

THE
NORTHERN WITNESS.

EDITED BY
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THE NORTHERN WITNESS.

THE INCARNATION IN ITS RELATION TO REDEMPTION.

IT is of the deepest moment that in all connected with that profound mystery "God manifest in flesh" we neither go beyond nor come short of the simple statement of the word, lest on the one side Christ as man becomes unreal, or on the other becomes contaminated with human corruption; in either case that which is essential to redemption is violated. It was around this doctrinal question that some of the most violent controversies between truth and error were carried on in the ancient church. Amid these controversies it is interesting to observe how, ultimately, the truth of Christ's person triumphed, and has been handed down intact, even through the dark ages, to the present day as the doctrine of orthodox believers.

In Gen. iii. we learn the first intimation of God's purpose unmistakably held out in the well-known promise that "The woman's seed should bruise the serpent's head," for as "by man came death" so was it divinely appointed that "by man should come the resurrection from the dead." In the Hebrew language, and in the whole of the Jewish economy, redemption and kinsmanship are connected together, and are expressed by the same word. This kinsmanship, according to the eternal purpose of God, necessitates incarnation in order to secure redemption. If any be disposed to dispute this necessity, we are not careful to answer, but simply refer to God's Word, in which this essential relationship is everywhere apparent, and to which so many of the types of the Old Testament bear witness—of which, perhaps, the Jewish marriage law is one of the most remarkable. (See Deut. xxv. 5-10.)

In the holy mysteries of the Lord's birth we see the way in which God brought a "holy thing" out of a mortal, sinful mother, yet so brought it about, in His infinite wisdom, that neither inherent mortality nor hereditary sinfulness defiled the Holy One of God. He came as near to humanity as was

needed for relationship and consanguinity, but not so near as to involve a taint of human corruptibility or sin. It was in the incarnation of Christ that God solved the mighty question so often raised, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" to which man must ever answer—"No one." But what is impossible with man is possible with God. It is so here, when Mary's womb brought forth that "holy thing," the Son of God, who, "because the children were partakers of *flesh and blood*, Himself likewise took part of the *same*," (Heb. ii. 14). It was thus He came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. viii. 3), but not in sinful flesh, and that, "for sin to condemn sin in the flesh." As an illustration may serve to help us in more clearly understanding the measure of our Lord's nearness to us, to which He condescended for our redemption in the atonement of our sins, we would refer to the book of Ruth, that beautiful history wherein, in allegory, we have the kinsmanship of Christ brought before us. When Ruth came to Boaz to claim from him the fulfilment of kinsmanship redemption, he at once acknowledged the claim. But one thing stood in the way; there was a yet nearer kinsman than he, whose claim could only be set aside by himself. Chap. iv. opens with Boaz calling the elders to the gate of the city, and in their presence he asks that kinsman to redeem Elimelech's inheritance at the hand of Ruth, "to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance." His reply was, "I cannot redeem it," in evidence of which he drew off his shoe. Boaz then steps forward, and acts the part of the redeemer, as the next nearest of kin.

Christ stands related to us only on the side of His mother; man stands related to his fellow by the side of both father and mother; but of man we read, in Ps. xlix, "none can by any means redeem his brother nor give to God a ransom for him (for the redemption of their soul is precious, and he must for ever give it up), that he should still live for ever, and not see corruption." Man cannot; the God-man alone can; and Christ having come into the kinsman's place raises up the name of the dead on his forfeited inheritance,

and it is as "the Son of Man" that he presents Himself to us mainly in the Gospels.

It is thus that the Lord comes into the place of Adam, and, standing in his shoes as "the Last Adam," links Himself therein with the Adam family, and in His cross winds up the history of the race under a judicial death from the hand of God, submitting to the sword of justice that Jehovah called to awake in those solemn words—"Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man (the mighty man) that is my fellow; smite the Shepherd." Thus spake the everlasting Jehovah, and thus, as the Last Adam, Christ bore the penalty of the sin of the first Adam, and became in the appointment of God the surety of all who believe.

In 1 Cor. xv. the expressions "the Last Adam" and "the Second Man" are both used of Christ, but with a different bearing, the one looking at Him as the one who closes up in His cross the history of the Adam line, and the other looks at Him in resurrection as the Head of a new line, even that of the family of faith. The *Last Adam* becomes, we are told, "a life-giving spirit," and that through the shedding of His blood, and the *Second Man* is "the Lord from heaven," who shall come to be admired in all that believe, and in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them who know not God and that obey not His Gospel.

As the Last Adam He becomes incarnate in our flesh and blood, and as the Second Man we are united to Him as the bride of Christ, members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. His relationship to us as men in incarnation previous to atonement, and our connection with Him through His atonement in resurrection, must never be confounded. The one made Him a partaker of human nature, for He became flesh; the other makes us partakers of "the Divine nature," for in regeneration we are made one with Him. It is not seeing this clearly marked distinction that leads many to be drawn away with much of the false teaching of the day, that making salvation to come by union with Christ in His incarnation, and not in His resurrection, brings in the doctrine of the universal fatherhood of God, and, as a necessary consequence, the ultimate salvation of the whole human race. This, were it true, would end—at best—in a human nature perfected in the Last Adam, and not a Divine nature imparted in the Second Man—the risen Christ of God. Truly great is the mystery

of God made flesh, and equally great is the mystery of Christ and His church. The first is the mystery of the Last Adam, the second is the mystery of the Second Man, who shall soon come as the Lord from heaven.

May all God's children be preserved from speculation on those divine mysteries, which in themselves are infinite, and about which we can but accept what is written; and framing our utterances in the language of Scripture, bow and worship before the Author of those divine revelations that make known to us "Him that was from the beginning." Of these mysteries as yet we can possibly know but in part, and that a very small part, in comparison of what lies hidden awaiting the fuller unfolding of eternity. Let us not tread profanely where angels veil their faces and worship. To Him and His Christ be glory now and for ever.

H. G.

A CRY FOR SOULS.



BELLO CHRISTIANS!—The time is short, life hastens to its close; this season cries to us of days and months for ever passed, of opportunities lost or missed which will never return. Let us, then, in view of eternity, stir up our souls to fresh earnestness. We will not occupy our thoughts with what others say or do. The crushing weight of indifference to the realities of heaven and hell, which is sinking hundreds into everlasting ruin, needs no demonstration; and the lethargic state of the children of God with regard to the Gospel, the lack of desire, the purposelessness or indirectness of prayer, and the absence of travail for souls, is none the less apparent, and hardly less sad; yet of these matters all we would now say is, God save each of us from taking eternal realities as matters of course, and from becoming ourselves as indifferent to them as the dead or the sleeping around us!

The only way to be of use for God in this world is personally to serve Him. We do not emulate any great work for God, or any movement on a large scale, but what we do desire for our readers and ourselves is, that each of us being moved by His grace should be doing his special work for Him. We plead with the individual Christian who reads this page, that he or she will set his or her spirit this coming year to

the prayerful consideration of eternity. True missionary effort is the outcome of personal zeal for God.

