were to stop there, simply having met the measure of man's need, God's share and delight in the saved one would be overlooked. God, in His love, delights that you, once a sinner, on believing on Him, should not only be justified, but fitted to be in His own presence, for His own pleasure, which is infinitely greater than your own. The tendency is to regard grace only as it affects the sinner, and to omit the satisfaction it is to God to have us as His children with Him; "the excellent, in whom is all my delight." Blessed God! Thy love desires my company, and would share Thy joys with me. And this love is shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto me. If I were

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not justified, it is evident that the holy God could not allow me to draw near to Him. Hence, justification is as it were, a definite step in the history of grace, but justification is not the measure of grace. I require to be justified first; the distance between me and God is not removed till then; I am not reconciled to Him until then; and He is not free to shew His favour to me until then. It is because of this that forgiveness of sins or salvation is so often regarded as the limit of the grace. God desires to have me for Himself, to be a companion of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a member of His body. Hence, His grace superabounds over the sin. Wherein I have lost anything by sin, which was a glory to a man, that is not restored to me in grace. Grace gives me something infinitely better, not to suit the man that was, but to suit me as brought to God. The grace of God does not reinstate me in the paradise lost by sin, but sets me in a much greater one. I am forgiven like the prodigal, for

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all I have done, but nothing that I have squandered is restored to me. I get something entirely new; and I am made, as he was in figure, quite new, and fitted for the immense exaltation to which I am raised by grace. The prodigal was not restored to the land as a Jew would have expected, but he was received into the father's house, with a favour and distinction never accorded to any one before; and this was all simply of grace. True, he had to be reconciled and kissed before he could be prepared for this immense excess in grace, that is, the measure of the grace beyond the need.

Thus with the thief on the cross; as soon as grace could be declared, he finds that not only is he saved by grace through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom his heart can cling; but when he asks for the brightest hope for a Jew—to be in His kingdom which he had forfeited—he was told that a far greater height awaited him. Jesus said to him, “To-day shalt thou be with me in

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paradise." Transferred from the depth of moral degradation among men, to the glorious height of association with the Lord in the greatest place. To this wondrous height grace raises the wretched sinner, and fits him for it. Nothing of the old thief remains except his identity ; but entirely new he was with Christ in paradise. Thus Paul in spirit enters into that blessed place, and was there received, as one at home in the innermost circle there. He heard there the secrets of God, which he was not allowed to tell to men. Surely he was well qualified to tell us that we are made to sit in the heavenlies in Christ, and seeing that so much grace has been shewn to us, that in us might be displayed in the coming ages, "the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus." And thus only we arrive at the measure of the grace of which we are to be the expositors, as I might say, in the coming ages.

The Lord lead our hearts more and more into it for His name's sake.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

It is not only that Christ did great things for us, but He gave Himself: beyond this love could not go. The same love which made Him give Himself for us, is now occupied in separating us from everything that could separate us from Him. Nothing can express more the profound depths of the love of Christ for us than this, that His present occupation in heaven is devoted to removing everything that would cause distance between us and Him. John xiii. 5-12, is expressive of His present service for us; I am going to glory, He says, but I am going there to serve you. My mind's attention will be fixed on you, my heart's affections will be set on you, and I shall take care that nothing shall break the intimacy that subsists between us. I shall make it my business there to detach you from everything that would separate you from myself. He sets us apart from all that would hinder com-

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munion and prevent any break between us and Himself. He takes care that nothing interferes with the intimacy, that there may not be the slightest reserve.

Such is His love for us !

TILL THAT DAY

O DAY so often long'd for
Amidst the strife and toil ;
O morning of clear shining
Over a reeking soil !
So Deborah and Barak
Sang when the fight was won ;
(And so in higher accents we)
“ May those that love Thee, Saviour, be
Like to the rising sun.”

Some have the morning waited
In cell and prison den ;
And some in labour patient,
Ignored, unknown by men ;
And many a wand'ring minstrel,
Across the desert way,
Awaits to sing the fullest praise,
Awaits his song of songs to raise
Before Thee on that day.

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As the first rays illumine
 The pure white Alpine snows,
 And blushing to vermillion,
 Each crag like coral glows—
 The throne, the crown, the kingdom,
 Will bright and glorious be ;
 But still we seek a higher part
 To fill the cup and crown the heart—
 O blessed Lord, 'tis Thee !

'Tis *Thou* !—who know'st the secret
 Of every burden'd soul ;
 Thou who canst tell each yearning,
 And every wish control.
 Who of devoted Mary,
 Such gracious words couldst say ;
 O guerdon great, O blessed choice !
 We too, would listen to Thy voice,
 Our solace till that day.

There where all saints adoring
 Thee, the exalted Head,
 Obey Thy voice harmonious,
 That voice that wakes the dead.
 Above the light and splendour
 Of all that bright array,
 Without restraint, in fullest tone,
 Shall rise Thy praise, for Thou alone
 Couldst keep us till that day.

E. L. B.

FRAGMENT.

It is well to remember that holiness is connected with redemption ; holiness and rest and song. The proper effect of redemption on a soul led by the Holy Ghost would be holiness—the grace that has redeemed you from your enemies would consecrate your heart to God. Holiness goes along with redemption ; and so, naturally, every heart of a true Christian answers to it, and there is a song. Singing, when it is true, is an expression of power in the soul, apprehending power in Another. Apprehending power in God is spiritual power in me. “The Lord is become my strength and song.” Really song—melody—is the expression of power, and cannot be taught by the precept of men. R. E.

THE CROSS.

THE more we think of the cross, the more we shall find that there is nothing like it throughout eternity : everything in good and evil came to an issue there. J. N. D.

JOHN'S GOSPEL.

CHAPTER XX. 11.

IT is not so with Mary Magdalene. For her the whole world was nothing but an empty tomb, without Jesus ; her heart was still more empty. She stays there at the tomb, where the Lord whom she loved had been. As it is said of Rachel, she could not be comforted, because He was no more. Leaning over the tomb that was cut out in the rock, she sees two angels, who ask her : " Why weepest thou ? " God allows the full expression of this strong affection. It is not, now, " They have taken away *the* Lord," as she said to the apostles, but, " They have taken away *my* Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." But Jesus was not far away from a heart so attached to His person. Mary hears some one moving behind her, and looking round, sees a man whom she supposes to be the gardener. He asks again : " Why weepest thou ? whom

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seekest thou ?” Then we see the affection that appropriates to itself the lost Saviour, and that cannot imagine that the gardener can think of any other object than of that which occupies it. “Master,” says she, “if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.” If I had a sick friend, I should ask at his house, “How is he ?” and all would understand what I was saying ; of whom I was speaking. Mary supposes that every-body thinks of the Lord, as she does herself, and that her affection gives her a perfect right to dispose of Him. It was not intelligence ; He had said that He would rise again, and she sought among the dead Him who was living. But the Lord was everything for her heart : that is what Jesus seeks, and He makes her find Him as living. He employs His divine and human affection, and calls His sheep by name ; “Mary,” He says. This was enough, and a single word from a satisfied heart answers to the call. His sheep hears His voice, and mistakes it not.

“Rabboni !” she says. This was everything ; Mary had found Him, and found Him living, and He had brought out clearly in Mary’s heart all the affection to which His love answered.

Now comes the time for intelligence, and it is Mary, who sought the living amongst the dead, but with a heart that belonged to the Lord, attached to His person, she it is whom the Lord employs to communicate to the apostles themselves the knowledge of the highest privileges that belong to Christians. We clearly see the importance of this devotedness. It was not knowledge that characterised Mary, but her affection brought her spiritually near to the Lord, and made her a fitting vessel for communicating what He Himself had in His heart. She possessed, as a vessel, this knowledge ; but more than this, she possessed the Lord.

As to her position, Mary Magdalene represented the Jewish remnant attached to the Lord’s person, but without knowing God’s glorious counsels. She thought to have found Jesus again

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risen no doubt, but come again into the world to take the place that was rightly His, and satisfy the affections of those who had left everything for Him in the days of His humiliation, despised of the world, and denied by His people. But she could not have Him thus now. Another glory of a far higher excellence, of a far greater extent was in God's thoughts, and another blessing for us of great value. In receiving Christ, she must receive Him according to God's thoughts concerning the Saviour. Only her attachment to the Lord opened this blessed path before her. "Touch me not," the Lord says, "for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." She could not have the Lord, even though risen, as come again as Messiah upon earth. He must first of all ascend to His Father and receive the kingdom, and then return: but there was much more than this. A work had been accomplished that placed Him, as Man and

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Son ever, with the Father in glory, Man in this blessed relationship ; but it was a work of redemption that set His own, redeemed according to the value of that work, in the same glory and in the same relationship as Himself. This was based upon the sure foundation of that work in which God Himself and the Father had been fully glorified, and had made themselves known according to all their perfections. (Compare John xiii. 31, 32, and xvii. 4, 5.) According to these perfections, the disciples are brought into the place and according to the relationship of Jesus Himself with God. This was the necessary fruit of Jesus' work ; without this, He would not have seen of the travail of His soul.

For the first time Christ calls His disciples His brethren, and puts them thus in His own relationship with God His Father. Judaism disappears for the time being, and as far as the old covenant is concerned, and the full effect of Christ's work, according to the purpose of grace, is revealed ; believers

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are placed in it by faith, and we have the knowledge and power of it by the Holy Ghost given to us, after that Jesus had entered personally, as Son of Man, into the glory that resulted from His work.

The resurrection of Jesus left death, sin, the power of Satan, and God's judgment behind man; it brought heavenly glory into view, although, in order to bear witness to the reality of the resurrection, Jesus was not yet entered into the glory itself. But as far as concerns the basis, that is, the relationship, it was established and revealed. The Jewish remnant, attached to Christ, becomes the Son's company, associated with Him in the power of the privileges into which He is entered, as risen from amongst the dead.

DISCERNING GOOD AND EVIL.

ONE of the marks of a full grown man in the things of the Lord, is the having the senses exercised to discern both good and evil (Heb. v. 14); but good

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and evil are now measured, not by a rule of human righteousness, but by the cross ; and it is in Him who hung there that we learn "the full knowledge of God." The new man is renewed unto this full knowledge after the image of Him that created him. It is in the wilderness journey that we are called on to discern between good and evil : it is there we get the needed exercise of the spiritual senses in order that we may do so ; there we specially need "the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." Else we shall put good for evil and evil for good. Hence Paul further speaks of our growing by the full knowledge of God, when he desires that our walk down here should be worthy of the Lord unto all well pleasing ; and Peter, who in his epistles conducts us along the ways of God's holy government in the scene where good and evil are, desires that "grace and peace may be *multiplied* to you in the full knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." (2 Pet. i. 3.) We have thus to measure every-

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thing according to this knowledge, so that our walk and ways may be suitable to the Lord. If we are not exercised before Him in the details of the wilderness walk, how, when an emergency arises, either individually or in the church of God, shall we be able to meet it. It is sorrowful when our incompetency to discern between good and evil is discovered in a time of testing, because we have not been conversant with our true measure of sanctification to God according to the power of the death of Christ.

In Leviticus iv. we may say that we have the great characteristic features of the sin-offering, but in chapter v. 1-10 we have certain matters brought before us in type which needed a sin-offering for the trespass, or guiltiness (ver. 6) which had been entailed. In verse 1 is a public guiltiness on which we need not now enter ; but in verse 2 there is the contraction of uncleanness through contact with unclean animals. If it were hidden from the one who touched such a carcass, yet uncleanness had

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been contracted and he was guilty. It was such defilement as was unbecoming in one called to be holy, for Jehovah was holy. The unclean animals seem to figure certain habits, unwittingly contracted, perhaps, or indulged in from want of spiritual perception, which, though not of the character of flagrant sin, yet were unclean in the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. An animal which did not maturely digest its food, or that was unable to walk in the strength of patience was unclean. Fishes that were not protected by scales, and could not make their way by means of fins through the restless waters, were unclean also. Speaking morally, we find that habits contrary to what is thus figured, prevail both in the ordered settled state of this world's society, and in the more tumultuous heavings of its wickedness. How easily may the habits of this scene be contracted through contact with them ! such as lead to a quick and careless acceptance of truth, consequent looseness of walk, and, alas,

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the being overcome too often by the restless principles which govern this world, instead of being able to make our way through it with our garments kept around us, so that our shame be not seen.—Habits, too, of speech, which do not accord with the usage of the sanctuary.

There is also (ver. 3) “the uncleanness of man;” any issue in the flesh, or leprous rising, or bright spot which marked the working out of a corrupt nature. The principles which animate this scene flow from this corrupt nature, but the truth in Jesus is that we have put off the old man which is corrupt with its deceitful lusts; and yet how little are we careful as to the touch of its defiling influence, and hence how easy for a saint to catch the habits and go upon the principles of the old man, which he has put off! Naturally such habits and principles are ours, and we move amidst their corrupting influence. Oh! that we were, each one, growing by the full knowledge of God, so that any contact with evil might not remain

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hidden from us, but that there might be the confession of having *sinned* in any such matter, which otherwise we might esteem but of little moment.

Further, the trespass-offering which was needed in such cases of defilement, tells us that though they might not be flagrant breaches of the will of God, yet that the state of heart and conscience with regard to them should be according to the value of the death of Christ, that thus we should be morally purified by reckoning ourselves dead to that to which He died. Christ "gave himself for us . . . that he might purify to *himself* a *peculiar* people, zealous of good works" (Tit. ii. 14)—that is "a special people"—not like other people, but "*above* all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deut. vii. 6); and we have been saved for this by "the washing of regeneration"—the application of the death of Christ as a means of moral purifying, "and the renewing of the Holy Ghost"—the power of the new creation. May the Lord lead us on in the knowledge of Himself.

T. H. R.

BODILY SUFFERING.

THERE is no subject more constantly before us, either in ourselves or in others, than bodily suffering, and yet, probably, we little understand its purport. There is one thing peculiar to it, namely, that the sufferer is the only one who is enjoined to understand its meaning. There is a distinct message to us in every bodily suffering, and according as the divine purpose is known, there is blessing from it.

There are four kinds of bodily suffering.

I. GOVERNMENTAL.

In this we generally find a weakly constitution, more a general debility like Timothy's case. This may arise from the reckless living of one's ancestors or of oneself. God does not surrender His judgment on me as a man on earth, because I am now His child. Through grace I am before

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Him in Christ, a man of an entirely new order, but all that which is under judgment shall fade away. Like the thief on the cross, his legs were broken after he was assured that he would be that day in paradise ; and this bodily suffering, as has been said, only hastened him to paradise ; so that while it was a suffering to him bodily, it was a great gain to him spiritually. Thus, I judge, it will ever be found by those under this class of suffering. The suffering directly promotes spiritual gain ; as in old age, the outer man perishes, the inner is renewed day by day. There is no sense of reserve with the Lord in this suffering and no break in the communion. It is something like the remnant who suffer for the sins of their ancestors, but the Lord sympathises with them and "makes all their bed in their sickness." I could not, as a rule, tell when a person was suffering governmentally, but, I am sure, each one who is suffering ought to ascertain from the Lord the meaning of it.