God blesses earnestness, and true earnestness is a fruit of His Spirit. A genuine worker for souls is a love-gift from Him to the children of men. Wherever such a spirit burns it is a Divine boon to the village or district where it is sent. It is not only light but heat: the light and warmth of love. Through such a heart God speaks. His love to sinners flows through the warm spiritual life-blood of His people's affection. It is marvellous grace, but He has put His Spirit in His people, and He gives His people to feel for sinners, to yearn for sinners, to weep and travail for their souls. It is, we repeat, the love of God moving the hearts of men for men. Through the very hearts of His servants God speaks, and commands the attention of the careless and the indifferent.

Mere *lucid Gospel statements* stir no souls; the cold, electric-light character of disseminating truth moves no hearts. It may edify understandings; it does not lay hold of spirits. It shines about men and dazzles them; it does not, like the sun's rays, warm them. We want love as well as light. We do not *need* intelligence in order to be earnest, but God forbid that increase of intelligence should mean a diminishing of earnestness. Wherever such is the case this is evident, that while the head has become filled with knowledge about God and the Bible, the heart has let God's love leak out.

Be in earnest, fellow Christians: a downright earnest Gospel worker, praying, yearning, determined by the grace of God to save souls, is the winner of jewels for the Redeemer's crown. Zeal may perhaps blunder, and haste perchance stumble over a stone, but ten thousand times better to make mistakes in doing good than to live the life-long miserable mistake of doing no good.

True earnestness is only to be gained in one way: we must get near to the heart of God. His love kindles ours; His compassion for a perishing world moves our spirits. His Spirit stirs our souls, and works in us and through us for the salvation of men.

Love cannot but be active. Love asleep, while the objects of its affections are perishing, is but love's image; it is but a block of stone carved into the shape of the reality, and painted up to look like life. We do not want images, we want men and women labouring in the Gospel. Helpers in the Gospel in

the abstract are of no use, they are dead weights in the lifeboat, where every hand should be handling an oar, and every muscle be strained to rescue the perishing. We know that there are Christians like *worn-out, pensioned-off steeds turned out to grass, who enjoy their fat things*; but with infidelity stalking defiantly across the land, and superstition sapping the foundation of the Gospel, it is no time for Christians to rust out of this world into heaven and rest.

We have said we do not suggest doing any great thing for God, for when the idea of doing some GREAT thing fascinates the mind, the usual result is that nothing at all is done.

Begin with meditation. Meditate upon eternity. Pray about its realities, seek for grace to be possessed with its tremendous issues, then you will begin to act for eternity.

Take yet another step. *Shut yourself in the chamber alone, and speak to God about eternity, with the name of one soul—a friend, a neighbour—upon your lips.* Let that name and eternity be *breathed together before God.* Where will that person spend eternity? Think over it, pray over it, weep over it, and, possessed with the reality, you will not be able to avoid speaking to your friend about it.

Visit the sick and the dying. Death-beds are the most powerful sermons the living can hear. Those sweet testimonies to the love of Jesus, those visions, those cheering words of Jesus to His own; ah! what preacher ever told to the heart so well who and what the Saviour is for His people, as the dying whispers of His beloved people?

Get you to the death-beds of the lost, you who make light of hell and eternal woe. Those awful cries are a dread reality; that unutterable despair is no idle dream. There, too, shall the slackening spirit of the Gospel-worker revive in earnestness. From such scenes he shall arise and go forth, weeping fresh tears, to work afresh for sinners.

We plead for earnestness, and feel that in so speaking we are pleading for what God loves. Consider the tears of Jesus over rejectors of His grace; meditate upon His sighs—aye, how "He sighed DEEPLY" over the unbelief of men; mark the energy of Paul and the apostles; see how the Holy Spirit wrought in them; and shall it be said that because we live in an indifferent day we too *may sleep* among the dead? Because the night is FAR spent, shall its last hours

be lost in idleness or disputes, in self-seeking or vanity ?

Awake : awake ; This coming year will be the last for many who read these pages ; it may be the last which we shall ever see ; before its close the Lord may come.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY J. R. C.

1 COR. vi. 1, &c.



As we have seen in the previous chapter—*within* the circle of the Church is a sphere of judgment.

That trespasses and offences would occur *within* was foreseen by the Lord, and instructions given for such cases in Matt. xviii. 15, &c.

Here, in the Corinthian Church, not only had there been immorality as in chap. v. ; evidently there had also been unrighteous or unjust dealing one with another of such a nature that the world's law-courts had been either threatened, or resorted to, in order to obtain justice.

The divine instructions are absolute upon this matter. For brother to go to law with brother before the unbelievers was a shame to them, and a dishonour to the name and doctrine of the Lord. "Why do ye not rather take wrong ? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded ?"

But although the apostle so strongly denounces the course some had been adopting, he by no means leads us to suppose that it is the Lord's mind that the Christian should be without a court of appeal, without a judge to deal righteously with his case.

He asks, to their shame, "Is it so that there is not a wise man *among* YOU ? no, not one who shall be able to judge between his brethren ?"

It is not to be expected that a spiritual man will ever be regarded as a "wise man" by the world. Christ was counted a fool, and so were His apostles ; and the more closely believers follow in His footsteps and theirs, the more will they be regarded by the world as fools, or at least weak and narrow-minded.

But though we may be counted fools by the wise men of the world, and though the very preaching of the cross, which is the power of God, may be reckoned foolishness by men, yet God never intends His people to be really a foolish people. He desires that they might

be "filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col. i. 9). He gives us access full and free to Him "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Some are specially gifted with the "word of wisdom" (1 Cor. xii. 8). His spirit is the spirit of "wisdom and understanding" (Isa. xi. 2) ; "the spirit of power and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. i. 7) ; and *all* have the promise, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God . . . and it shall be given him" (James i. 5).

Is it any wonder, then, that the apostle, as he hears of them seeking to the world's wise men for judgment, asks in reproachful surprise, "Is there not a wise man **AMONG YOU ?**"

But he also makes mention of the wonderful purpose of God concerning the Church. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world ?" and, again, "Know ye not that we shall judge angels ?" The ordinary idea has been that at the end of the world all would be gathered together before the throne of God—saints and sinners—in one vast mingled company, then and there to be judged by God, and to be separated as the sheep from the goats.

But how can such a doctrine as this be found to agree with the teaching of the chapter before us ? Plainly it is irreconcilable, and it arises from not seeing and understanding the unique position and calling of the Church as one with Christ, joint-heirs with Him, destined to come with Him when He comes in manifested glory, having been previously taken up to be with Him ; destined to reign with Him when He reigns, and to execute judgment with Him when He judges.

The Scriptures upon this subject were more fully referred to when we were considering chapter iv. 8 ;* but what may well strike us here is that the apostle does not appear to take into account the change that will take place upon the saints at the coming of the Lord. He does not say that resurrection and glory are needed to fit us for the great occasion of judging the world. Of course we know that the sleeping saints must first be raised and the living must be changed, and that, glorified and changed into the likeness of our Lord, we shall reign and judge. But he ignores all that here, and why ? Is it not because of

* See January number of *N. Witness*, Vol. XIII, 1883.

this—that, little as we apprehend it, little as we live in the power of it, we have even now in our weakness and humiliation all the wisdom of God at our disposal as fully as we shall then? Even now we have God for us, Christ as our storehouse, His Holy Spirit within us, His Word to instruct us—all this we have *now*, what more can we have *then*? Surely nothing more; only the flesh that so hinders here shall then be dropped, and God shall be all in all.

And is it so that those who are so honoured, so gifted, so empowered by God, shall in time of trouble, and writhing under a sense of injustice, turn from the Church of God to the world, as if wisdom or justice were not to be found among the saints—not to be found in that sphere wherein God dwells, but must needs be sought for at the hands of those who know not God and obey not His gospel?

It is true Paul appealed to Cæsar. But would Paul have done so had his accusers been of the Church of God? Surely not. The world was acting towards him in gross injustice, going contrary to its own laws to do him injury; he therefore appealed to the world's own highest authority at the time.

Some there are who judge the apostle to have been wrong in this; such would not appeal to law, even when the injustice complained of comes from the ungodly. They prefer to commit their cause wholly to the Lord. It is wonderful oftentimes how God honours such simple faith as this, and Himself espouses the cause and vindicates the rights of those who trust Him. But in the passage before us what is forbidden is not the appeal to law in the case of injustice coming from the world, but in the case of alleged wrong between brother and brother.

The British army protects our country from invasion and bloodshed, and for this we can thank God. The policeman protects our home from robbery, and for this also we can thank God. Romans xiii. is a chapter which shows how fully human government has the sanction of God, and how the just administration of law is according to His will.

If, therefore, the Christian appeals, as did Paul, against the world's injustice to the world's law court, he may even then have cause to thank God that in His good providence such a provision is made for the maintenance of right in an evil age.

But in the case of differences arising between brethren, it is only to those *within* that the matter

should be made known. The decision of Christian men of prudence and experience ought to be more to such than the decision of any law court.

If the unrighteousness be persisted in, then the saints have their instructions how to act towards the offender,—“let him be to them as an heathen man and a publican.”

God will defend the right in His own time and way.

THE CROWNING DAY.

BEHOLD them robed and crowned, the priestly kings!

Past are their pilgrim days;
While gladsomely the Golden City rings
With anthems of their praise.
These, who earth's dark despite and scorn had known,
Now, bathed in light, surround the Jasper Throne.

All seated they—save when they prostrate fall
In adoration deep;

And cast before Him on Whose name they call,

A glitt'ring golden heap.—
The victor-crowns, which circle every brow,
So hated once and so exalted now.

But yet methinks the eye can well discern,
For evermore made fast,

The tokens of that judgment, kindly stern,
At Christ's tribunal passed;

For divers wreaths of different victory
Bespeak the approval of the crowning day.

For some, 'mid human pride and strife of tongues,
Longed for that crowning day,

And His appearing Who should right their wrongs
And bear the righteous sway.

A crown of righteousness has long been kept
To such as for His coming watched and wept.

And others loved Him well, and much it cost
To manifest that love;

Now, manifold for all on earth they lost,
He metes to them above.

Life's crown they bear who bore the cross and shame,
Held fast His Word, and thought upon His name.

A shepherd's heart had some. On earth they fed
The “little flock” of God;

The lame they tended, and the strong they led
Along the rugged road.

A crown of glory from the Shepherd Chief,
Their meet reward for by-past toil and grief.

Thus, loving Lord, Thy saints all know Thy grace;
But only those the prize

Have won who lived their days before Thy face—
Who faithful were and wise.

Blest Master! only Thou right worthy art
Of service full, and undivided heart! A. P. M.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

“**H**E righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter i. 1). You will often hear very dear Christians talk about the righteousness of Christ, an expression not found in Scripture once, unless it be here; and it is thought by those who study Scripture carefully that the idea here is God’s faithfulness in His promises to Israel, in sending His Son. Always in Scripture it is the *righteousness of God*, never of *Christ*. The difference is not an unimportant one, because inaccuracy of statement leads to inaccuracy of doctrine. Doctrine has got so much sublimated and refined, that if it is not Scriptural it is not worthy of such a term. So analysed, sorted, and divided has it been that divines thus speak of the active and of the passive obedience of Christ—that by the passive obedience we are saved from hell and our sins put away; but, by His active obedience in keeping the law and living a holy life we are entitled to heaven. And this is a common doctrine among evangelical Christians. I read an extract from a sermon preached in Exeter Hall on July 18, 1858, by a servant of God now with the Lord, Capel Molyneux. “In plain words, do you know this, Do this and live? Do you know that if a man is cleansed from his sin in the blood of Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit of God, *he cannot then go to heaven*. He wants something more still: he must have a perfect obedience. Heaven is suspended on a perfect obedience, not a negative one. God said to Adam, Do this and live! He failed. You must present a perfect obedience when you come to God. Have you got it? It is the active obedience of Christ. *It is not His sufferings* that blot out sin, it is not His Spirit that sanctifies the heart, but it is His perfect righteousness. Listen, ‘By His *obedience* shall my righteous servant justify many.’ A misquotation of Scripture, by which he would confirm his dogma.

Now the question occurs, is that which I have stated God’s truth? It may be amplified further thus—and in fact it is the common teaching—You have told lies, Christ told the truth, there is your righteousness before God; you have been a deceiver, Christ never deceived, there is your righteousness before God; you have done this and that naughty act, Christ did the reverse, there is your righteous-

ness before God. Now is that God’s truth? And sometimes that passage in Isaiah is quoted (lxi. 10), as if it were a literal robe of His good works wrapped around us.

Now the point I will try to show is, that Christ Himself in resurrection is our righteousness, and that Christ Himself our righteousness is so made by the living God. In the first place, it is not Scriptural to divide Christ’s work in that way, into “active” and “passive” obedience. His obedience was one perfect whole from beginning to end. He obeyed God in His life, but He even more obeyed God in His death. It was one perfect whole, and we have no business to cut it up as these evangelical divines have done; and this that I have given you is merely a quotation of the theology everywhere prevalent. His passive obedience! Why the Bible speaks of His obedience in giving His life for us, in going on and on to the cross, as if it were something stupendous, wonderful, divine. And to tell me that it can only save me from hell, and that the other—His obedience ere the cross, which is only a step to it—brings me to heaven; it is not God’s way, it is not God’s truth. The text, as I have said, is misquoted, and rightly it reads, “By His *knowledge*.” By His knowledge of God; by His knowledge of the requirements of God’s throne, of God’s presence, and of His character, so thoroughly that He could do all, suffer all, bear all that that throne and that light required. Perhaps the speaker had his eye upon that passage, “by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous” (Rom. v. 19); but that again means, if we study the context, obedience unto death. Sometimes this text also is misconstrued, “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” But it is His life in resurrection, because it is put after His death. And I quote another passage here which will help us to see this. It is a well-known Scripture, but I quote it for a new purpose. You may see there that same thought of obedience unto death. “The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back” (Isa. l. 5). Now what is the idea? It is as if God were leading Christ to the cross, and He was not going to shirk it. You can see that this is the thought from the context: obedience, so that He gets more and more engulfed in the woe. One more

text. "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." His life proved He was a holy man, the spotless One; but His death showed that He was the Lamb of God. Together they showed Him to be the spotless Lamb of God. Let that be distinctly seen first—that the obedience of Christ was one piece, culminating in the cross, in the back furrowed, in the brow crowned with thorns, in the hands pierced, in the side stabbed, and then the obedience unto death; one single whole, one grand piece. Away, then, with the figment of the active obedience of the life and the passive obedience of the cross. He was active upon the cross, for He could have come down at any moment that He liked. Oh, it is a shame to disparage the cross in that way. And it is not the truth that my righteousness before God is that Christ told the truth for my lie; it is all foreign to the Book of God.