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II. SUFFERING IN AND FOR SERVICE.

In every service or act of faith there is a measure of bodily suffering, but this is only to purge or make one the more partaker of His holiness. This is properly the discipline spoken of in Hebrews xii. The cloud of witnesses suffered often much, but this suffering contributed to their gain. They were more detached from the power and weight of the flesh. Like Stephen, every stone, as far as he was concerned, only detached him the more from the man in the flesh, and separated him from everything unto God. This was Paul's thorn in the flesh; and hence it is said, "we who live are always delivered unto death." As there is so little persecution now, the suffering is more directly through illness, but this more by occasional attacks than by a general debility. Thus Epaphroditus suffered. "For the work of Christ he was nigh unto death:" "but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have

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sorrow upon sorrow." A sorrow indeed it is, to lose any true servant. In suffering of this order, there is a fresh sense of favour. The discipline is really corresponding with the true desires of the heart; it is freeing one of the obstacles in the way to a more perfect service; and there is an assurance that in some special way, the sufferer shall receive a mark of God's favour. "Thou preparest a table for me in the presence of mine enemies." Thus was it with Abraham when he returned from the slaughter of the kings, and with Paul in the prison at Philippi. Often the very spot of the suffering is the scene of the recompense.

III. SUFFERING IN CONNECTION WITH THE LORD'S TABLE.

This suffering is because of eating and drinking unworthily. As it is written, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." This is peculiarly the Lord's discipline. The body is His; but when one eats and

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drinks unworthily, he "shall be guilty in respect of the body and of the blood of the Lord." He eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. The Lord, as in the spirit of jealousy, causes that as you do not enter into what He suffered on your account, you should suffer in your own body. It is not for any one to assume that he can distinguish this suffering from any other bodily suffering in another, but surely he should be able to distinguish it for himself. I feel assured, that there is always a sense of reserve with the Lord connected with this suffering ; and if the cause of the affliction be not seen, there is a falling away from the Lord and a gradual sinking into the world. On the contrary, when the cause is discovered there is great revival ; the heart, like the bride (Cant. v.), awakened from her sleep, cleaves to the Lord more than ever.

IV. REAPING WHAT WE SOW.

This refers to our daily life. "If ye

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call on the Father, who without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." We are either acting rightly or wrongly. If we gain in the one, righteously we lose in the other. If a man overtax his strength in vanity, he suffers from some bodily illness ; or if he labour too hard from covetousness, he suffers in his health and is an invalid : he has sinned. It is, I apprehend, to this class of sufferers James refers, when he says, " And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up ; and if he hath committed sins, it shall be forgiven him." But when high-handed sin is persisted in offensively to the general conscience, and there is open reproach, it becomes a sin unto death, and there is no forgiveness for it : the sufferer dies, as we read in 1 John v. 16—" There is a sin unto death : I do not say that he shall pray for it."

The blessed God grant that we may be more sensibly under His hand and care.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE SHEEP AFTER CHRIST CAME— THEIR ADVANCEMENT.

It must be plain to every careful reader of the New Testament that the sheep, the members of the flock of God, were greatly advanced; that is, they received a very great accession of blessing, by the coming of Christ; set forth in pattern in the Gospels, but fully established, consequent on His resurrection and the descent of the Holy Ghost. It is most interesting to trace, in the history of the disciples, the gradual way they are led up to the highest point.

In a paper like this, one can only sketch the line, and note the more important steps to their ultimate promotion. The first great definite step was that they left John and followed Jesus. No doubt they were, as we should say, converted when with John. He had come in the way of righteousness. There was a call to

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repent ; everyone reached by the word of God followed him. They were the sheep at the time, and they were the best at the time, for they represented the godly remnant ; and hence our Lord, to fulfil all righteousness, took His place with them, and was baptised by John. Now two of John's disciples followed Jesus. The extent of their advancement does not appear in this step, but surely it was a very great one. They have come to Jesus. They have at least broken away from the system which obtained under John. "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." They had advanced from that order of things, and in following Jesus, though they did not enter into the full reality of the step at the moment, they truly had entered into the kingdom of heaven : and the least there was greater than John the Baptist, simply because in Christ an entirely new order was introduced. It is not now the mere servant ; not one try-

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ing to attain to anything. Now it is, "If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

It is a great day in the history of the soul when one breaks away entirely from John the Baptist, and that order of things. I do not say the disciples knew in power the new order they had come to, but they knew at least that the presence of Christ swayed them into concurrence with His ways. It was not possible that they could be with Christ and not feel that they were in a different order of things from that which they had left. To describe the nature and measure of the transition from John to Christ—that is, what Christ confers—can only give us an idea of the advancement which they received. It is plain that Christ Himself is the measure of it; but we have to learn the steps by which we are led along in order to reach at length that "as he is, so are we in this world." The Lord could say to His disciples when on earth, "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked

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ye anything? And they said, Nothing." That flowed from the simple fact of His presence down here. This was an entirely new thing here, that a Man's company could be so full and blessed apart from the comforts of this life, that they not only lacked nothing, but when He was taken from them they were like unfledged birds, powerless and disconsolate.

In Peter's history, or rather in the notices given of him in the Gospels, we learn the definite and gradual way a soul is led on to the new ground—that is, Christianity. One of those who followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. "He first findeth his own brother, Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation a stone." (John i. 40, 42.) Peter, as we find from Luke v., was drawn to Christ. It is simply and solely the

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power of God which can lead the heart of man to like what is divine, and perfect in holiness. Peter is first drawn to Christ ; he has received light. So far he answers to the blind man. (John ix.) In the case of the blind man we see the exercise that takes place in the soul consequent on receiving light from Christ : light which is to conduct one into an entirely new order of things : things wholly unknown before. Peter has light, and he follows Christ ; he does not yet know Him. In Luke v. we are told of a distinct step in advance. The Lord had used Peter's ship in preaching, and Peter had not only cordially devoted his ship to the Lord's service, but when He proposes to him to launch out into the deep and let down his net for a draught, Peter complies, though it was contrary to his own judgment. The result was that they enclosed a great multitude of fishes. The effect on Peter was so great that he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me ; for I am a sinful

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man, O Lord." This is a remarkable step ; no doubt he was converted before this, but he had never before felt himself in the presence of God, and he is sensible of his unfitness. "He fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me ; for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

It is the sense of unfitness, not any reluctance to be with Him. Jesus says, "Fear not ; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." As it was the Lord who awakened the fear, so He is the One to remove it. This is a very important step. The blind man had reached it, if he had not surpassed it, when he could say, "I believe, Lord : and he worshipped him." Now this man was isolated from all that was esteemed among men ; he was in the solitude of light. Man morally was outside of him.

The next definite step is "the new bottle," in the end of Luke v. When the Bridegroom should be taken away, the children of the bridechamber should fast. As to earth, the source of happi-

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ness was gone, but there was to be given "new wine;" but this new wine must be put into "new bottles." The Lord had come—the "new piece"—but you could not attach Him to the old. The rent or severance between them would then only be the more apparent.

The more we keep in mind the unparalleled newness of Christ come on earth, the easier shall we apprehend that nothing already here could comport with Him. All must be new now, and hence there must be a new bottle for the new wine. It was no more to be the man here, because that indeed the Greatest has come, and the thing now was to receive Him. Everyone receiving Him would be of the new piece, and by the work of God a new bottle for the new wine. Hence while our Lord shews what He is in the ship in the storms (see Matt. viii. 23-27), He makes Peter sensible of His power to make him walk on the water when not in the ship. It is quite true Peter had not been given, at the time he

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walked on the water, this great power, but he was made acquainted with it as derived from the Man Christ Jesus, and thus placed in manifest superiority to the things which would swamp man ordinarily. The great thing is to grasp the promotion to which the saint was advanced ; not merely His perfect composure when the storm raged, but His ability to take the position of complete superiority to all the power of evil here. May we have some adequate conception of the greatness to which we are promoted. It is a great step in this new history when we learn, as Peter does, that Christ is the Rock on which the new structure, the assembly, is founded (Matt. xvi.) ; yet this enlightened Peter cannot discern the difference between what is merely according to men and what is according to God. The Lord has to rebuke him : “ thou savourest not of the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” Oh ! how slow we are to leave man, as of Adam, out of our consideration, and think only of God

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and the Man who suits Him ! A little after, Peter is an eyewitness of the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and again he confounds Him—God manifest in flesh—with Moses and Elias ; so slowly does the heart, under the best influences, see the great distinction between Christ and all other men.

In the history of Peter we learn our own. He was singularly attached to Christ ; as we find from John xiii., he could say, “I will lay down my life for thy sake.” He said on a previous occasion, “We have left all and followed thee.” It is deeply interesting the attachment which has been created between the soul and Christ. The work of God truly, but it is important to note that this attachment existed before the full effect of His death is known. Peter does not really accept His death, and hence his violence to the high priest’s servant. It is much easier to understand Christ’s power than Christ’s weakness. He was crucified in weakness. It is long before

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the true and full consequence of Christ's death is a known verity to oneself. It is remarkable that parallel with the terrible sorrow to Peter, that Christ is condemned to die; he is plunged into the deepest humiliation as to himself. He denied the Lord. What a moment of anguish! On the one hand, his heart rent at seeing Him condemned to die, and at the same moment the unutterable shame at his own worthlessness in denying Him. Until this step is learned, a time of unspeakable woe, there is no real severance from one's own self. The death of Christ liberates us when learned, and it is only in His life that I am free from myself. I can "thank God through Jesus Christ;" and I can say, "God forbid, that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." The Lord comes to him when He rose, the brightest day of his new history. Peter then receives peace and life, the sense of it at any rate, for the first time;

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and in John xxi., restored in heart as well as in conscience, he starts on his new course, as indicated by the words, "Follow me."

How wonderful and beautiful to contemplate, and, in a measure, to apprehend the immense moral dignity to which Peter was promoted from that day when his brother Andrew announced to him the presence of the Messiah—the growth, the exercises, the sorrows and the joys; the humiliations on the one hand, and the great moral heights to which he was advanced on the other, until we now find him following Him "who left us a model that we should follow His steps."

We have to bear in mind the nature and scope of the work of God in his soul before the day of Pentecost, and then we have to apprehend the fulness of power in which he entered into and enjoyed what already had been given to him. The divine greatness of the work of grace in his soul could not be apprehended or enjoyed but by the Spirit of God. No one could enjoy the

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life of Christ but by the Holy Spirit indwelling, yet the work of God was wrought in his soul in a new way beyond any one before him, because Christ had come, and he could be in the presence of Christ without fear. Before Christ came, all before were subject to fear. Now, Peter, sensible of his own unfitness, can leave everything for the One who had removed all his fear before God. There is real love to Christ in Peter's heart. Never before could a man know the power of God to enable him to walk superior to all the power of evil here. Never before could it be revealed to any one that Jesus is the Rock ; and the revelation did not come before there was a work in Peter's soul preparing him for it. So at this time he could say, "Lord, to whom shall we go ? thou hast the words of eternal life." Never before could any one have seen Christ's glory—the power and coming of the Son of Man—eyewitnesses of His majesty. Never before did any one know or could have known that combination of sorrow and distress

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through which Peter passed when Christ was condemned to die, and he at the very time denying Him. The corruption of man's heart exposed in the most poignant way, at the very moment that the Lord was about to die to set us for ever free from it. Never before had the risen Man, the last Adam breathed into man and said, "Receive ye Holy Spirit :"—no doubt, life in divine power. Never before was man's mind opened to understand the scriptures. But Christ being glorified, the Holy Ghost descended, and each was filled with the Holy Ghost. Every divine work in Peter's soul, which could not be before Christ came, was now brought into distinction and splendour. The work of God is seen and enjoyed in divine power and freshness. The work is there, but divine power is required to set forth the beauty and magnificence of the work. Man's works, the more they are magnified, the less perfect they appear ; but with the blessed God, the more any of His works are magnified, the more

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beautiful and perfect they are proved to be. Hence when the Holy Ghost dwells in me, not only is all His work in me illuminated and declared in its divine grandeur, but our relation to the Son and the Father is made known—(John xiv.)—a communication boundless in its nature, and incomprehensible save to the Spirit of God. By Him we are introduced into a region of blessedness and delight unspeakable, ever enlarging and ever more entrancing.

“ The draught which lulls our thirsting,
Awakes our thirst anew.”

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. J., Reading, asks me to withdraw the passage in page 271 of *Voice to the Faithful*, September, 1884, where I say, referring to the times previous to the coming of Christ, "We constantly find its (the flesh) use was sanctioned, even when it was morally degraded."

I did not think I was stating anything new ; but I readily withdraw the sentence, as it has been misunderstood, because I meant no more than that in the old dispensation man in the flesh was still under trial, and acts were permitted which would necessarily be condemned after Christ had come—the immense difference between them and us.

J. B. S.

JOHN'S GOSPEL.

CHAPTER XX. 18 ; XXI.

WHEN Mary had communicated these things to the apostles, the rest of the outward development founded upon this revelation, is related. The disciples met that same day in the evening, and Jesus, the doors being shut because of their fear of the Jews, appeared in Person, but in a spiritual body, in their midst, bringing them peace which He had made by His blood. Divine peace, gathering together, and the Lord's presence, characterised their meeting. The disciples were to be eye-witnesses of the resurrection, and He shews to them His hands and His side, irrefutable witnesses that it was the same Jesus they had known, and they rejoice when they see Him. Then they must be His missionaries or apostles (sent ones), and He lays down divine peace as the starting-point ; "Peace be to you," He says to them ;

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“As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” Then, as God breathed into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life, the divine Son, the same God—here Man in resurrection—breathes upon them and communicates the Holy Ghost to them. Although this symbolises the gift of the Holy Ghost, He was not yet sent, for Jesus was not yet ascended on high, but He was given to them as the power of life, by the risen Saviour, that is of divine life—life according to the place in which He was, and which was its power. They lived by the divine life of the Saviour, and according to the state He had entered into in rising from the dead. The Holy Ghost sent down from heaven should reveal the objects of faith, and lead them. Here, that which they receive is the spiritual and subjective capacity to enjoy them, making them personally capable of finishing the course in which the Holy Ghost was to lead them. They were fit for the service of their mission; He who should guide them was the Holy Ghost

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who was going to come down from heaven.