Look at the next point. Whenever Scripture speaks of the work of the Son of God, it always makes the blood-shedding to be the grand thing of all: the giving up of the life, the climax of that wondrous obedience of His. What was put upon the lid and upon the front of the ark by the high priest when, once a year, he went into the holy place? Need I tell you that it was blood? as if that blood was the most valuable thing in God's account. How does Christ enter into heaven itself now? We are told in Hebrews ix. upon what ground He goes in there. "*By His own blood* He entered in once into the Holy place." What man disparages (no doubt in ignorance) God sets infinite value upon. The blood of Jesus is both my one plea to save me from hell, which I richly deserve—and I do not say it merely as a preacher, but because I deeply feel it—the blood of Christ is my one plea to save me from the pit of hell, and my one ground to stand in God's light. It is a beautiful thought, that whilst in Hebrews ix. Christ goes in upon the footing of His shed blood into the holiest of all, we are encouraged to come near upon the same precious ground in chapter x. Christ and I go into the presence of God on one ground, the blood of the Lamb. Not to quote many Scriptures, because this is so well known, I refer to one more

only. In that beautiful picture of heaven, where all the saints are hymning His praises, this is their one song, "Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us *to God* by Thy blood." The testimony of all these millions of saints is far more to the point than of saints upon earth whose eyes are only half opened. This was not the doctrine of the reformers, this active and passive obedience; it was of the Puritans, who carried back the truth much in many points. The reformers never talked about it—I mean such as Luther; not a word about it in Luther's commentary on the Galatians. No; it is one single magnificent piece. And not a command written on tables of stone, given to Christ by God; it was as good as a command to Christ that God *willed* it; that is a command of the most binding force to Christ.

Then, thirdly, there is no union to Christ but in death and resurrection. This is always laid down in Scripture as peremptory. You know that well-known Scripture, "Except *the* corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." No union but in death and resurrection; and not even in death, except by resurrection. But if there is no union to Christ until resurrection, how do I get at His good deeds as my righteousness? All His path, from His baptism to the cross, was one descending path, till at the last moment of the cross He sank into death. There is the obedience of Christ. And then the righteousness of God came out. "You have done it; you have gratified *MY* heart; you have brought *MY* people to *ME*"—and God lifts Christ into His presence. He died for our sins; He was raised again for our justification. And not only does He lift Him into His presence, but He becomes our righteousness. Bear in mind that the word "just" and the word "righteous" are in the original the same word; also "justify" and "make righteous." There is my righteousness or justification, and then God proclaims Himself righteous or just in lifting Christ into His presence. But not alone; "if it die it bringeth forth much fruit"—the Head and members all lifted up together before God, and are seen together now; we stand or fall together. And so we read in such a well-known passage as this, "Who is made unto us wisdom from God, even righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." A living Christ, a Christ not disassociated from me or

I from Him—a Christ who now has nothing apart from me or I from Him. If He is righteous I am, for He is my righteousness; not in His life ere He died, but He Himself in resurrection my righteousness. When I believe in Him I get life, but that life flowing from Christ risen; and then we have a singular expression at the end of Romans v., which you may not have noticed, I mean verse 18, “By the righteousness of One the free gift came upon (or towards) all men unto the justification of life.” For when I believe in Him I get life from that risen Christ, and that very life proves that I am a justified man, because it is life from Him who is my justification. So also in that striking passage in Colossians, “And you hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” My life, my peace—but the point I press is, Christ Himself my righteousness. Not a thing, not the actions which He did upon earth, but Himself a living Person my righteousness before God. A robe may be taken off; and it is a shame so to pervert those words in Isaiah as to make them more than a metaphor. No; Christ Himself is my righteousness; there is He, and the life flows down from Him every moment from the day He went up to glory. Like as it proceeded from Him to the disciples even before He went away, when He breathed upon them, so ever since the life, the justification of life, flowing down from Him who is my righteousness, Christ having no separate existence from me, nor I from Him. It is a living Christ, not a Christ law-keeping. Granted that it is written, “Yea, Thy law is within my heart;” and it may be an allusion to the two tables of stone within the ark; but I am quite sure the thought is that God wished that Christ should come, and should suffer and die. That is the law here, God’s *wish* was law to Christ, Who says, “I delight to do Thy will, oh My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart.” And so with many other Scriptures. Therefore, beware of teaching so downright an error as that by His passive obedience He saved us from hell, and by His active obedience He brought us to God. On the contrary, it was active obedience as well, in dying to save us from hell—the highest act of obedience. And when He gave up His breath it was because He so willed it, and none took it from Him. It was the highest act of obedience when He just breathed out His spirit, delivered it up, as we have it in John xix.

“There is no man that hath power over the spirit, to retain the spirit,” it is written in Ecclesiastes, none can determine when they shall die; but He delivered up the spirit when He pleased, retired from the conflict when all was over, and that was the highest act of obedience; when he sank to the very bottom. Then God interposes, and shows us what He can do; first He lifts up Christ to His throne, and then multitudes of hell-deserving sinners. Not as such; for God neither puts logs nor swine into His presence; neither as dead, nor living in sin, but in resurrection life in Christ. Yea, something more He gives besides. Still keeping to that passage in Romans, read a verse or two in chapter vi., “Now, if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Now, observe particularly that word “likewise;” it means that in the same manner as Christ died you have died. It does not mean you are dead to the motions of sin in you; any one who maintains that, is either profoundly ignorant or unconverted, and may God forgive him. Did Christ die to the motions of sin in Him? Most certainly not. He never had a motion of sin in Him, and, therefore, could not die to such. Then, it does not mean that you have so died. Ah! you feel, then, that what it means it says. It says that as Christ died you have died, that Christ died on account of sin once, that God condemned sin in the holy flesh of His Son; and Christ died, though there was not a single motion of sin in Him, and you died unto sin too. And you are dead, and God does not know you now except as members of Christ—one with Christ—as seen in Christ before God. Christ, in His grace, acts in grace as your High Priest to wash your feet. Christ knows us in another way, and deals with our experience. But, as a matter of fact, our place before God does not turn upon our experience at all, but upon what Christ is before God; and our experience turns upon faith in God’s Word.—*Notes of Addresses by W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. H.*

We sink into nothingness as we grow up into Christ.

GATHERING THE MANNA.



HE need of continual exhortation to a diligent study of God's word, increases as "the day approaches." Therefore, we are inclined to linger a little over this; seeking to impress on young believers the importance of their "searching the scriptures daily," and applying the truth honestly to every thought, word, and deed, so that all may be brought into harmony with the Divine mind. The grand thing is to realise that we are to be *doers* of God's word, and not *hearers* only. It is only what our consciences take in from the Lord Himself that imparts real profit to our souls; for only thus do we become fashioned like Jesus, in our daily life; and this should be our desire. We must *feed* upon God's word, that we may *grow thereby*; not that careless, casual reading of the Bible, without meditation or prayer, which is so common in these perilous times, when Christians, by an endless round of *engagements* are tempted to *neglect* the scriptures; when society is in a state of unrest and distraction by pleasure seeking, excursions, and entertainments of every kind which divert the mind from the souls welfare, and lead to spiritual apathy, and leanness. We cannot serve two masters; and *the world*, in every form, is opposed to Christ; we should therefore *turn away our eyes from its vanities*; and not seek its amusement from them. *Spiritual strength*, to bear the difficulties of life, and *walk* such as to glorify God, must depend on our *feeding upon Christ*, through communion with the Spirit, over His word.

One has truly said that "every ray of the sun contains three colours; the properties of each being to give light, to heat, and to fertilise. Likewise, *truth* emanates from God, the fountain of light, and is intended to enlighten our understanding; to warm our hearts; and to produce the fruits of righteousness in our lives."

Now we have pointed out that the ordinary desultory reading of God's word, imparts but little profit, because it lacks the heartfelt desire to *know God's mind*, in order to be *obedient children*. The mere desire to increase our stock of *knowledge* is not a satisfactory motive to prompt us in "searching the scriptures." *Natural wisdom* in the church of God (apart from a heart exercised by the

Holy Ghost) leads to sorrow, just as Eden's humiliation came through eating of "the tree of knowledge." The antidote to this is that "*place of a skull*," where He who was *the wisdom of God*, "emptied Himself," and He is our example in all things. Yes, brother and sister, *learn of Him*, where *Mary learnt* those truths that became a stay to her soul, even *at His feet*. *Learn of Him*, who whilst He was "the brightness of the Father's glory, and express image of His person" yet was also a real man, who required water to satisfy the thirst of His body; and for His soul's refreshment "drew water out of the wells of salvation;" going in the *early morning* away to the solitary place, where He could commune with God, and gather that blessed manna "*fresh from the dew*." Would that we were more like Him! Oh, what *power* there would be in *our walk* and *our words*, instead of the *faltering step* and the *uncertain sound* which characterises those who neglect closet prayer, and reading and meditation on God's Word.

Men's books, with worthless chaff are stored;
 God's book, doth golden grain afford;
 Then leave the chaff, and spend your pains
 In gathering up the golden grains.

Now "there is a time for everything," and God has told us in Numbers ii. *when the manna* had to be gathered. It was "early in the morning"; when the sun waxed hot, it melted, and what was hoarded up bred worms and stank. Solemn and seasonable truth is unfolded here. The manna had to be gathered "*fresh from the dew*." In scripture, *dew* is always typical of the Holy Spirit, see Hosea xiv. 5. And we are to learn from this, that whilst all around is barren, yet God provides for the daily need of our wilderness journey. His Spirit shall abide with us for ever. He unfolds Jesus to our souls as the Bread of life. *Truth from Him* invigorates the new man. Truth acquired second-hand is comparatively useless. We must *feed* upon it, *fresh from the dew*, if our souls are to *grow thereby*; see Eph. iii. 16, 1 Peter ii. 2, Col. i. 10. The world knows nothing of this meat which sustains our souls. And the quiet solemnity of the early morning is the best time to gather this heavenly food, before the heart is ruffled with the cares of life. Braced up with this we should be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might."

Christians should adopt a systematic, regular, and

conscientious reading of God's word. David esteemed *all* God's precepts; so should we read carefully from Genesis to Revelation, and devote as much time daily to this delightful exercise of soul, as we possibly can. It is easy to see how many hours and days in a year we should thus have, if we *set apart fixed times daily*, for reading God's word. Those who do this, unite in testimony, as to the great profit their souls have derived and the increasing interest awakened in spiritual things until it becomes sweeter than honey to their taste, Psa. cxix. 103, a light to their feet, Psa. cxix. 105, and "better than thousands of silver and gold," Psa. cxix. 127.

Paul, in writing to Timothy, his son in the faith, exhorts him to give attention to reading and to *meditate upon these things*.

The need that "*the word of God* should dwell in us *richly*, in all wisdom," is greater now than it ever has been, for "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light," and our only way to detect his wiles or parry his thrusts, is by using *the sword of the Spirit*, and having our "lions girt about with truth." "The entrance of God's word giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple," and, according to Prov. vi. it leads us where we go, keeps us when we sleep, talks with us when we are awake, and is—"a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path."

In these *perilous times*, Satan does all he can to neutralise the power of *God's word* both to saints and to sinners. He has flooded the land with works of fiction to charm the mind and suit every taste,—from the religious novel, to the profane novelette. Sad to say, this garbage from the adversary is too often substituted by Christians for the Bread of life. In thousands of Christian homes this *light literature* is eating like a canker into the souls of young believers, and spoiling their taste for spiritual food. These *tales* that are found in periodicals of various forms feed the lust of the flesh and produce unhealthy excitement of the mind, which, more, or less, rob the soul of communion with Christ, who says to such, "If ye seek Me, let these go their way." It is *impossible* to read *fiction* without grieving the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us, and spoiling the appetite for a quiet, prayerful study of God's word. It leads to a swallow-like skimming over the surface of your reading, instead of that patient study in "comparing scripture with scripture," and "medita-

ting on these things." Without *digestion*, food is not assimilated to the body. So without *reflection*, our reading is unprofitable to the soul. There ever needs to be a quiet waiting upon God's spirit, for His application of the truth to our hearts. It is thus, *little by little*, that we get "*built up* in the faith;" growing in grace and in the knowledge and love of God. We exhort young believers, as they value their *soul's prosperity*, avoid those "snares of the devil," which are laid very close to the narrow path. The Psalms tell us much of the *blessedness* of those who "*meditate* on the law of the Lord." His promise is that such shall be *fruitful, evergreen, and prosperous*. We want more *closet communings* with our blessed Lord, with ears awakened morning by morning to hear what He shall say to our souls. Public Meetings won't suffice for spiritual health; we must get away from "the many coming and going," where we can hear His voice, which alone can impart counsel for *these perilous times*. E. H. B.

CONFESSION OF SIN.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS ON DANIEL IX. BY MR. ROBERT CHAPMAN.

LET us consider the chapter we have been reading. First, we will observe that one of the chief demands God makes, and a demand that He never forgoes, is the confession, full and complete, of the sin whereof forgiveness is sought. We remember the great law of His grace, given us by the Apostle John, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Now, on the one hand, it is not possible for God to seal forgiveness of sins upon the heart and conscience unless there be a confession; and on the other hand, it is not possible for him to withhold the pardon, and all that follows—viz., life eternal, sonship, if there be the confession. I say this because in this company there may be some who have never considered this at all; there may be others that have consciences troubling, accusing, and shutting out the Gospel from the soul. To such I would say that we have been reading one amongst the many patterns in Scripture of the confession of sin. You will observe there are two great marks of right and acceptable confession,—

acceptable to God. One is that the sin is always regarded as *against Him* committed. Now, the natural conscience never has this rule, and measure, and scales, and weights. The natural conscience is like that man in Luke, "I thank thee I am not as other men." It is damage done to the creature, and the judgment of the creature and neighbour, that rules the conscience of the mere natural man. When the spirit of God instructs the conscience, damage done to the man or a neighbour is out of sight; the majesty of God, and His excellency, alone is the rule of judgment, and as the act is against Him so is the guilt of the sin.

Now, whenever a sinner comes to this conclusion, "Against Thee only have I sinned;" when God's holiness is the measure of the guilt, thank God, he is in the path of life.