This difference is found in Romans viii. Up to verse 11, the Holy Ghost in the believer, is the spirit of life and liberty, of moral power in Christ. After that (from verse 11) it is the Holy Ghost personally, acting as a divine Person. This goes on to verse 26.

Still, in this picture, which is the summing-up of the whole position, this fact (the Lord breathing on them) points to the gift of the Holy Ghost. Now their mission, the salvation that Jesus had just accomplished, was characterised in its first application by the remission of sins, the first need of the sinner, if he is to be reconciled with God. (Luke i. 77 ; Matt. ix. 2.) It is not here the eternal efficacy of Christ's work in itself, but the application of its efficacy down here as a present, actual thing. In examining the bearing of this work, we find that the worshippers, once purged, have no more conscience of sins ; but here it is the present application in this purifying. The eternal

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efficacy of the work is not the subject of John's Gospel, which does not speak of it, but it is its administrative application.

Verses 19-23 of our chapter resume the place of service, in which the Lord sets His disciples, as well as the gathering together of the children of God. Notice here that He said, in His life upon earth before resurrection: "Fear not;" and if, as Emmanuel, the Messiah, He disposed of everything in favour of His own, when He sent out His disciples, here, on the contrary, they fear the Jews, and the Lord does not take away that fear, but replaces the power of His presence as Emmanuel the Messiah, by His presence in their midst, and by the peace He had made and conferred.

Thomas was not there. Eight days after, that is, on the following Lord's day, Thomas was with the others, and Jesus came into their midst. In answering the doubts that Thomas had expressed before Jesus came, the Lord convinced him, in shewing him and

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making him touch His hands and His side. Thomas's doubts disappear. It is the expression of the Jewish remnant's position in the last days, in this remarkable *résumé* or sketch of God's dispensations. They will believe when they see Him, and Jesus makes the difference between believers who have not seen Him—our position—and those who will believe when they see Him ; there is a blessing pronounced upon us. Thomas's confession, true and just as it was, shews, I think, the Jewish position. It is not the glorified Son of man, Jesus on high, but it is what the Jews will recognise when He returns ; that is, that the Jesus whom they had rejected is their Lord and their God, their Deliverer and Saviour, the Jehovah who shall free them. The testimony of others will not have convinced them ; they will see and look upon Him whom they have pierced. Thus we find, in this chapter, besides the resurrection of Jesus, the picture of the dispensation of grace from that time up to the Saviour's return : first

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of all the Jewish remnant, represented by Mary Magdalene, but brought by a risen Christ into the knowledge of the place of christian privileges—privileges that she announces to the disciples. Following upon this communication, the assembled disciples find the Lord Jesus in their midst, pronouncing upon them the peace that He had just made : then He sends them, founding their mission on the peace given, and putting into their hands the administration of the forgiveness of sins, in communicating the Holy Ghost to them. Finally, the Jewish remnant at the end, which believes when it sees, but which does not enjoy the same privileges as those who believe during Christ's absence, that is, whilst we do not see. Thomas (the remnant) would not receive the testimony that had been borne to him of Jesus' resurrection.

CHAPTER XXI.

THIS last chapter is purposely mysterious, and gives us what will take place when Jesus comes back ; but

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besides, the restoration of Peter's soul after his fall. Verses 1-14 relate what follows Jesus' return, the third time He shews Himself. The first time, is the day of the resurrection; the second time, a week later, when Thomas was there; these two occasions present the remnant that had become the church, and the remnant at the end. Here, in this chapter, it is what is called the millennium. It is the third time that Jesus shews Himself to them, when they are met together; in figure it was first of all for Christians, then for the Jewish remnant, and finally for the Gentile world. Hence we find that Jesus had already here some fish on the fire, that is the Jewish remnant. But in throwing the net into the sea of peoples, the disciples gather together a mass of fish, without, however, the net breaking. In the beginning (Luke v.) they had taken a mass of peoples, but then the net brake. The administrative order that contained the fish, could not keep them according to this order, but here the Saviour's presence

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changes everything. Nothing breaks, and He is again associated with His own, and in the power of the fruit of His work.

After this mysterious scene, He restores Peter, but in sounding his heart, and in making him know himself. This is what the Lord does always. Peter had said, that if all denied Him, he would not. The Saviour asks him if he loved Him more than the others. Peter appeals to the knowledge that the Lord had ; Jesus confides His lambs to him. When we are really humbled, and have lost all confidence in ourselves, then the Lord can commit to us that which is most dear to His heart : "Feed my lambs ;" He says to him. Note well that Jesus does not at all reproach Peter with anything that he had done, but He goes, for his good, to the very bottom of his soul, even to that false self-confidence that had caused his fall. Then, repeating the question three times, which should have recalled to Peter his denial, three times repeated, He widens the sphere

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of His confidence, and says to him, "Take care of my sheep." Peter had strengthened the expression of his affection* in saying, "Thou knowest that thou art dear to me." The Lord takes up the word, and says, "Am I dear to thee?" Peter was troubled because the Lord questioned his affection again, and said to Him: "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that thou art dear to me." He appeals to that knowledge that sounds all hearts, but this is confessing that it needed that knowledge to know it; for, according to all appearances, when Peter was put to the proof, he shewed himself unfaithful at the moment when his devotedness was needed, and men could have said that Peter had turned out a hypocrite. But, thank God, notwithstanding all our weaknesses, there is One who knows what He Himself has set at

* In the first two questions, Jesus says to Peter: "[ἀγαπᾷς με] Lovest thou me." Peter answers instantly: "[φιλῶ σε] Thou art dear to me;" and this is the word that Jesus employs the third time.

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the bottom of our hearts, and if He searches us and makes us know ourselves, and the root of evil in us, He recognises still lower down that which He has created there ; may His name be praised ; and He fills with grace that which His grace has put there, and confides in this grace in us, maintained by the constant stream of His grace, when once we have been humbled enough.

We see also in this passage, how dear His sheep are to Jesus. He thinks of them in going away, to provide their food and needful care. But there is something more in His grace towards poor Peter. He had lost the fine opportunity he had had. To save his life he had denied the Saviour, and that which want of faith had lost is not always given back, though something better be given us. If we cross the Jordan,* we cannot go up the mountain of the Amorites any more, we must wander in the arid desert.

* Read and compare Numbers xiii. and Deuteronomy i.

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God, however, accomplishes His counsels. But here, the power of Peter's will having been shewn to be weakness before the enemy's power, the immense blessing of suffering and even dying for the Lord is granted to him ; and that should take place, when it should no longer be a question of his will, but of submission to the power of others, there where his faithfulness should be manifested. Another should bind him, and lead him where he would not wish to go. He should die, after all, for the Lord. It is then, when there is no more will of our own, no more power, that we can follow the Lord.

Then, in terms purposely mysterious, John's ministry and work are established. Jesus' lambs and sheep were the Jewish believers confided to Peter. The testimony would be rejected by the nation, and end by Peter's death. But it should be different with John's testimony. Peter, who sees him also follow Jesus, asks the Lord what would happen to him. "If I will," says the Saviour, "that he remain till I come

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what is that to thee? Follow thou me!" He did not say, as was supposed, that he would not die, but indeed his ministry makes God's ways known to the end. All is left in suspense after him, until Jesus come, whilst the sphere of Peter's service has disappeared from off the earth.

Remark, too, that it is no question here of Paul's ministry. Peter had the ministry of the circumcision; the earth was the scene of it, and the promises its object, leading at the same time saints individually to heaven. John, in revealing the Person of the Son and eternal life come down from heaven, occupies himself too with that which is upon earth, then of God's government and judgment at the Saviour's manifestation down here. Paul treats of God's counsels in Christ, and of His work, to introduce us into the same heavenly glory, like Himself before the Father, we being His brethren already down here. This is not the subject of our Gospel.

THOUGHTS ON THE PEACE-OFFERING.

IF we do not understand the ground on which the grace of God has put us, we shall neither be able in the experience of our souls to occupy the position which that grace assigns us, nor to act conformably therewith.

Had it been possible that a people in the flesh could have answered to the favour bestowed upon them, the position of Israel would have been very blessed. Redeemed out of Egypt by the blood of the passover lamb, and by the power which divided the Red Sea, Jehovah could say that He had brought them to Himself. Furthermore, they had a privilege which was accorded to no other nation, namely, that Jehovah Himself was their lawgiver. (Is. xxxiii. 22.) Thus Moses could say, "For what nation is there so great, who hath God *so nigh* unto them as Jehovah our God is in *all things* that we call upon Him for? And what nation is there so

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great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day ?" (Deut. iv. 7, 8.) How blessedly Jehovah thus sought to bind them up with Himself, and how jealous was He in His love to them, that in all things they should be for Himself. He set His tabernacle in their midst, and they might approach Him with the offerings of willing hearts, bringing into His courts that in which they could be accepted, as in the burnt-offering, and in which He also could find His own rest, as it ascended a sweet savour to Him. Then, there was the meat-offering, with its memorial for the Lord, and the remainder to be fed upon by the priestly family, and also the peace-offering, which partook of the character of the burnt-offering (in that the blood was sprinkled and the fat burned on the altar as a sweet savour to the Lord upon the burnt sacrifice), and of the meat-offering, for the priestly family had their portion in the wave-breast and heave shoulder ; added to this, the communion was complete by the offerer

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having his share in the flesh of the sacrifice.

I do not dwell now upon the provision made for their need in the sin and trespass offerings, but revert to the peace-offering, which had an additional feature, namely, that if an ox or lamb or goat were killed in an ordinary way, while they were in the wilderness (Lev. xvii.), so did the Lord seek to bind them up with Himself, that the slain beast must be regarded as a peace-offering, the blood sprinkled on the altar, and the fat burned as a sweet savour to the Lord. Thus, though "He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths," and also "had given them of the corn of heaven," yet also in respect of the animal they killed, it should have been with them: "He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks."

We also have been brought to God, as a people whose status is not in the first Adam, for the Lord had looked down on the children of men for 4,000

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years, and not one could He find that sought God, and then He brought in the second Man, the One who said, "A body hast thou prepared me—Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." That blessed Man is now before God in all the value of that one act of accomplished subsisting righteousness—His obedience unto death; and the abounding of grace has placed the believer in that same righteousness before God, so that he has become the righteousness of God in Him. Can we look up to heaven and say, as those having thus received abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, "I am before God in Christ in all the value of that one accomplished righteousness in which He is there"? and ought we not further to say, "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all then were all dead, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again"? Has not the Lord bound us up with Himself, not on the untenable

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ground of a people whose status was fleshly, but as righteously alive to God on the ground of that one act of righteousness in which the flesh was condemned and set aside ?

Is the Lord less jealous in His love towards us than He was towards Israel of old, in that having bound us up with Himself, "whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we should do all to the glory of God" ? The Corinthians had to be reminded, even as to holy things, that "the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ?" The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ? But if the Lord has brought *us* to himself, not according to the measure of grace which each may possess, but according to the grace of God which is by *one* Man, Jesus Christ, is it allowable that we should make a wide distinction between religious and secular things, as is the common practice of Christendom ; or should not Christ be the Object, not only in the communion of the secret

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of His tabernacle, but also in every act of daily life, so that it should partake of the character of the communion of the peace-offering? "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." (Col. iii. 17.)

T. H. R.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

POWER OR DECLENSION.

POWER is moral superiority over evil as it presents itself. Declension is when I retreat, because of present influence, from any principle or position which I had accepted. If I walk in the Spirit, I shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. This is power. The work of faith with power is the ability to rise above the temptation or hindrance as it occurs. It is not merely like a strong man exulting in his known strength, but it is, as it were, occult, until an occasion for its manifestation occur. Thus faith is always power,

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In declension God is not before the soul, and there is generally an impression that one is attaining to something much to be desired for oneself. It was plainly declension with Eve, when she ate of the forbidden fruit, but at the moment she was lured and captivated with the gain which she thought she was securing. Adam was in power when he called her name Eve. When in any strait I rise to God, and act for Him, it is power.

There may be declension, though I do not leave the ground I have taken with God. There is declension in Lot when, departing from Abram, he chooses the well-watered plain ; he does not leave Canaan, but he seeks what would suit himself. God is not before him. This is a very deceptive form of declension, because, while there is no apparent departure from the true ground, there is the attempt to acquire a position of advantage for oneself. If Ananias was true in joining the disciples, declension had set in when he sought to gain credit for a devotedness

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which was not true. Power, on the other hand, advances ; it is a race, as it were ; and, as difficulties arise, they are surmounted. Abram returns to the land. It is a signal act of power to retrace one's steps. It is like ascending a steep one has fallen down. He came back to the spot from which he had departed ; where faith ceased, faith or power resumes its course.

It is of deep importance to note, how readily one acting in great power may decline. The fact that declension is so near, and so easy, constrains us to say, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." We see in Jacob the history of many. Restored, by divine favour, to the land, and blessed in a very special way there, when he is in great prosperity, declension marks him ; he settles at Shalem. He did not think there was any declension in his doing so. This is one of the worst forms of it. He was still in the land, and he was true to the blessing he had received ; he had an altar, El-elohe-Israel ; there was nothing *outwardly* to mark declen-

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sion ; but there *was* declension, for the blessing God had given him was what was before his heart, and what characterised the altar, and not God who gave it. When the blessing, however great, is paramount to my heart, there is declension, because God is displaced by His own blessing. Our associates, as a rule, betray the extent and nature of this. It will always be found that declension plunges us into association unknown or unapproved of before. God, in mercy, restores Jacob. He says to him, "Arise, go up to Bethel." Power always turns to God, As He is before me, He is the health of my countenance, and my God ; and then, though my own blessing is not paramount with me, I get a deeper sense of it.

I desire to point out a few of the various ways in which declension works when one is in the path of faith or power. It is so sudden, and often so specious, that it is not discovered until its consequences are disclosed.

Ten of the spies could commend the

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land, and, in the same breath, discourage the people. Caleb and Joshua were in power, they kept God before them. The saddest chapter in our history, is, that declension may set in after a great and successful conflict with the enemy, after we have broken from his trammels. Thus was it with the captives from Babylon. They came up, and began to build in great power. They were hindered, and declension set in. A people who had gone through so much, and who had so vigorously contended for God's glory, "looked for much, and, lo, it came to little ; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste," and that for sixteen years ! In vain they laboured—there was no advance. When there is power, there is always progress. The question, "Children, have ye any meat?" at once discloses whether one is in power, or not.