A step further:—he will make no excuses. Instead of making excuses and finding fault with God, which is the course that the mere natural conscience takes, it will be the opposite of this; he will be without excuse before God; he will entirely justify God, and loathe and condemn himself. Why so? Because, "blessed is the poor in spirit." It is God's delight as well as glory to forgive.

Man thinks it is left to himself, and that forgiveness must be extorted from God. Ah! it is God's delight to forgive. Forgiveness must not be extorted from God; but confession must be *wring out* from the obstinate heart of the sinner. It is hard for the sinner to confess, but easy to God to forgive. I would remind you how the confessions which you find in Daniel, in Nehemiah, in Ezra, and the Book of the Lamentations of Jeremiah bear marks of confession acceptable to God, if you will observe them and compare them together. The times that have passed in the wisdom of God over this world, are all favourable to faith in God; each period, each age, each country will supply to faith peculiar occasions of glorifying God. Now, in this present time there are beyond question growing difficulties in the pathway of the people of God; their hearts feel it; but this would I say—that commonly the thoughts and feelings of God's people about the matter rather bespeak looking to the difficulty than to the occasion furnished by the difficulty for pleasing the Living God.

Now, for a moment, compare this servant of God, Daniel, with some others that have gone before. Take

Moses, who brought Israel, the one people of Jehovah, out of Egypt. He had occasions that Abraham had not for trusting God, which is the great secret of pleasing Him, and we know how that great servant of God did profit by those occasions, and how God's character, and Moses' acquaintance with God, are brought out, for we see him to be a man of like passions with ourselves; here and there the flesh appears; but we find how that in his course he fully-glorified God.

If we take up Joshua in like manner, when all Israel was one; if we go to David (passing others by) we see one peculiarly glorifying God (in times in a great measure differing from those of Moses), when he was persecuted by the king, King Saul. He profited by his occasions. But we see Daniel in captivity giving honour to God, as having an occasion that none had before him. The captivity to the end seemed hopeless; but we observe that Daniel is so acquainted with God that while he says (4th verse)—"the curse of the Lord is upon Israel," he rises, and herein is the great secret of faith—he rises above all the law of Moses to the God of all grace, that made promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. It is the rather to be observed, beloved, because, whereas Daniel did this, so did Moses before him at the foot of Mount Sinai; and we see how far Moses excels his forefather, Abraham, as an intercessor. You will remember that Abraham says (making a kind of bargain with the Lord)—"I will speak only this once. Let not the Lord be angry, if there be but ten righteous." He has the promise, and, we observe, Abraham left off asking before the Lord left off granting. But worse than Sodom by far, was the guilt of Israel in making a golden calf at the foot of Mount Sinai, after the redemption out of Egypt by the passage of the Red Sea, after they had made their vow to keep God's law, how far greater their provocation of God than all the sins of Sodom! Yet Moses betakes himself to God's care as the God of all grace. Let us refer to it in Exodus xxxii. 13th verse, You will observe at the foot of Mount Sinai he rises upon eagle's wings above all its thunders, and he deals with the character of God as the God of all grace that made such promises to Abraham. Now, precisely so with Daniel. He knows the righteousness of the judgment; he perfectly justifies God in that judgment; and then he rises far above the law of Moses.

Now we should not go wrong in our affections, in our consciences, in our judgments, in our faith, in earthly

things amidst the world, if we always kept before us the name, mind, and character of God as revealed to us in Christ Jesus. The great success that Satan obtains over the natural man is—he slanders the character of God (the word “devil” means slanderer), and the poor fool believes the lie, and deals with God as an hard person; he wishes to be out of God’s presence—to be without Him. And in like manner does Satan seek to hinder the ways and darken the mind of the child of God; but he cannot root out the root of living faith. Do not let us think that when Daniel says “by books” it means books of human wisdom; it is the height of folly to think that; it is the books of Scripture he refers to, but especially the particular revelation of the “seventy years” of Jeremiah in his prophecy.

Oh! my dear friends, there is every day a need that we renew, through the Word of God, our apprehensions of our God and Father in Christ Jesus; and those who neglect the Scriptures, and do not thus renew their right apprehensions of God think God wrong, and do not perceive, do not feel it, do not consider it. Now, you will observe also, that as this servant of God (very lovely to see it), grows more importunate and fervid; not a whit less is his reverence in spirit and speech. I say, not less reverent, because in the 19th verse again and again he uses the word “Lord.” Sovereign Lord, which means that God has a right to do what He will. It is very good, indeed, to bear in mind the peculiar significance of the threefold meaning of the words Sovereign Lord. One is—He has a right to do what He will; He is the potter and has a right to fashion the clay as He pleases; He cannot do wrong, because He wills His deeds; secondly, Jehovah, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and thirdly, God the Almighty One, able to do all that He has said. Now, then, Daniel having these three titles in his heart and upon his lips, says—“O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not; for Thine own sake, O my God: for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name.” Oh! my dear friends, as faith grows it becomes one with God in His purpose to please Him. Strictly speaking, God has but one business to do, and that is to do His own will. But what a will is that! A will of infinite wisdom, of infinite love. Oh beloved, let us fall in with that purpose; let there be no will

of ours, no will but His, then we shall, as it were, nestle nearer the bosom of God in Christ, and we then shall be more and more importunate, more and more trusting, more and more fervid in intercessions and prayers, and yet our reverence will grow for the God with whom we are so familiar.

In these days you often find such words as these from the lips of Christians—“O Lord, we are unworthy dust.” Now, that does not come from humility, but from ignorance of God. Daniel was worthy to be heard, and he knew it. But how came he by that worthiness? Acquaintance with God. Every man that does justice to God is worthy to be heard. God accounts him worthy; and He tells Daniel so in sending Gabriel, the mighty one of God, and causing him to fly swiftly. And you will observe that before the revelation of the seventy weeks is made what is said to Daniel—“O man, greatly beloved.” There are two modes (if I may so speak) which God takes of answering prayer. The first is the answer within us; the other is the answer without us. Now, the first answer was given to Daniel by the messenger Gabriel. What a stir was made in the heavens by the prayer of this captive! If the praises of Job were sounded in heaven in the presence of the host of the angels of Satan (a marvellous chaos in that place of glory), well, so Gabriel had his message; he heard it in the heaven of heavens, he delivered it on earth. Here was a man by nature just like the rest of mankind, and, worse than that, just like the rest of wretched Israel who had corrupted themselves more than Gentiles by nature, and yet by grace wrapping and pressing up God’s Word in his heart, cleansing himself by the Spirit and by the Word, he knew how to take advantage of all the terrible judgments of God upon Israel, and by their sins to speak to the heart of God, pledging God’s name and character as the great reason why He should have mercy upon Israel.