In our Lord's time, the great evidence of declension was the Pharisee. Where there is a lack of power, there

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is always an effort to keep up an appearance. Power expresses itself ; it is what it is. A bird flies, it shews its power as it moves. The attempt to sustain an order of things, however right, is of itself an evidence of the lack of power. As it is said of Israel, "They sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them : for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after covetousness." (Ezek. xxxiii. 31.) When we come to the time of full spiritual power, the declension of the unbelieving Jew is exposed. The blessed Lord was the power of God on the earth ; any who followed Him did not walk in darkness, but had the light of life. Hence, from that time there is no power apart from Him. "Without me ye can do nothing," and declension begins when any believer drops out of concert with Him, however powerful or faithful previously. We have seen how readily declension supervenes, and we have thus learned that no one is, at any moment, safe from it.

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But now, seeing we are united to Christ, the source of power, we are, on the one hand, without excuse ; and, on the other, the declension is more apparent and decided. Power is defined by a Person : any independence of Christ is declension. When Christ. was here, He kept His own by His power. Declension ensued on His going away. He restored them to Himself. (John xxi.) Under His control they were kept in the right way. When He was exalted, He received the promise of the Father ; the Holy Ghost was sent down. Power from henceforth is as we walk in the Spirit ; when not in the Spirit, it is declension. The Spirit connects with Christ. Thus power or declension is easily defined.

There was declension at Corinth, though they were so greatly gifted. They reigned as kings ; led away by self-indulgence, they were loose in their own lives, and therefore were so in the church. They were not led of the Spirit. They did not remember that "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit."

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There was declension of quite a different kind among the Galatians. Having begun in the Spirit, they sought to be made perfect in the flesh. There was declension at Thessalonica, when an event, and even the greatest event, engrossed their hearts more than Christ. There was declension at Ephesus, when they left their first love. There was declension in Asia, when it could be said, "All in Asia have turned away from me." Declension marked the Hebrews, when they in their hearts turned back to earth, instead of running on to heaven.

Thus we have glanced at the many phases of declension, as recounted in scripture. I will now seek to define the more general forms in which it occurs, and, at the same time, point out how walking in the Spirit, which is power, would have preserved us.

The most common form of declension is when, after having taken a right step, we are tempted and drawn away by an offer ministering to our natural taste. Thus it was, when the green

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fields turned away Lot, and when the water so engrossed the nine thousand seven hundred of Gideon's brave followers, that they were suddenly disbanded and unemployed; ready and willing to serve, but disqualified; the case with many in this day. Thus, Mark, when at Pamphylia, returned to his house at Jerusalem. This is so common, that no one is safe from it. In fact, there is sure to be a temptation presented to us after every advance, and the only preservative is to *continue*: "Whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." The insidious feature in this declension, is, that there is no apparent surrender of any position. Where there is power, there is the refusal of everything which would divert us from our good beginning. Indeed, the way to help one in this state, is simply to recall them to their beginning.

Secondly. When one who has, through grace and much exercise, been led to the right ground, and has been blessed

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there, is overpowered by human influences, while retaining, as he thinks, the right ground and the truth—like Barnabas taking his kinsman, and going to Cyprus, or Jacob at Shalem; and all because a worldly sentiment was indulged in. This is a very painful declension, because one is like Ephraim, “grey hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.” There is no easy recovery from this, because one is deceived, unless one feels the pressure of the world one has fallen into, and then God restores, as He did Barnabas and Jacob. In both it was an unjudged worldliness which led to their fall. Had they walked on straight, as called of God, they would have been preserved.

Another class, while admitting the beauty and excellence of heavenly things, are really discouraged themselves from going up to possess them, because they have no faith, and discourage others. This shews the danger of sentimentalising on truth. It is here, no doubt, Demas was, and all

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that are in Asia, who turned away from Paul. The knowledge of truth in itself is not power, as we see at Corinth, and with the two disciples going to Emmaus, and very markedly with the ten spies. They commended the land, but discouraged the people. They had not faith for themselves, and therefore they would taint others, as they were tainted themselves.

Again ; often, when there is true devotedness, with an unbroken will, there is a great deal of energy in preaching or doing. It is painful to see, at times, with much devotedness, really no spirituality ; like Martha, cumbered about much serving, or the disciples going a-fishing. This declension is very specious, because many, as well as the person himself, regard such a course as very useful. It is the occupation with the usefulness which feeds the declension. Generally, those under this form are buoyed up with their own sense of what they had done—ready to say, “We have left all, and followed thee.” When power works here, they are oc-

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cupied with their gain in Christ, and not with their service, or their surrender for Him.

One more case. A declension of a very covert character, and one not easily corrected, is, when one contends and suffers for the right position — the heavenly position—and while, like the two and a half tribes, he endures in battle to secure the position, he never tastes or knows the good of it, nor is he marked by the power of it. The position of a heavenly man, without the power, is delusive. It is the power that makes known the reality of the position. The two and a half tribes fought for the position in Canaan, but never enjoyed the land, their hearts were where their families and their cattle were. No one could, in faith, accept the position of a heavenly man, without being characterised by separation from this world, a real severance from all on this side Jordan. Perhaps, in no way has the testimony suffered more than by insisting on heavenly position without practical self-denial.

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Worldly honours may be declined, while there is as much consideration for oneself in earthly things, as if there were nothing greater.

The Lord give us such a sense of the greatness and reality of our heavenly portion, that we may be found more truly in His path here.

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THE simple thing to lay hold of is Christ's work—His work determines my standing. Where His work puts me, a believer, there I am. Christ's work embraces the beginning and the end. It must do so, or it would not be finished. There must be an end as well as a beginning. *Out* of Egypt, and *in* the land ; *out* of the far country, and *in* the Father's house ; as you get, in figure, in Exodus xxiv., the blood shed, and heaven in sight. Hence our blessed Lord begins with the finish of His work to the woman of Samaria (John iv.), and He calls His work

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there *God's* work : " I have meat to eat that ye know not of, my meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to *finish* his work."

There are four aspects of the death of Christ from Egypt to Canaan. The blood on the lintel ; the Red Sea ; the brazen serpent ; and the Jordan. The two first were Godward ; the two last, *our* side, but Christ did all in one death ; in one stroke, as I might say. Thus all the offerings were, in the anti-type, at one and the same time. I do not learn them without a break, but the work is done without a break, and the good of this work is assured to me without a break.

The blood of the bullock, on the day of atonement, secured an entrance for Aaron (and his house) *inside* the veil, and the blood of the goat sprinkled on the mercy-seat gave God liberty to send forth from within Melchizedec to bless Israel *outside*. The same blood gave God liberty to do two very different things ; to put two companies of believers in totally different stand-

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ing. The blood is the same, but the blessed God blesses each company as His grace leads Him ; one inside, within the veil ; and the other outside, in earthly places. In the anti-type it was the one blood, but in the type there were two bloods—that of the bullock, and of the goat, to mark the difference of effect.

CHRIST'S work is one great whole. We take time to learn it, and only learn it in parts. First sheltered by the blood from judgment ; then the Red Sea. Then, practically, the brazen serpent, and the Jordan. But these parts formed one whole in Christ's work, and He carried us from the dead to heavenly places. His work in its finish declares our standing.

DIVINE teaching gives us the whole truth. We must hold it, but in meekness and lowliness. We are learners, but learners of that which is certain and infinite.

G. V. W.

THE REMNANT, AND WHAT THEY HAVE TO SURMOUNT.

It has been shewn in a previous paper, that the remnant is always a part of the original. It could not be a remnant otherwise. The word means, the part left of what was. On this I do not dwell. I desire to confine myself now to the nature of the opposition which has to be surmounted in order to be the remnant; that is, to set forth the cardinal characteristic of the testimony as it was originally.

Now, when the remnant rises by grace to the calling of God at any time, they can only do so by surmounting the power of the enemy, which has marred the beauty and brightness of the original. If the original had not been spoiled and defaced, there would have been no need for a remnant testimony. The enemy has succeeded, in a measure, in stripping the tree of testimony of all

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its leaves ; yet “as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves : so the holyseed shall be the substance thereof.” The power which has reduced and dilapidated the original must be overcome by the remnant.

Let us verify this from scripture. If we turn to 1 Samuel vii., we shall see how the remnant in that day surmounted the power of the enemy. The calling of Israel was to possess the land and worship Jehovah there. This was the original. They were now, though still in the land (in figure, on the right ground), more as subjects or slaves to the Philistines, than as those enjoying the rights and privileges of proprietorship.

When Israel first entered Canaan, they were opposed by seven nations, which typified the darkness of this world—“spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places.” After a course of many years, as we read in the Book of Judges, when their original was often suppressed, and at times was entirely

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gone, the Lord, in Samuel, calls out a remnant. This remnant was marked by prayer. Prayer, through Hannah, gave birth to it. Samuel, as his name indicates, was the answer to prayer, and prayer was ever his resource. It is very interesting to note this, as the true and sure beginning of a remnant; the recovery of what is ours, but of which we have been deprived by the enemy. At this time, Israel was in their own land, completely under the power of the Philistines. They were not captives, but in the abnormal position of being mastered where they were nominal masters, so that they were unable to enjoy the rights of their property, while apparently in possession of it. This is the power they have to surmount, and they cannot be the remnant, that is, they cannot reach the characteristic of the original calling until they do so. It is important that we should bear in mind the difference between the power which had to be surmounted when the original was set up, and the power which has to be

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surmounted when the remnant would rise up to God's calling. In every conflict it is of all importance, after we are assured of our resources, to know where the enemy is in his strongest position and greatest force. The seven nations are Satanic, so are the Philistines Satanic; but their opposition is of a later date. They rose into power as Israel declined. They were the power of the enemy in a new form, an opposition to Israel after they had settled in the land. When we come to apply this to our own time, I trust we shall see more definitely the nature of the power which the Philistines express. At all events, we see from this chapter (1 Sam. vii.), that this power must be overcome in order that they might return to the substance of the original. Samuel first exhorts them to be separate — "Put away the strange gods from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only." This is the first great step. There is no hope unless this step is fully and honestly taken. The grace, which

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enables us to separate from corrupting associations, is the pledge to us, that being personally set free from the idols of our own hearts, we shall, through the same grace, be delivered from the power of evil which would overwhelm us from without. I do not dilate on the instructive process by which the Philistine power was broken. It is enough for my present purpose, that this power was thoroughly broken, and that "Eben-ezer" is the monument to record the glorious fact.

Let us now try to apply the principle we have learned from 1 Samuel vii. to our own time. A divine principle must get its place in every divine teaching. We may note in passing, that the remnant who came up from Babylon were not primarily opposed by those who had carried them captive, but by enemies who had arisen after they had begun to build the temple : a new form of opposition from their very neighbours. We learn from the Book of Haggai, that the captives who had endured so much in order, as the true

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remnant, to restore the temple—were so overpowered and leavened by this new opposition, that for sixteen years they had ceased to rebuild it, and on that account had forfeited their own blessing. The principle we have learned in 1 Samuel vii., is corroborated here—namely, that it is not the ordinary foe we have to contend with, but with a new form of adversary, concurrent with the purpose of heart to be faithful to our calling.

In our Lord's time we find that the greatest opposition to Him, who surely was "The repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in," was from the Pharisees; those who assumed to stand most for God, were the greatest opponents to "God manifest in the flesh."

Now, when we come to the church period, we shall find that the enemies who opposed the Christians at the first, are not the same, as to appearance or character, as those who oppose and hinder the testimony in this day; that is, that the opposition to the remnant

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is of a different character to the opposition which was waged against the church when first presented here on the earth. The Jews, or in a word, the world, the form in which the enemy assailed and persecuted the church in its first or original beauty, is not the form in which the remnant is assailed now. The apostle Paul had warned the elders of Ephesus, that "from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." We find, that subsequent to this, in 1 Timothy iv., the apostle warns Timothy of the spurious sanctity which would be advocated; and this, while he was at Ephesus, where the assembly was instructed in the highest truth. Also in chapter vi., the apostle denounces those who consider that gain, or advancement here is godliness. Thus a new form of opposition would spring from a corrupt use of Christianity, in a way that would supply to the natural man a weapon for its own destruction. This is a very serious form of opposition;

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consequently we find afterwards, that the church in Ephesus is censured for losing its first love, while still proof against the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. I gather from this that there is always declension personally, before there is a break-down corporately.

Let us now learn from scripture, definitely, the form in which we are being assailed at this time, in order that we may at least know what we have to resist. The Second Epistle to Timothy furnishes us with the varied forms of opposition arrayed against any who would in any measure maintain the calling of God. There is always, as I might say, some cardinal truth in every original. For instance, the land was the prominent thing until the building of the temple ; and the temple from Haggai's time down to the descent of the Holy Ghost, embracing our Lord's presence here as the real temple. Since then, the church as the house of God, His assembly, the body of Christ, is the cardinal truth, and nothing could be the remnant of the

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original that did not set forth and maintain this great cardinal truth, however imperfectly its beautiful appendages might be restored.

Now, in 2 Timothy, there are four forms of opposition ; not one of them similar to the opposition which the church encountered when it was first set up. The first is the turning away of all that are in Asia. The chief scene of the apostle's labours has become the place (like Bethel of old, which became Bethaven) where there is the greatest alienation from him. Secondly, "profane and vain babblings . . . their word will eat, as doth a canker." Thirdly, "as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth : men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith." Fourthly, "they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." Now two of these are the ordinary forms of opposition ; and the two latter, the forms which obtain in "difficult times."

The Lord grant that we may lay it

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to heart that unless we can overcome the present form of Satanic opposition, which has sprung up side by side with us, and which we are in a measure answerable for, because springing up from within, we shall not be able to be, in any degree, true to the calling of God; that is, we shall not be among those who have "a little strength," and have "kept my word," and "not denied my name."

May our hearts be awakened to see how much we should gain, like Israel of old, by being sensible that the Lord is on our side, and though His support would not be as ostensible as the thunder in their day, yet it would not be less sure or efficacious. May we know the great blessedness of being succoured by Him, the sense of what Paul enjoyed when he could say, "the Lord stood with me and strengthened me." Blessed indeed to know Him so near, and to have our hearts assured that we are maintaining with unrelaxing vigour, what His own heart is set for.

THE *CHARACTER* AND
ATTITUDE OF THOSE WHO
KNOW THE WORD OF THE
LORD.

ZECHARIAH XI. 11.

It is with the *moral* teaching of the passage rather than with its dispensational and primary application, I am now dealing. With regard to the latter, it may be well to say that the subject evidently is the history of Israel in connection with Christ. Jehovah takes up the case of His desolate people and flock. There was no compassion in their own shepherds towards them ; it is very blessed to see that while the nation is handed over to reap the fruit of its own ways and sins, Jehovah, in the infinite compassion of His heart, cares for the poor and oppressed of His people, but the nation as such are left to themselves, Jehovah gives up for the time being the inheritance of

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the Gentiles, it is in His earthly people He is to possess it. Then it is we find that the poor of the flock are they who recognise *the fulfilment of the prophetic word* in those ways of Jehovah. So much for the literal application of the passage. Now the *moral* bearing of this is of the deepest moment for our souls in these days, for there are now morally as then in the history of Israel, "the poor of the flock." How blessed to think of this divine characteristic! it carries one's thoughts at once to Matthew v.; the very first mark of that which meets the mind of God in a world where all has departed from Him, is poverty of spirit—that which is in no sense indigenous to man or the earth, that which so far from being promoted, is suppressed and hindered by all that obtains amongst men and in the age. Poverty of spirit is only found in those who are broken, those who are down in the dust before the Lord, as their rightful place. Alas! how little of it is to be seen, how much of the opposite; self-elevation and self-asser-

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tion, a determination to maintain self at all costs ; lowliness of mind and humility of mind, are not virtues of the present moment or age ; on the contrary, high-mindedness and pride, alas ! prevail to a sad extent. How blessed to dwell upon that which is kindred to the thoughts of God, that which He takes pleasure in, and that which has ever met His mind from the very first. But further, this spirit has, as it were, its own surroundings and atmosphere ; it grows and flourishes far away from that which is found amongst men. It is impossible to maintain poverty of spirit if men and the world are mingled with. " All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world "—these are the principles and objects governing in the world, and none else beside. It is a solemn question for conscience and heart, how far apart from such a sphere do we walk ? May the Lord exercise each of us before Himself as to this.

But not only do we find here " the

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poor of the flock," but we also find their *attitude*—"that waited upon me." This is ever the attitude of the soul where poverty of spirit is the characteristic ; confiding dependence and expectation mark them at all times, whether the remnant in Israel, or the few who to-day in loyalty of heart cleave to the Lord : hated, reviled, slandered, and despised, they ever have been, and will be, yet He knows them as trusting in Himself and waiting on Him.

But not only is there in this attitude a very marked dependence on, and expectation from, the Lord Himself, but there is an active exercise of heart implied in the words "*waited upon me.*" How unlike the busy restlessness of the moment we are in, and the scene we are passing through ! The moral magnificence of one who waits on God simply is beyond all admiration ; how blessed to be brought to this simply, so as to say, "thou art the God of my salvation ; on thee do I *wait* all the day ;" or again, "this is our God, we have *waited* for him ;" or again, "yea, in the

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way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we *waited* for thee."

It was this which marked the Lord Jesus in all His blessed perfection as a man on earth ; how blessed to hear Him say, as in Psalm xl. 1—He takes the place of patience *without failure*—"I waited patiently for Jehovah:" it is exactly opposite to what man is as man, with his will and all that belongs to it. Observe it is "for Jehovah," that is, until He came in ; His own will never moved ; Christ would have no other deliverance than Jehovah's. That which was found in the blessed One in His own perfection, is by grace wrought in the poor of the flock, and in feebleness and imperfection still is exhibited in some small measure by them. Oh may it be ours more and more to be known simply as a poor and an afflicted people who wait on the Lord and trust in Him. Then, lastly, observe here how the Lord says, "the poor of the flock that waited upon me, knew that it was the word of the Lord." This shews very blessedly the connection

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between the *state of soul* according to God, and the discernment of His mind through His word; and may we not ask is it not ever so? The *wise* and *prudent* on the one hand and the *unseparated* on the other, never discern His will; it is *hidden* from the former (very solemn reflection this); it is revealed to babes. As to the other class, those not separated and consecrated to God, it is written, "the knowledge of the *holy* is understanding;" and further, "do not drink wine nor strong drink when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean." (Lev. x. 9, 10.) May the Lord apply His own word to all that needs its piercing light at this moment, so that there may be, by its divine action, formed in our souls that capacity and ability of His Spirit, to know what is the word of the Lord in its application to all the difficulties and exercises of the way at this present moment.

W. T. T.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE WORK OF CHRIST AND WHAT IT EFFECTS.

IN order to understand the effect of a work, we must first know the nature and scope of it. The great defect in believers is, that while they believe in Christ, they have a limited or incorrect idea of what He has done. When I know the measure of Christ's work, even though I may not be in the full enjoyment of all He has wrought out for me, I at least know what is mine, and I could not accept anything else. It will be found that in Christendom, the variety of sects arises from the varied limitations of the work of Christ. Christ's work can be determined only by what He was sent to do. He can say in anticipation (John xvii.), "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." In like manner at the beginning of His course, with reference to the woman of Samaria,

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“My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.”

The first thing, and the thing of the deepest interest to us, is to ascertain what was the work which was given Him to do, and which He has done. When we go back to the fall, we are told that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. Here we get a very definite and comprehensive view of Christ's work. The power of the enemy is to be broken by Him ; He is to “destroy him that hath the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage.” The full effect of His work in this respect is not manifested yet. Satan still rages. The time has not yet come when He will “bruise Satan under our feet,” but Satan was vanquished in the death of Christ, so that we can say, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The important thing for faith to

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apprehend is what Christ has done. He has "abolished death and brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel." We are not to measure Christ's work by our apprehension of it. True there is no sense of its value, but as we apprehend it in faith, yet it is of deep moment that we should have before our hearts the measure to be apprehended. It is clear to every exercised soul how little one walks here in the simple assurance that Satan's power has been broken by Christ, that He has done this work. We practically realise it as we resist the devil, as it has been said, "Resist the devil, and when he finds Christ in you, he will flee from you." Now, if we are feeble in our faith as to the subjugation of the power of the devil by Christ in His death, it will be found that we are still more so in our faith as to the place with God which His work has obtained for us ; that it is according to His glory ; that is, every attribute of His nature maintained ; His righteousness as well as His love, His light as

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well as His grace ; all in harmony and balance—one beautiful whole.

When we read that “by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,” what an immense scope and measure is presented to our minds ! All that was typified by all the offerings fulfilled in divine perfection. In His one offering we are brought, according to God’s holiness, not only *from* the greatest distance, but *to* the greatest nearness ; we are entitled to be in the holiest of all by the work of Christ. It is of all importance that we see that the work which sheltered us from the judgment of God, the worst and most distant place, is the same which has given us title to enter the brightest and the best place. If His work has done the one, so has His work, and His work only, obtained for us the other.

Now in His one offering there was the burnt-offering, the meat-offering, the peace-offering, as well as the sin-offering. The latter gave the blessed God liberty to have us in the holiest, and through it we are entitled to enter ;

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but besides, in His presence we have fellowship with Him in His satisfaction in Christ, as the Man who glorified Him on earth in death and in life, and who is ever the prosperity-offering for every believer. It is most important to see that it is the finish of Christ's work which can only declare the full effect of it. True, in my soul I may not have reached the finish, but surely if I have not the finish of it before me as He finished it, I have accepted a lower measure than what He has done, and here (though unintentionally) I dishonour Him and suffer loss myself. In all ordinary things the value is unknown until the execution is completed.

The gospel is generally regarded as safety from future judgment, because of faith in the blood of Christ, with present earthly favour and heaven after death. This is rather the blessing of the millennial saint than of the Christian. It is evident Christ's work secured the blessing of the millennial saint as well as that of the Christian. The point to maintain is that His work, and

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nothing superadded to it, has secured the blessing of both the one and the other. His work, blessed be His name, has obtained a place for the Christian in company with Himself, typified by the sons of Aaron consecrated. We are thus, as His companions, those who have derived from Him. "Behold I, and the children whom God hath given me." "Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." His work has secured for us a like place or position with Himself. Hence we are here but strangers and pilgrims, and now earthly prosperity is not to be expected. The work which enabled God, according to His glory, to have us in His house, in fellowship with Himself, the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ, is also the same, in virtue of which, Jesus will yet, as Melchisedec, come forth and bless Israel on the earth; while we, the church, are blessed in heaven as co-heirs with Christ. The same work, but with a different blessing to each

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company. We might have expected this, from the simple fact, that there was the blood of the bullock on the day of atonement for Aaron and his house, the heavenly company ; and the blood of the goat for Israel, or the earthly company. In the type there were two bloods ; in the antitype of course, only one blood ; the blood of Christ.

Now, not only is nearness to God (as the holiest typifies) secured for us by the work of Christ, but also His place is our place. Surely it is not enough to hold that the work of Christ effects a clearance of all guilt ; that is only a part of the great whole. The work of Christ is described, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God," not only (great as it would be) to save us from judgment, but to bring us to God. We have seen that by one offering Christ has effected, according to His own infinite perfection, all that was shadowed forth in types. Thus our approach to God by His work can only be measured by Himself, nay,

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the very glory resting on Him, as the One who has established everything according to God where man dishonoured Him, transforms us into the "same image from glory to glory, as by the Lord the Spirit." Hence we are not only in nearness, but in likeness too. Consequently, the complete effect of His work is to set us in the same place as He is. His work sets us there in the heavenly places in Him. God said to Moses, "I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey." It was in the mind of God one work. It is as much the work of Christ, by His death to open heaven to us, as it was by His blood to shelter us from the judgment in Egypt.

There are four aspects of His death, and it is thus, in parts, we apprehend it. We learn first how His blood shelters us from judgment. Then, when we believe in the death and resurrection of Christ, we are not only

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clear of all our guilt, but we are really, as the type sets forth, "brought to God:" we can sing, "Thou hast guided us in thy strength unto thy holy habitation." Practically, according to the type, we are not in Canaan yet; we have to learn experimentally the death in Numbers xxi. The Son of man is lifted up, and He is now our life: "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Now in the liberty of His life, I am not only dead to sin, but I also learn that having died with Him, I am dead to the world. I am across Jordan; I am in heaven. We are often a long time reaching up to this—the full effect of His work; and yet it is the same work which sheltered us from judgment which lands us in heaven. This is exemplified in the thief on the cross. In one step he is transferred from the deepest degradation and distance, into the greatest elevation in paradise, in the highest place, and there with Christ—the most honoured position. The same work

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brought him from one place, the lowest and the worst, to the highest and the best. The man who would limit Christ's work to the first part and leave out the other, would not only deprive himself of the highest blessing, but he would grievously misrepresent the service of our Lord Jesus Christ. It might be urged that the case of the thief on the cross was exceptional. I only adduce it to prove that a believer could in one step learn in a moment, the full effect of the work of Christ. Nay, more ; it is plain that a believer on the earth receives from heaven the Spirit, the promise of the Father, consequent on Christ being glorified ; not only a well of water springing up into everlasting life ; not only, I repeat, lighting up the heart with the resources which are in Christ, so that he who drinks of it never thirsts, but he is so enriched, that out of his belly flow rivers of living water. It is hardly possible to conceive the exaltation vouchsafed to a man in the scene of all his misery and feebleness, even to

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be a temple of the Holy Ghost. "He shall glorify me, he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." And, moreover, He being the bond of union between us and the Head of the body, the church, making us know "the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." That is, being united to Christ by the Holy Ghost, I can here on earth know the power which set Christ in heavenly places, which raised Him from death, the lowest, man's lowest place, up to God's right hand in the heavenly places; and we all, who were dead in sins, are quickened together, and raised up together, and made sit together in the heavenly places in Christ. That is, the work of Christ has spanned the whole distance between God and man, and His place before God is, through grace, the believer's place. We are not only cleared of all our offences, but in the

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life of Him who cleared us, we “joy in God,” and we are the delight of His heart. He can say, “It is meet we should make merry and be glad.” The “man in Christ” can pass into the highest place, “the third heaven,” and there he is received, not merely as a guest, but one fit and welcome to the innermost circle ; all this simply and solely effected by the work of Christ.

May our hearts apprehend the effect of it day by day more perfectly for His name’s sake.

 GIRDED LOINS.

LUKE XII. 32-53.

THE Lord’s testimony, constantly coming out through the course of His ministry, was that His people would be a people separated from the world. He Himself of, and from, heaven, and we as in Him—so His prayer, “they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” We belong entirely to that heavenly place ; the Father’s

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house is our home, we are not of this world ; the world is without God, it saw no beauty in Christ to admire Him, only enough to hate Him. "The natural mind is enmity against God;" when I get to God, nature is my enemy as it is His. The nature we have received is not of this world ; our relationships are with God, our Father, and the one thing we have to do is, to manifest the life of Christ where we are. I am sitting in heavenly places in Christ, and have to manifest Him. Fear not, little children, get your treasure in heaven, and your heart will be where your treasure is ; not only the kingdom, but *Christ* Himself. The character of the place we are in, and the character we have to maintain in it involves much care and watchfulness. I cannot go through the world at ease, I am obliged to have my loins well tucked up, like a porter, with his hands upon the door, ready to open on the first knock of him for whom the watch is kept. When the heart of a believer is thus with Christ, the secret of the

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Lord is with him, and we learn how *He* is waiting with a perfect and infinite love. Love delights in serving, and when He has all things His own way, when He comes to put all things right, the very first thing He does, is to take us to be with Himself. Then no longer girded, the heart unsealed, all may be at ease, and flow forth without restraint. He will then take the place of service ; as once before He girded His loins to wash His disciples' feet, *now* He will gird Himself, and come forth and serve them. His heart is set upon us, and He sets us in the place of service that we may serve Him. The service may be ever so small ; it is not the value of the gift, but the love that gives it, that is appreciated by the heart that loves. Do you love Him enough to watch for Him ? Do you believe He loves you enough to desire to have you with Him ? Can your heart watch for Him as one thus loving and loved, in full expectation ; and while watching to serve ? Service is connected with the inheritance and rewards.

FRAGMENT.

3

There is practical difficulty in passing through this world, so as to shew all that is so precious to us. I have to go through it as He did. He saw all before Him ; was there any shrinking or turning back ? No ! "How am I straitened till it be accomplished." When the world did its worst, God's love abounded over it. Our place is, to watch, to wait, and to serve. Let us ask our hearts, Is the place in which I am the one He has made for me ? If I look back through the work of one day, how much of it has been for Him ? All else is lost time. How much of our service will bear this character in that day when He rewards the service done to Him ?

J. N. D.

FRAGMENT.

How He links us up with Himself at every step ! In death together with Him, out of death into resurrection with Him ; to be made like Him, and

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to be in the same glory with Him! And this Thy purpose, O God, before the foundation of the world! Then I was present to Thy mind—the blood of Thy Son to be shed for me—Thou wouldst needs have my voice in the hallelujah. There was in Thy eternal mind a needs be that I should bethere to fill up the number of the saved in the mighty chorus, saying, “Blessing unto unto him that sits upon the throne.” He brings out what we are in contrast to what He is. Have you ever known the sweetness of Christ saying the flesh is flesh? Have you ever thanked Him for telling you your nature is utterly ruined. It is everything to accept God’s testimony of what we are and of what Christ is. “All flesh is grass.... the word of the Lord endureth for ever.”