Let us, beloved, consider what this has to do with the present times. We remember the commandment, “Pray for kings and for governors, and for all that be in authority.” My dear brethren and sisters in Christ, God looks to us that love His name (*us* means the whole family of God) to be intercessors in prayer with Him for the world. The world continues for the sake of the Church of God; heaven and earth are kept in their course for

the sake of the family of God ; but the world does not know it. Our prayers are very much shut up to this—The salvation of son and daughter, father and mother, husband and wife, and the salvation, perhaps, of our neighbours ; but it is rather the advantage to the creature that occupies us than the honour and joy brought to God by the petition of His Church, and by the salvation of sinners. “Thy name,” says Daniel. Oh, we should never flag in faith, never flag in prayer, if we considered that the great intent of the Gospel is to be pleasing God rather than the creature ; and we should never faint in our service if we began and ended where God begins and ends ; but if we are swallowed up in the creature’s advantage, and the pleasing of God last, we shall not be like Moses interceding at Sinai, nor like Daniel interceding for the captives in Babylon, but we shall be like that man who fled from Jezebel and laid himself down under a juniper-tree, and requested that he might die, because he was no better than his fathers. What made that great man so small ? He rose, no doubt, far above it before he was taken up into heaven without seeing death, and God rebuked him by not answering his unbelieving, fretful prayer. But what was the cause of his fainting ? He made the advantage to Israel his first care and God’s glory his last, and when he found he could not obtain what was dearest to his heart—the restitution of Israel to God—well, then, his all was gone, and he fretted against God. We shall never be weary in well-doing if we begin and end with pleasing the living God.

Let me just observe, there is a remarkable difference between the revelation of the time of Christ’s first coming and the Scripture speaking of His second coming. You will observe to Daniel was revealed the precise time of the cutting off of the Messiah. No one in that day could possibly doubt about the period, and hence even the enemies of the Lord were expecting Christ to come. They did not know the Christ of God ; they had turned the Christ of God into a Christ of their own imaginations and hearts ; but still, even as to the time, the ungodly Jew knew when He would come. Now, beloved, the word is remarkably used by Paul and Peter, touching the second coming, “due time.” Paul says—if you remember “due time,” “due season.” What is the meaning of “due time” ? That God had made it manifest that what Christ did, none but Christ could

do—make atonement for sin. Let us turn to the last chapter of Colossians, 7th verse—“Due season ;” surely carrying us on to the final harvest, where “in due season” we shall reap if we faint not. Peter says—“Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, and He shall exalt you in due season.” Now, beloved, why should not the time in the latter case (that of the second coming) be revealed, as in the case of the coming to do the work of redemption ? Beloved, God’s rule is this—wherever he gives a revelation of Himself, and makes known His character more and more, He makes a demand upon us for faith. Now, here He has so revealed Himself in Christ, “in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head bodily ;” that, to speak with reverence, all that God can do is to reveal what He has already done. Having made this perfect revelation He makes this demand upon us, and we should trust Him for the time. But this I would also say—He expects us to reckon time as He does, and as Christ does Himself. Just turn to Hebrews, 10th chapter, 37th verse. You remember a verse in Habakkuk, “Though it tarry wait for it.” It is very significant to see the Spirit by Paul dropping the words that before Christ did come are put into the mouth of the prophet Habakkuk—“though the vision tarry,” and saying, “Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” “A little while” not worth counting ! Oh, my dear friends, methinks that while it becomes us with longing hearts to pray for the coming of the Lord Jesus, it becomes us equally to be thankful for the occasions we have of magnifying His name ; but it will come to an end with Him. Daniel profited by his occasions in captivity ; let us profit by our occasions, furnished to faith in the midst of the Church of God, grievously carnal and shamefully divided. Let us take occasion, beloved, to please God according to that which His own Word and character demands, and to please God also in respect of the world, which is pictured by the herd of swine running violently down the steep place into destruction. There are dreams in the people’s minds of the world becoming better and better. Oh ! my dear friends, how terrible the delusion, and how hurtful, too ! a setting aside of the Scriptures of truth ; the world is going on to judgment, and the proudest nations must have the heaviest strokes. Why ? Because they are setting up the wisdom of man, and have crucified the Son of God, who is the

Wisdom of God, and whose weakness is the power of God. In 2nd Corinthians chap. v. we have these words—"God hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made"—what? "the righteousness of God." What is the righteousness of God? Surely the meaning is something more than a righteousness by the hand of God, wrought when the first man was created in uprightness. His righteousness was the creation of God in one sense, *i.e.*, a righteousness worked out by God, but it was not as given in the deep sense of this passage before us. The righteousness of God is that wherein all the glory of the Godhead has set forth its perfections—wherein all its glories at once and together shine out; everlasting righteousness—one that never can contract spot or stain. What follows? That a poor sinner may make a confession of his sin to God, and have nothing but Christ to plead—nothing but Christ to trust in; and if seeing himself to be such, what does he become? A child of the living God—a co-heir with Christ, and that Scripture must be fulfilled in him, "Whom He justified them He also glorified." And what shall keep God's people when they are in glory? Shall it be because there is no temptation; or, because into that City of God shall enter nothing that defileth? No! Shall it be because they have perfectly the likeness of Christ? No! All necessary to their perfect happiness; but their preservation will lie in this—they are seen in Christ so bound up in the bundle of life—made to be the righteousness of God in Christ, that God's own immutability will secure them from falling from that better paradise. The poor sinner becomes a child of God, and so nigh to God, so one with Christ, so loved of God in Christ, that holy angels are his ministers, and he is raised far above them. Christ is not found to call one of these angels "brethren;" but He does so to every poor sinner that trusts in His blood. Oh! my dear friends, it is not barely promises we have to plead with God; promises are very good, but, as a child of God, I have the heart of God to encourage me; I have His heart; let Him have mine, and I shall not distrust His love or His wisdom about anything. He can never fail to be a just God; He will never fail to execute all His purposes—and one is to show in unrepenting sinners that He never can lie; that they are the authors of their own destruction, while we are not the authors of our salvation. He will have a justification

from their own mouth amidst the weeping and torment of hell; they will have two hells (and the worst within them), the fire without and the fire within. Oh! my dear friends, it will be seen then that God is all in all. Oh, happy those that fall in with the great purpose of God to glorify Himself and take advantage of present times, present occasions to glorify Him, so that they may have the inner testimony that Daniel had—that they are pleasing God—then they may safely leave the outer testimony to the guidance of His wisdom.

FIRST CORINTHIANS.

THE Gospel was first introduced into the city of Corinth by the apostle Paul. He stayed a year and six months teaching the Word of God, and supporting himself by labouring with his own hands at tent-making (Acts xviii. 3, 11).

The Church at Corinth was composed of Jew and Gentile, the latter predominating. Its internal condition—ecclesiastically, morally, and doctrinally, are fully made known in chapters i.-iv., v., and xv. Party spirit characterised the *first*, impurity the *second*, speculative heathen philosophy denying the resurrection and eternal life the *third*. This first epistle may be divided into three parts—part 1, comprising chapters i.-iv.; part 2, chapters v.-x.; part 3, chapters xi.-xvi.

Chap. i. 1-9.—The apostle prefaces the epistle by asserting his apostolic authority—"called" an apostle, reminding the assembly that they were saints by *calling* too, as well as sanctified. All were sanctified, set apart for God, from the very commencement of the work of God in their souls. In these first nine verses we have thrice the expression "Lord Jesus Christ" (verses 3, 7, and 8); twice "Jesus Christ our Lord" (verses 2 and 9); twice "Jesus Christ" (verses 1 and 4); once "Christ Jesus" (verse 2); once "Christ" (verse 6).

Jesus means *Jehovah our Saviour*. Jesus was the name under which the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. Hence it was the name of His earthly life, associating Him with suffering, shame, sin-bearing, and death.

Christ means "Anointed," and is His official title. Hence believers are always said to be "*in Christ*,"

indicating their position and standing in Christ as risen and glorified (Eph. ii. 6).