G. V. W.



GRACE.

“THOU therefore, my son, be strong *in the grace* which is in Christ Jesus.” Such is the Spirit’s injunction by Paul to Timothy, when the latter was in tears, and when declension had fully set in. So, also, in parting from the elders of Ephesus, while referring to the character of his own ministry among them, he commends them to God, and the word of *His grace*. It is not to a set of rules and ordinances, but to the word of His grace. As another once wrote: “The call of the church is apart from the world, to do service in the light and strength of the Holy Ghost, and to maintain, in *living spiritual grace*, testimony to a rejected and heavenly Jesus. All within us and around us is contrary to this. Such a call can be upheld, such a dispensation maintained only in the direct grace of the Spirit ministered to elect vessels, and filling them with the freshness and apprehension of truth. No ordered

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services or course of fleshly ordinances can at all answer to this end." Hence Paul further charges Timothy to entrust to faithful men *competent* to instruct others that which he had learned of him. This competency (we learn in 2 Corinthians iii. 5, 6) is of God, who, Paul says, hath made us competent as new covenant ministers.

We can look back, in the close of Acts ii., to the church in its early bloom, when great grace was upon them all (iii. 33), and there see how grace wrought in the assembly itself. Then in Acts xx. we have a further picture of an elect vessel to minister this grace, and how it wrought in one who desired to finish his course with joy, and the ministry he had received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God. What a picture of its working in a man we have here. "Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and many tears." A service carried on in such grace, that "by the space of three years he ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Then what

self-abnegation—his own hands ministering unto his necessities, and not his own merely, but to those that were with him.

Again, if we thus see after what manner he had been with these Ephesians at all seasons from the first day that he came into Asia ; we learn from 2 Corinthians i. 12 that it was his habitual manner. He could boast in this, with the full testimony of his conscience to it, that in simplicity and sincerity, which were of God, and so produced by Him in Paul, not with fleshly wisdom, but *by the grace of God*, he had conducted himself in the world, and more abundantly towards these Corinthians. It was a great thing to say, but true even when rebuking them in his first epistle. The man Moses was very meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth, yet he spake unadvisedly with his lips in calling the people of the Lord rebels. He thus failed to sanctify the Lord in His character of grace, of which it was his privilege to be the channel by means of

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the priestly rod that budded. A saint of God, who lived two hundred years ago, wrote, "I rejoice that I am grace's freeholder," and the closing words of inspiration assure it to all the saints. What other ministry could assert the supremacy of good over evil? Hence the confidence with which Paul appealed to the Corinthians in the assurance that they recognised what he wrote to them, as well as the writer; and that they would be his rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus. Thus his conduct towards them was characterised by divine certainty. If he purposed to visit them, it was not yea, yea; nay, nay. There was no may be or perchance, for he well knew that the Christ he preached to them was Yea and Amen. If all is failure on the part of the saints, the Christ whom Paul preached is the verification of all the promises of God. He preached Him as Son of God, declared to be so in power, according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead. This leads into a new scene beyond man's sin and failure,

and consequent judgment, where not only the supremacy of God's holy nature as light and love is seen to be above the evil, though fully recognising it and dealing with it, but where all the divine purposes are made good in glory to God by us.

It is sweet to think of this supremacy of grace ministered in the unfailing power of the Holy Ghost in a scene where all the sin and break-down of the saints have manifested the need of it, so that the top-stone shall be brought forth with shoutings, crying "Grace, grace unto it." It is needful that evil be detected and rebuked, but recovering power is in grace. Rebuke or judgment deals with *me* if I err, and exposes my emptiness. Grace brings me from its own fulness what I need—it ministers *Christ* to me. Elijah judged the evil of Baal among the people of God, but his journey to Horeb could bring no remedy. The Lord's question "What doest thou *here*, Elijah?" must have told him this. He must journey in a different direction

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altogether—through Jordan and upward, and then Elisha can pursue the ministry of grace with the mantle of the ascended Elijah.

Now, it is all treasured up in the Son of God whom Paul preached. What an unfailing spring of power is there—"strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus." And yet it has its own ways. It was *to spare* them, lest he should have gone with a rod, that Paul had not gone to Corinth. He had purposed, not with yea, yea, and nay, nay, but in the certainty of the actings of grace, to go to them, that they might have a second benefit (grace or favour). His not going was but the same grace acting in another manner. We may well ask as we ponder its exhibition in the servant, what must be the heart of Him from whom it flows? The Lord give us to know better His own blessed ministry of grace, the washing of our feet in the supremacy of His own holy love, which can allow no spot upon us. We are poor channels of such love, yet if we taste it, He would have us so to

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be. We may not reach to the measure of Paul, but He who washes our feet has said, “I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you.” T. H. R.

“THINE . . . AND ON THY
SIDE.”

1 CHRONICLES XII. 18.

THE intense applicability of the truth conveyed by these words at this time, cannot be called in question. The supreme inquiry of the moment is, who are practically the Lord's, and who are on His side ?

The order, too, is striking and significant, for it is first *whose we are*. The circumstances in which David was at this juncture, are familiar to all who search the scriptures ; he was in a rejected and outcast position, and this became of itself *the test*—his position manifested those who were true to his person and interests.

But it is not a little interesting

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that those who thus declare themselves through Amasai, chief of the captains, as true to the person and fortune, if we may so say, of the rejected and despised man of Ziklag, were men who "went over Jordan in the first month, when it had overflowed all his banks." And further, it is said of them in this connection, that "they put to flight all them of the valleys, both toward the east and toward the west." Now, it is blessed to ponder and meditate on that which is set forth in this, to see that all true power, true affection, and true devotedness, spring from *the other side of Jordan*; death is the door to Christ in heaven, or to follow Him with whole-heartedness on earth. It has ever been so, Elisha's newly acquired mantle of power, received from the one to whom he separated himself (2 Kings ii. 2-14), leads him, ere he uses it, to Jordan, as well. Alas, how little such a solemn reality as this, has set its mark upon the saints as a whole! Not only are carnal wisdom, earthly-mindedness, and worldliness, allowed to

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pass unexposed and unrebuked, but it has been even attempted with disastrous effects to press them into the service and testimony of the Lord. Let us be well assured that we must leave behind in death practically, self and its surroundings, ere we can follow the true David in His rejection, and be devoted to His Person and interests on earth: yes, that to us impassable river, until He made a road through it by going into it Himself, is the secret of all true loyalty of heart to Him, is moreover the secret of all power by the Spirit in service for Him during the long, weary night of His absence.

“Thine *are we*.” Now this was as regards David more than words; first it was with these Benjamite *acts*, for they were *separated* men, who had *gone out* to David, to the despised place; these words, of such dreadful import to many in these days, demonstrated the reality of David’s faithful followers; they might well say to David, “Thine are we,” having proved it so clearly. Are we so acting and expressing to

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our rejected Lord and Master in these days ? Have we acted and spoken in the spirit of "Thine are we" ? Alas, how little, must be the truthful answer of every heart and conscience at all awake and exercised ; but more than this, how little even do we measure, or judge, or weigh things *in relation to Christ* ! Hence, the insensibility that seems to have set in, the frosts and snows of the winter of the soul, the icy coldness that seems to have asserted its influence on so many hearts ; oh, that we might, as a whole, be awakened out of this sleep, this death-like slumber, by His own voice, saying to us in power, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from amongst the dead." But how little plain do we make it *appear* that we are Christ's, and yet we in language and speech own Him as our Lord ; but where are the *proofs* that He is so really to us ? Where, it may be asked, is our *subjection* to His authority, to His will, to His word ? Self-importance, self-justification, self-assertion, self-exaltation, in its most specious forms,

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is the sad crop occupying the ground where fruit for Him should have been found.

“Thine are we.” Most searching words where reality and uprightness of heart are found, and the very contrast with, and the opposite to, the prevailing spirit of the hour, “with our *tongue* will we prevail ; our *lips* are our own : who is Lord over us.” But further, observe, that to be really where we can take that place with Christ, and be, as well as say, “Thine are we,” Jordan must not only be passed when it had overflowed all its banks, that is, death, in faith *accepted* by us in all its extent, but it must be *carried* by us as well (2 Cor. iv. 10), and carried by us, not once, or in a way, but “*always*.” Oh, the reality of the “dying of Jesus ;” that is the death we must always carry ; but how unsparing it is ; nothing of *man*, not to speak of nature or flesh, can be tolerated here. Why is it we see and hear so much of man ? Is it not because this great reality is avoided by many, refused by others, and dreaded

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by all? Lord, help us always to bear about in our bodies the dying of Jesus!

“Thine are we.” This, we may be assured, is the desire of the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ as to all that are His own; they are *in fact*, blessed be His name, His own; His own too whom He loves right on to the end, through everything, and in spite of all! We may well say, what should we do if it were not so? But the fact underlies the great practical truth we seek to enforce, even that what is true of us in His amazing grace and love, should be *practically* recognised and acted upon by us. How blessed to see it in the apostle of the Gentiles, he who followed Christ as none before or since, and to see it declared in a moment of human suspense and emergency, even when in the shipwreck all hope of being saved was taken away; what words of comfort from the mouth of a poor prisoner, as he opens it to comfort and cheer the despairing and the overwhelmed: “There stood by me this night, the angel of God, whose I am,

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and whom I serve.” Mark those blessed words well, “whose I am ;” what dignity, what confidence, what affection, these utterances breathe ; Oh, that the beloved saints of God tasted of the liberty of belonging to Christ ; exclusively and entirely to be to Him, “a garden *enclosed*, a spring *shut up*, a foundation *sealed*”—that is, fully, finally, and only for Him ! “Whose I am,” “Thine are we ;” our happy confession to Himself and to all around us in *acts* and in *words*.

But we have also another mark of true devotedness in their further confession to the rejected David—“and on thy side ;” indeed, we might say this is the simple consequence of “Thine are we.” How grateful to the heart of David this confession at this moment, hunted as he was, like a partridge on the mountains. It is just this that one sees the immense lack of at the present time. “Who is on the Lord’s side, who ?” may well be asked. Now, indeed, every side has its adherents and supporters, but, alas, how few take

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sides with Christ ; and, moreover, there is a lack of perception, a density of spiritual understanding, and blindness of spiritual vision, as to His claims and rights. His presence in the midst of His gathered saints is deemed compatible with moral and doctrinal leaven ; His truth, yea, even about Himself as the exalted Man in glory, Head of a new creation, with all the blessed consequences to His own, is reviled and sneered at by those who once *professed* to love it. The profession (alas, it is to be feared, in many cases little more than profession) of His name and His rejected place on earth, is allied with earthly-mindedness and worldliness in its many phases ; “divine ground,” as it is called, is rudely grasped as a platform upon which man in the flesh is exalted, and the many appliances to further this end, such as ambition of various kinds, covetous grasping after money, with the pride and oppression that ever accompany it, are all here in full energy ; and if any are found with enough of conscience, not to say

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devotedness to Christ even, to make a stand against this growing tide, they are accounted as an extreme party, to be avoided and shunned at all cost.

These are sad and sorrowful matters to be met and faced by us if we would be in truth and verity on Christ's side, and loyal to His interests, who is our rejected Master and Lord. Is it to be wondered at, that the infidel, the free-thinker, the scoffer of the age, should all demand with a kind of triumphant sneer, “Where are the disciples, friends, and witnesses, of the rejected Man, who had in the world but a manger at His birth, a gibbet between two thieves at His death, and no place where to lay His head in His life?” May we take this to heart more really and truly than we have done—“on thy side.” Oh, that the blessedness of it, the joy of being associated with Christ in His present sorrow and rejection, because devoted to Him in the power of His love, might be more ours in His grace; what a reality to find in Him *one worth losing all for*, if only to be in

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company with Him ; this is the one desire and aim of the devoted heart, its single object to be only *with Him*, whether in heaven or on earth. "Thine are we, and on thy side"—the language of its loyalty and its love. Another thought, and we have finished ; the day of Christ's rejection by the world is fast drawing to a close ; the opportunity for love to express itself in devotion to its object will soon be past. He who is the Man of *patience* now will soon return to become the Man of joy for ever. All His own will make up the substance of His joy for ever ; but oh, to meet His heart somewhat *now* ; to walk with Him *now* ; to be on His side *now* ! May the Lord give purpose of heart for this, by endearing His blessed Son more to our affections, for His name's sake. W. T. T.

 WHY ARE WE HERE ?

THE Lord has two reasons for keeping us here. One, to fit us for the place which He has appointed for us in the future

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spiritual temple. All the hammering is done now ; as the flesh is broken down, and set aside by the growth of grace, we are accordingly a fit material for His temple. It is plain that no one practically gets rid of the flesh as a whole here ; but as it is set aside, and grace in the power of Christ's life supersedes it, we are accordingly of that measure and size ; and thus one stone differs from another stone : but the preparation goes on now. That alone will remain which is of Christ.

The other reason for leaving us here is that we may serve Him. He has been rejected here ; we are the members of His body, and we are never truly happy in divine joy, but as we are true to this most intimate relationship to Him. The more I am through the Spirit in this relationship, the better I do everything, and the better I fulfil every duty and relationship here. The nearer I am to the Lord (see Eph.), the better do I behave myself in every ordinance of God, because it is of God. Once the heart is convinced of the great

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reality of this relationship, there is a growing readiness to part company with everything which would interfere with it. Though "no infant's changing pleasure is like my wandering mind," God's Spirit in my heart keeps it assured of the blessedness of my great relationship to Him, to whom I owe everything; and thus the two reasons for my remaining in this world mutually help one another. One's christian life here, is therefore most interesting, and incomparably beautiful, for it is all of God, in the midst of the greatest incongruities.

The Lord keep us more simply subject to Him in everything, and thus we shall find that the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness and peace.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE PRESENT OPPOSITION.

IN 2 Timothy we are given the varied influences which hinder and mar the truth. The first is, that "all who are

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in Asia have turned away from me." (Paul.) The fact that those among whom the apostle had laboured chiefly should turn away from him, necessarily had a very injurious effect on souls. Those who had not known him, and who had heard of his teaching, must be shaken in their minds as to the validity of it, when those who had heard him first and most turned away from him. If I turn away from a teacher when I have only first heard him, it may be alleged that I have not understood him; but when those who had known him well turned away from him, after having received from him the deepest truth, they must have been perverted by direct Satanic agency.

It is a different thing to be slow or unwilling to receive a truth, and to renounce and abandon it after having received it. In the one case I have not as yet felt in my conscience the divine verity of it; in the other, after having received it as the truth of God, I have deliberately abandoned it. There can-

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not be any growth until this retrogression has been confessed and relinquished; whereas, if I have never received it, there is still hope that the word may be effectual. The former case is of the character of the sow that was washed, and hence it is "better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." A truth may be refused, without a surrender of conscience, but when truth once accepted has been given up, then the conscience has been corrupted and over-ridden.

We can hardly conceive anything more damaging to one earnest about the truth, than to find that those who had long received it, and from the best teacher, should now, quite openly and avowedly give up the teacher, for with the teacher, all that was identified with him is surrendered and abandoned. The impression, which such a surrender would leave on the mind is, that the truth with which Paul was identified, was, after all, only of high pretension

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and little moral weight, and without a divine hold on the heart. It is a great success to the enemy when any renounce the truth which they had accepted, because it gives the impression that it was not morally true; that it was found to be chimerical. This is like the ten spies who commended the land, but said that to possess it was untenable and impracticable—a depreciation which weighs with those who seek an excuse to escape from their responsibility.

To “the man of God” at such a juncture, the word is, “Be not therefore ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of me, his prisoner.” It is a most critical time when there is defection all around; as in the days of Shammah, when the people fled from the Philistines, but he stood in the midst of the ground and defended it, and slew the Philistines.” (2 Sam. xxiii. 11, 12.) Like a tree that has blossomed well, has made a great show, but a blight has fallen on it; the power of the tree is tested, and the result is that

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only a solitary pear here and there tells of its name and nature.

One requires to be in the presence of the Lord in a scene of unclouded purity, to be able to form an adequate idea of the terrible power and machination of Satan at work, when saints openly turned aside from the greatest servant God had ever used to instruct them. If they had never tasted of the good of the truth, if they never had heard of it from the lips of the apostle of the Gentiles, there would have been some palliation for their perversion and moral blindness. But to be so stultified that they should belie the truth they had once accepted, and thus close their eyes to the brightest light that ever shone into the heart of man, declares that they had fallen under the power of distinct Satanic aggression.

Thus the era of retrogression began, and surely there is no one who has carefully taken note of the opposition to the truth in our time, but must have seen how one of the most significant marks of the enemy's power, is the

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shameless way in which some have turned away from the truth which they had once accepted, as well as from the teacher they once revered as God's messenger of it.

Now while this deep dark foe was preying on the consciences of the saints, secretly abstracting from them the very eyesight of the soul, there were also in the assembly openly, "profane and vain babblings" which would "increase unto more ungodliness;" so much so, that two men, well known, maintained that the resurrection had taken place already; that is, that there would be an open denial of fundamental truth. When the assembly became so demoralised as to suffer such an intrusion, it was very evident that the Lord's presence was not there; that the saints were not in faith gathered to His name. If there had been even two or three of them thus gathered, such a grievous intrusion would have been resisted; and if the conscience of the assembly, not merely the conscience of a few, were not aroused to the enormity of their course,

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there was then no option left but to separate from these vessels to dishonour.

In the first instance we have the abandonment of the teacher sent of God, and once accepted as such. Next we have in the assembly the unblushing advocacy of a teaching which undermines Christianity ; "saying that the resurrection has taken place already." Many in Christendom are leavened with this doctrine, who would not avow it. Surely the godless way in which Christians, Corinthian-like, seek pleasure as if their bodies were not the Lord's, is a practical denial of the resurrection of the body ; it is the principle of "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." (1 Cor. xv. 32.) Is it to be wondered at that concurrent with, or consequent upon, an avowed abandonment of the apostle (the servant of God, to whom specially the truth of "the mystery of the gospel" was committed), the next inroad of the enemy would be to introduce false doctrine into the assembly ? When this evil was permitted in the house of

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God it was defiled, and the only course open to the faithful, was simply to separate from the vessels to dishonour, and to identify themselves with those “who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” Thus as a true remnant they would maintain the truth which had been relinquished, and they, gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, would still enjoy His presence here, and as God’s house, where He could make known His pleasure.

Hence the action of divine power is greater in restoring than in introducing. In the latter a space is necessary, but in the other all the influences which together had dismantled and almost destroyed the assembly—God’s house—are overcome, and it comes forth, as it were, from the dead in spite of them. Satan seemed to succeed when everything was at its prime, but God sets Satan at nought when, through even a handful, He restores the testimony, and then, too, there is a greater manifestation of His power *for* us, though not by us.

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We have considered the nature of the opposition to the truth when failure set in. Now we have to dwell on the character of it in "difficult times." The opposition in these times is twofold ; one when the truth is withstood by an exhibition of power, and the other, when their ears are turned away from the truth, and are turned to fables. The first is more with reference to the teachers ; the second, to the congregation at large.

It is almost inscrutable, how one professing to be a Christian, could attempt to withstand the truth, like Jannes and Jambres. We must remember that these withstood Moses by claiming to do the same works that Moses did by "the finger of God." They would neutralise that which was of God, by shewing that they, by their enchantments, could do the same. Their object was to defeat the work of God, and to prove that they were as powerful as Moses, because they could do the same as he did. They did not assume to be sent of God, as Moses

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did, but their intention was to prevent the people from owning that it was God's hand, by their doing the like. It is not easy to point out at the present hour a form of opposition which fully answers to this, though no doubt it does exist. Plainly, any who teach that by one's own works and penances, man can procure his salvation, withstand the truth, and set up a power which is opposed to God's power. But there is a more subtle form than this ; where a measure of evangelical truth is received, and with it is supplemented the doctrine that one can attain to perfection or holiness by an exercise apart from the Spirit of God ; or where there is any expectation or effort to sway the hearts of men by human eloquence or man's wisdom. In fine, where there is any attempt to arrive at anything similar to what God's power effects, there is a resort to the enemy's power to withstand the truth of God. There cannot be a more effectual way of withstanding the truth than to seek to produce something

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similar to its effects by a hostile power. It would hardly be credited that any sensible man could be thus deceived, but scripture warns us of it ; and alas ! we see it in our own day, often coupled with true light in the soul. The design of the enemy is very evident, even to defeat the truth ; and when he cannot prevent the soul from accepting the gospel in part, he, because of his unremitting hostility, pursues each of us unceasingly, to see, if possibly, he can at any stage, thwart the work of God. It is remarkable that it is Paul's doctrine and example which are given to us as the preservation from this opposition. It will be remembered that the magicians were defeated when it came to a question of producing life (Ex. viii. 16-18), and hence, the sure and true way of controverting this opposition, is by setting forth the height and greatness of God's calling in our life. Naturally, one would have supposed that the course to be adopted in order to expose an imitation, would be by instituting a comparison between

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the real and the spurious ; but that is not the way enjoined here. It is by insisting on the greatness of the positive truth as practically exhibited. "Thou hast fully known my doctrine," &c. ; and, "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." The more fully I am acquainted with the scriptures, the more am I formed and swayed by them ; as one has said, "I not only get thoughts from scripture, but scripture forms my thoughts ;" and thus in a very blessed way I am kept from man's ways and devisings, and adhere simply and truly to God's ways and manner of acting.

When one is not proof to this part of the opposition, the second is sure to prevail, namely, as is described in 2 Timothy iv. 3, 4. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine ; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears ; and they shall turn away their ears from the

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truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” It is not now trying to neutralise the truth by seeking to produce an action similar to what God’s power produces; and it is not only the deliberate turning away their ears from the truth, but there is the turning of them to fables, myths, things that never had any existence, false creations of the mind, by a power foreign to God; it is an entire surrender of the truth for myths. But the servant of God must not yield. “Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.” And the apostle himself is the example of the solitary unit suffering for the truth of God; an encouragement to us, that if through faithfulness to Christ, we are reduced to the same isolation, we shall find the same consolation and succour from the Lord that he found. “Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the

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mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST.

PEOPLE say, "Ah! but after all we must appear before the judgment-seat"—very true; and how perfect, how blessed are God's ways in His word, in all! I ask you now (I am supposing that you have full *peace* through the blood—otherwise you cannot thus look on it), in looking back from your youth—well! we see heaps of flesh, a quantity of evil things every day. Does it trouble or distress you? Not a bit! I look back, and oh! it is to see the unwearied grace which has dealt with me, led me, borne with me, come in so marvellously, touching my heart, and making me weep with the sense of His love and gracious tenderness, where I had looked for chastening. But if it is thus in looking back now, how much

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more will it be in the moment when, as set in His glory, I shall know His ways, even as I am known? Just in measure as I can really judge my ways in His presence *now*, the effect is adoration and praise. What will it be *then*? “We must all appear,” rather, “we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ,” and special grace there is in this manifestation. I ask, “How do we get there?” As fashioned like unto His glorious body. Shall I be afraid then? Why we shall all be conformed to the image of His Son. To this we are predestinated. There is that which is prepared for Paul, which I shall not have; but each will have his own.

Perhaps there are things we would withhold from Him; some little bit of self we would keep back; no outward evil, but something in my heart which I am sparing—something which is not *Christ in me*. Ah! we must be manifested. All is grace; but the present effect of it is to manifest the conscience *now*.

J. N. D.

GENESIS.

HEADINGS OF CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE creation of the heavens and the earth. The condition of chaos of the earth. The formation of the habitable world, the sphere of man's responsibility, by the word of God, in the work of six days. (1.) Light manifested, and divided from darkness, forming day and night. (2.) The atmospheric heaven. (3.) The gathering together of the waters in seas; the appearing of the dry land, earth: the earth made fruitful in grass, in herb yielding seed, and fruit-tree with seed in itself. (4.) The heavenly luminaries—sun and moon—for the divisions of time, and to give light upon earth; the stars also. (5.) The creation of the first living creatures of the waters; and of fowl, to fly in the heavens. (6.) The earth brings forth the beasts of the earth, and creeping things. The divine council to make

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man : man's creation, in the image and likeness of God, male and female, and given place of lordship over all other creatures of the sea and earth. The appointment of food, the herb bearing seed and fruit-tree for man, the green herb for all other creatures.

CHAPTER II.

The rest of God the seventh day, when His work was done. The manner of man's creation of the dust of the ground, with the breath of life of the Lord God : his relationship with the Lord God, with all subordinate creation, and with his wife. The garden of Eden, and the river thereof : the central tree of life, and that of responsibility ; the latter forbidden to man, with the penalty of death on disobedience. The woman's creation of the rib taken from the man, and the institution of marriage.

CHAPTER III.

The serpent's subtlety. Sin enters into the world : the woman, deceived, lusts, and comes into transgression.

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Adam hearkens to his wife and transgresses. Their efforts to hide their nakedness. Conscience awakes to fear in the presence of God, and drives from Him, who comes to seek the lost. Adam seeks to justify himself. The judgment of the serpent, and in that the woman's seed announced, and victory over him, the only hope for ruined man. The present governmental consequences on earth of sin—to the woman, sorrow in conception, and subjection to her husband; to the man, curse upon the ground, sorrow and toil in partaking of its fruits, and death.

Adam gives Eve her name, according to the announcement of her seed, as mother of all living. God clothes them with skins of slain animals. The tree of life debarred to fallen man, driven out from Eden, lest he should eat and perpetuate his ruin: Cherubim with flaming sword bar the way of it.

CHAPTER IV.

The birth and pursuits of Cain and

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Abel. Cain seeks access to God by an offering of fruits of the ground that God had cursed, and is rejected. Abel's faith finds it by the sacrifice of the firstlings of his flock, and the fat thereof. Cain hates and slays his righteous brother, and becomes, under the judgment of God, a fugitive and vagabond upon earth, but with a mark of the Lord upon him that his life should be preserved. The world takes shape in Cain, gone out from the presence of the Lord, and his race (Chanoch "instructed"), with its cities, or pastoral life, music, and manufactures. Seth is born to Eve, and in the days of her son, (Enosh, "frail," "mortal man") men began to call on the name of the Lord.

CHAPTER V.

The race of "the Adam" (male and female), traced from Seth, begotten in his (fallen) likeness and image to Noah's sons. The reign of death; but broken in upon in Enoch, who walked with God, and was translated that he should not see death.

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CHAPTER VI.

The sons of God mingle with the daughters of men. Power, corruption, and violence characterise men. God proposes to destroy them with the earth. The just Noah finds grace, and by faith prepares an ark, according to the commandment of God, to the saving of his house.

CHAPTER VII.

Noah and his house enter the ark, with every sort of beasts of the earth and birds of the air, and of every creeping thing. The flood is brought upon the world of the ungodly. The waters prevail 150 days. The Lord shut in Noah, in safety.

CHAPTER VIII.

God remembers Noah and all that were with him in the ark, and the waters decrease continually. The sending out of the raven and the dove. After a year and seventeen days, at the word of God, Noah leaves the ark, and builds an altar to the Lord, offering burnt-offerings thereon, the sweet savour of

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which becomes the new ground of Jehovah's relations with the restored earth—no more to be cursed on the old basis of man's hopeless condition, nor smitten again with a flood; and the orderly succession of seasons is guaranteed while the earth remains.

CHAPTER IX.

Government set up in Noah. Every living thing given man for food, but the blood, which is the life, reserved. The primary law of government, as to the shedding of man's blood, whether by man or beast. An everlasting covenant established with Noah and his seed, and every living creature, that there shall be no more a flood to destroy the earth; the bow set in the cloud as the token of the covenant. Government breaks down, in Noah's failing to govern himself. The providential ordering of races in the sons of Noah, by whom the whole earth was overspread, is announced. Ham, failing in respect towards his father, is cursed, and condemned to be a servant

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to Shem and Japheth. Shem is owned, as in special relation of blessing, with the Lord God. God would enlarge Japheth, even to dwelling in the tents of Shem.

CHAPTER X.

The generations of the sons of Noah. To Japheth is traced the origin of the races by whom the coasts of the Gentiles were divided, among whom are recognised the Cymry, or Celts (Gomer); the Scythians of Europe (Magog); Ionians, or Greeks (Javan); Thracians? (Tiras), and others derivatively.

To Ham: Cush (Ethiopian and Asiatic); the Egyptians (Mizraim, literally, "the two Egypts"); Phut; the families of the Canaanites, and derivatively the beginning of imperial energy in Nimrod at Babel.

To Shem: the Elamites, Assyrians, Syrians (Aram), and derivatively the Hebrews.

With their respective territories, God setting the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel (see ver. 19), by whom the

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nations were separated in the earth, according to kindred, and tongue, and country.

CHAPTER XI.

The occasion of the separation (presented in its results in chapter x.), men seeking to associate and centralise in the building of Babel; the judgment of God on the undertaking, confounding the common language, and thus scattering them.

The genealogy of the favoured race of Shem then given to Abram. The average age cut down by half, in the time of Peleg, in whose days the earth was divided.

Terah, father of Abraham, moves, with his family and nephew, Lot, from Ur of the Chaldees, to go to Canaan, halts at Haran, and dies there.

“PROVING WHAT IS
ACCEPTABLE TO THE LORD.”

EPHESIANS v. 10.

THIS is a short exhortation containing nothing attractive for the intellect, but

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very much for the heart. Are we doing it? How much of the “*proving*” has there been in your course and in mine this day? How much of real, earnest, godly exercise as to what was the Lord’s mind about each little occurrence?

“Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.” (1 John ii. 20.) This is true of every Christian, whether only a babe, or more advanced as a young man, or a father in Christ. And this gives to us the power to do what the verse I have quoted exhorts us to do.

Is there then anything in your daily path with which Christ can have fellowship? (You will be instructed as to this in the word.) Are this and that “acceptable unto the Lord”? If so then persevere in it, go on with it. Let no human influence deter you from this path. Why? Because the Lord is with you, and can there be anything like *that*? You have His own blessed presence, and favour, and *sympathy*, and they will compensate, even if you have to face all the world’s frowns.

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But again, Is there anything in your daily path or allowed in yourself, that is *not* "acceptable unto the Lord"? If so (suffer one to exhort you and himself too) judge it, have done with it, refuse it, and do all this *at once*; and why? You are risking the loss of the Lord's present favour and company with you. To lose the sense of these is to lose all that is worth living for in this world. To have to tread this world *alone*! What a cheerless blank the Christian life would be. And I *do* tread it alone if Christ is not practically with me, and this when I may be looked upon by others as a pious person.

Is it an established truth for our hearts that the Lord has not only dealt with and settled the question of our sins, but that now the desire of His heart is to be *with us*—daily—continually near; the One I can consult in every difficulty, and on whose love I can rest all the day long? What is my Christianity worth, if it does not minister these to my soul? To have Christ (as He was at Bethany) at home

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with *me* on earth, is only surpassed by one thing, namely, the blessed future, when I shall be at home with Him in heaven. (John xiv. 3.)

H. C. A.

HOW DOES ONE GET HEART-REST ?

I HAVE been interested in your question, as to how one gets soul and heart-rest. First there must be rest to the conscience—"I will give you rest." There is not full rest until liberty is known ;—that is, that I am free from the law of sin and death. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath set me free from the law of sin and of death." (Rom. viii. 2.)

Then there is an assured sense of welcome to the Father's house. There is making merry in the heart because of His reception. But this is all outside this scene, and only enjoyed as one is in heart there. The Father is the contrast to the world, and His love

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preserves from the world. The world and His love are not compatible.

But even though this be known, I do not believe it gives rest of heart. I believe that there is only rest of heart as one enjoys the company of the Lord in *details* down here. I have a companion who knows me perfectly, loves me perfectly, and whose power is unlimited. It is the knowledge of Christ which satisfies the heart of the pilgrim. "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that Christ may be my gain." When we have learnt the value of His company in our own circumstances we enjoy a continuance of it in the holiest, which is our new sphere. As we know Him in our own sphere, and find His love better than wine, we could not be in His own sphere apart from Him, and we know our union with Him there.

The stages of the soul are: first, justification, when the love of God is shed abroad in my heart by the Holy

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Ghost which He hath given me. I know the Father's reception ; my state then is liberty—justification of life. It is literally finding true of myself that which is true for me. In liberty I am in the full work of the Saviour. Now another great field of blessing is opened out to my soul. It is that my Saviour is my Priest. The Saviour had to do with sins and sin. The priest has to do with my infirmity.

It is Christ in His sympathy who satisfies my heart in this untoward place ; as Mary found in John xi. ; as indeed the disciples found so fully that they could say they lacked nothing.

It is simply wonderful the solace the heart finds in Christ when He is known in His sympathy. "His left hand under my head, his right hand doth embrace me." It is the nursing that attaches the child to the mother, even more than the relationship, though, of course, the relationship is greater. It is the tenderness of the Lord's nursing that attaches our hearts to Him, though His saving us is more ; and it

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is really the nearness which we enjoy in His tender care of us that deepens in our hearts His greatest work in dying for us.

It is when we are thus attached to Him that the gospel of glory is really appreciated by us ; for the great thing in entering into it is, that we are conformed into the same image.

There is nothing so gratifying to a devoted heart as to be like its object ; then to be united to Him ; to know it is the crown of everything. The heart is perfectly restful, and in concert with Him does His pleasure.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS DAY.

THE EFFECTS WHICH SPRING FROM UNION WITH CHRIST.

“WE love him because he first loved us.” His love to us is the origin and spring of all our love to Him. Hence the better and more fully we know His love and can enter into it, the better we love Him.

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There are, I might say, three measures of our love to Him. The first, when we know what He has done for us as Saviour; second, when we know what He is doing for us as Priest; and, thirdly, when we know union with Him as our Head. His love for each of us existed in the whole three before we knew the first, consequently it is only when we know the three that we truly know the love that led Him to do the first—to die for us. He “loved me, and gave himself for me” embraces everything; He loved the church and gave himself for it: yet our love is always measured by the measure we know of His love.

When I know Him as my Saviour, as the One who bore the judgment for me, who was delivered for my offences and raised again for my justification, then the love of God is shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost which is given to me. I begin to be without fear, for as His love is known, fear departs. It is when we are relieved from the fear of judgment by His

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work that we have the first sense of love to Him. The freedom from fear assured to our hearts by Himself (as when He said to Peter "Fear not") makes Him dearer to us than anything else ; and as "they brought their ships to land and followed Him," so does every one who has tasted this measure of His love. Like Jonathan to David, when He saw that by the hand of David, Goliath, the terror of his soul, had been completely removed, his head in David's hand, "the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." (1 Sam. xviii. 4.)

It is very interesting to note the effect of this measure. The heart has learned that through a Man--the Lord Jesus Christ--it is relieved of all fear in the presence of God. Where the fear existed, there it has been removed ; and the consequence is, that the heart clings to

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this Person, and delights to surrender for His sake. - The woman in Luke vii. 36 going into the Pharisee's house, a place she would naturally shrink from, in order to express her love to Jesus as her Saviour, sets forth in pattern, one who has reached this measure.

We all know how striking and effective it is when we see one now and again so attracted to Him, that there is an open and public surrender of property or natural advantages in order to make much of Him. The One from heaven is more to the heart than any property here. Love likes to exalt its object at its own loss.

The next measure of His love made known to us is the way He is "able to sympathise with our infirmities." We grow in a deeper sense of the first measure as we advance in the knowledge of His love. It is like the growth of a tree, every advance in the tree increases the first growth, so that the bottom of the tree is ever the greatest part of it. In the first measure

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all the question of sin has been settled, and by the Spirit, in the freedom of His life, we are, though encompassed with infirmity, moving onward and upward. Then we learn that He never leaves us nor forsakes us ; but as we are near Him, He sympathises with us, as He Himself had felt in a similar trial or difficulty. He cannot sympathise with wilfulness ; He does with infirmities. He took our infirmities on Him and bare our sicknesses. The One who perfectly knows us, perfectly loves us, and is perfectly able to feel with us ; He, in divine power, is ever in the aspect suited to cheer and support us ; and we find Him thus when our faith is simple. In the storm He is asleep ; that is the aspect His sympathy takes. Unbelief is occupied with the storm ; faith learns how He is a very present help in the time of trouble.

Mary of Bethany knew Him in this measure ; she knew His sympathy, while Martha, who suffered from the same sorrow, was too unsubdued to know it. The knowledge of this

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measure is very effective. It is not so much the thought of giving to Him in any open way as with Jonathan, but now nothing can satisfy but His company ; we cannot do without Him. The more we use Him in our daily difficulties, and learn how He would act in them, (and thus His own grace is imparted to us,) the less can we bear to be here without Him. The most valued thing as belonging to this scene is freely buried with Him ; and this is properly the difference between the alabaster box of John xii. and Luke vii.

It is a most wonderful history. How happy to remember all the way that He has led us ! Surely if Elisha could feel that Elijah was so indispensable to him that nothing but a double portion of his spirit could make up for his absence, how much more with us who know anything of the company of our blessed Lord, so infinitely beyond that of Elijah !

One is now like Ruth to Naomi. A Person commands our whole being. It is not now surrender of property in

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testimony of my heart's affection, but it is that a Person is more to me than anything here, and that I can readily leave everything I have known and valued, as Rebekah did for Isaac. The One who is my stay and only comfort on this earth has left it, hence I am running on to heaven, for "He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry."

Now we come to the third measure of His love in which every measure is fully learned. In this measure we know the exceeding greatness of the power that wrought in Christ: we know that we are united to Him by the Holy Ghost. The One whom we know as our Saviour and High Priest is our Head, "from whom all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." It is from this altitude that we can acquire some apprehension of His love "that passeth knowledge." For it is when we know our calling that, as in Ephesians iii. 14-20, we know "the love that passeth knowledge," that we

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“might be filled even to all the fulness of God.”

The knowledge of union, which is the consummation of love, has an effect on us entirely different from any previous measure of His love. True it is, that then the greatness of His love in giving Himself is fully known, and hence, as I have said, His giving Himself to death is ever the sure ground for His doing anything.

Now let us try to gather from scripture some of the effects which spring from the knowledge of union with Christ. I believe the first great effect is restfulness of heart. Surely as united to Him I know that as He is, so am I in this world. See the effect on Mary Magdalene as a pattern, when she heard His words, “I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” The everlasting bond of union is the climax of affection. There cannot be more, and there never can be less. The heart rests in an indissoluble tie to its object. It cannot be made surer of what it loves. When

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the heart has not learned this, it is ever to a great degree occupied with itself, with relation, I admit, to the Lord, but then there is not complete restfulness; hence I believe this is its first effect. Stephen knew it in power when he, through the Holy Ghost, "looked up steadfastly into heaven."

Now, restfulness being the first effect, the next is, that I am in spirit where He is; His place is my place, an enjoyment and reality which I could not know here, if I were not united to Him. My joy is full. I am in fellowship with the Father and the Son. An immense field of blessing is now opened out to me, which is embodied in the prayer. (Eph. iii. 14-20.)

Next, as down here, I am devoted to His pleasure; I know in whom I have believed, and like the disciples, though I am where He is not, His words are now the one thought of my heart. "If any man love me, he will keep my words." It is evident one is now in quite a new line. It has been said that a relationship generates its

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own affections, hence there is now an entirely new experience to the heart. As one Spirit with the Lord, I feel I am entirely under His control. The church is subject to Christ. I have now but One to please. It is both my duty and my joy.

If the entirely new position in which I am set through union with Christ be not seen, we shall not be able to understand the drawing of heart to Him which springs from that relationship.

Obedience is ever connected with dependence. Next to obedience, or keeping His words, I get the sense of His confidence in me. My heart looks for His confidence. "I call you not servants, but friends." "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." There is no greater confirmation of His unhindered love than that He confides in us; no greater joy to my heart, as He said to Peter, "Feed my sheep"—"Feed my lambs." He failed because of confidence in himself, but the Lord would have confidence in him. What joy to my heart when this is known!

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We are next in concert with Him, an experience of untold blessedness when I can share with Him in His interests. If I am not enjoying union I could not be in company with Him in His present work, even to "sanctify" the church. This is His present chief interest, and the nearer I am to Him and the more subject I am to Him (like Sarah) calling Him Lord, the more He leads me into what His heart is set on. If the heart of the Queen of Sheba was entranced when she saw all the personal interests of Solomon, how much more is mine, when the Holy Ghost glorifies Him to me; as He said, "He shall take of mine and shew it unto you." It is not easy to describe the sense of His love—the intimacy of affection—known to the heart as it is thus associated with Him in service. Hence only now is true service entered on; and, as I am serving Him according to His pleasure, my heart knows the truth of His words, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

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The love that accepts my service binds my heart to itself, for when we serve from love, our love is always increased, as a mother's love for her child.

Service embraces the assembly and its prosperity ; a great circle of interest, as the faithful wife devoted to the interests of her lord in his absence, beginning with "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" up to the highest point, "until we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ," reaching out to every detail which would subserve to this great end ; and finally, "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might," resisting every force of the enemy to turn us aside from making known "the mystery of the gospel."

To the heart in true service, only one thing remains, and that is to see Him. The heart will be fully satisfied when we see Him. The one loving Him best, and serving Him best, the bride in

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character, has but one leading desire, even to see Him ; and hence in company with the Spirit, says to Him, "Come !" while still unwearied in service. Surely it is only the heart that lives on His love that can know the way love to Him is deepened and increased, as the sense of His coming is a felt reality to it. Surely the wise virgins trimmed their lamps to go out to meet Him. The nearer He is, the more the heart longs to see Him. He promotes love in our hearts by leading us into the consciousness of His being near. Thus proximity to Him produces suitability ; as with Rebekah, when she caught sight of Isaac, she became in appearance suited for him, "She took a veil, and covered herself."

Thus feebly have I set forth some of the great effects which spring from a knowledge of union with Christ. The subject delights one, but it is too much like music at a distance. One catches a little of it, but the nearer you come to it, the more you are entranced by it.

May we draw nearer and nearer until

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we are not only filled with the melody, but our hearts wholly captivated by His love.

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WHEN Christ comes to fetch His people, His power will be put forth. They cannot step into the cloud save by His power. Many do not disallow things of the flesh which they ought to disallow. They get happy in the thought of the Lord's coming, and then something inconsistent with it hinders joy. You may judge everything in self that is inconsistent, but even then you will feel that you must be dependent on Christ to light up the hope in the heart, and to keep it burning brightly. There must be the crippling of all self-confidence.

The Lord gave a promise, that He will fulfil. "I will come again, and receive you unto myself." He has not forgotten it. All in connection with it has got its measure from Christ having laid down His life and having taken it again. He goes up to heaven, and

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says, "I go to prepare a place in my Father's house. I will come again and fetch you." He had got a place of His own, and these adopted ones are to be in it with Him. Directly the Son is at home, He must have a place prepared for us to be with Him there. If I think of heaven only, my ideas about it are vague ; but when I think of Him in heaven, it makes a home for my heart in a place where all His glory can flow forth—where the Father's will is ever being done. When we look up now, we know He is there, and quite at home. He left heaven to die for His people ; He will leave heaven again, to come and fetch His people up there. When we see Him, we shall feel that all that we have learnt about Him is a very feeble expression of His beauty. We shall see Him as the centre of all the glory of heaven, but the beauty of Himself will surpass all. G. V. W.



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