Lord: this title indicates *Ownership*, and one having power and *authority*. Hence the believer owns Him as his *Master* as well as Saviour.

Verse 8.—The day of the Lord reaches beyond the rapture of the Church to the time of rewards; hence it is the judgment-seat of Christ; "*fellowship* of His Son;" *fellowship* in suffering (Phil. iii. 10); *fellowship* in the Gospel (Phil. i. 5); *fellowship* one with the other (1 John i. 3).

Verses 10-16.—Paul seeks to correct the internal dissensions arising from a party spirit. Eloquence characterises Apollos; zeal, Cephas; learning, Paul; pretentious spirituality those who said they were of Christ. From verse 17 to chapter ii. verse 16, we have the wisdom of man and the wisdom of God contrasted; the spirit of man and the Spirit of God; the "natural" man and the "spiritual" man; the "things of man" and the "things of God." Three times is the expression "God hath chosen" used in verses 27 and 28 of chapter i., and sixteen times the word "wisdom" is mentioned in the first two chapters. The "redemption" spoken of in verse 30 is not only the forgiveness of sins, which every believer has, but a complete and final deliverance from the effect of sin in our mortal body, when we are conformed to His likeness with resurrection bodies (Rom. viii. 23).

Chap. iii.—Chapter i. closed with glorying in the

Lord; this opens with glorying in man. Hence they were carnal and walked as men in the flesh; they were only babes in spiritual growth, and had to be fed with milk instead of meat. There are three classes of babes referred to in Paul's epistles—1, under the head of carnality or age; 2, those under bondage or outward forms (Gal. iv. 13); 3, without experience in the word of righteousness (Heb. v. 12, 13).

Verses 5-7 put God's servants in their proper place. If Paul plants and Apollos waters, it is God who gives the increase, as we are told twice over. If God fits and uses various instruments, He would have them know their own insufficiency, and all these differences must perish into nothingness *before God*. Hence they are fellow-labourers, God's fellow-workmen, not workers together *with God*. If in verses 3 and 4 we have the saints forbidden to give God's ministering servants an undue place, verses 10-15 show that those who build must see what sort of material they build with. Hence we have here responsibility as to service in the Church. The question of the security of the soul is not raised. It is the reward of faithful service—not the judgment of the servant, but his *work*.

Verse 16.—The "one temple" in contrast with the many sects or parties in verse 4. At Corinth the rents or divisions were *within* the assembly of God; now they are without, forming the Babel of Christendom. S. B.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender.

QUESTION NO. CLVIII.

What is meant by "the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands" in Heb. vi. 2?

REPLY.

A word or two on the context may be helpful:—"Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ," or "the word of the beginning of Christ," does not mean leaving them as being superseded, or leaving them as the shadow for the substance, but leaving them in the sense in which, as builders go on with the superstructure, they leave the foundation.

They are not always occupied with the foundation; it is laid once for all, and they go on from that to

rear the edifice of which the foundation ever forms the most necessary part.

Then follow three couples or pairs of divine truth, each of the three pairs being fundamental and eternal and common to all dispensations.

They form foundation truth for the superstructure of all doctrine.

The first couple is "repentance from dead works and faith towards God." In all ages these two conditions are true of every regenerate person. No man in any age ever was or ever will be accepted of God without repentance and faith. See the same in Acts xx. 21.

Then comes the second couple, "The doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands." Notice, it is

not "baptisms and the laying on of hands," but the "doctrine" or "teaching" therein contained that is fundamental.

The word here rendered "baptisms" (*baptismos*) only occurs elsewhere in the three following passages—Mark vii. 4, 8, and Heb. ix. 10, and cannot therefore have any connection with Christian baptism. It really refers to and embraces all the ceremonial "washings" of the Levitical economy. The "doctrine" or "teaching" (see new revision) of all these was the great truth of SANCTIFICATION in some of its many aspects. In this is included a wide range of doctrine, from regeneration to practical sanctification, through the truth, "the washing of water by the Word" (John xvii. 17; Eph. v. 26).

The "laying on of hands" was an expression which would certainly carry the mind of a Jew to the whole teaching of the sacrifices. In this way the offerer was identified with his offering (see Lev. i. 4, iii. 2, iv. 15, viii. 14, &c., &c.).

Thus the "doctrine" or "teaching" of the "laying on of hands" embraced all the circle of truth regarding atonement by blood and substitutionary death.

"Baptisms" connect with the truth embodied in "the laver." "Laying on of hands" connects with the truth embodied in "the altar."

Then follows the third couple of fundamental truths, "resurrection and eternal judgment." These embrace the eternal destiny of all mankind. The eternal damnation of the wicked is here shown to be as fundamental a doctrine as the resurrection of the just, and any teaching subversive of it demands the same uncompromising action.

QUESTION NO. CLIX.

Have we any ground for concluding that the choosing of Matthias by lot was unsanctioned by God, and that this proceeding of the eleven was of the flesh and from motives of expediency?

REPLY.

In Acts i. 20 a quotation from Psa. cix. 8 is given as their warrant for their action, "Let another take his charge."

The choosing by lot was recognised by God until the descent of the Holy Spirit. The presence in the Church of the Holy Spirit necessarily supersedes such action; but until that time it was the acknowledged way of ascertaining the mind of the Lord.

"The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole dis-

posing thereof is of the Lord" (Prov. xvi. 33). The numbering of Matthias with the eleven is distinctly mentioned, and not with any indication of disapproval.

Again, in Acts ii. 14, the Holy Spirit includes Matthias with the other apostles—"But Peter standing up with the eleven."

Again, in 1 Cor. xv. 5, the Holy Spirit by Paul speaks of "the twelve" as having all at one time been present at some of those special manifestations which He gave of Himself to His witnesses after His resurrection.

We therefore conclude that the action of the eleven had the sanction of God, and this is in no way affected by the fact that Matthias is not again mentioned by name, which might be said of others of the apostles as well as of him.

QUESTION NO. CLX.

In our Lord's discourse in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke iv. 16) what was there in His allusion to the widow of Sarepta and to Naaman the Syrian, that was calculated to rouse His hearers to such a pitch of rage as they exhibited?

REPLY.

The allusion to the widow of Sarepta, a *Sidonian*, and to Naaman, a *Syrian*, being visited graciously by Jehovah, whilst Israel was left unblest because of its rebellion, could not fail to gall those who prided themselves in being Jehovah's favoured people.

The application to them was evident. Known to them only as "Joseph's son," they did not believe in Jesus; and as a prophet He was not honoured by them. He did not, therefore, perform among them such works as He had done in Capernaum. As it is written, "He could there do no mighty work save that He laid His hands on a few sick folks and healed them" (Mark vi. 5), and this was on account of *their unbelief*, as we see from the parallel passage in Matt. xiii. 58.

The Lord thus taught them that as in the days of Elijah and Elisha blessing had been lost to Israel through their unbelief, and had been extended to the Gentiles; so now again the Jews were securing for themselves the same judgment, and that the blessing they were refusing in their rejection of Christ would be passed on to the Gentiles.

The same teaching is in Matt. xxii. 43, and the same result in verses 45, 46. The same is seen in Acts xiii. 45, 46, and in 1 Thess. ii. 16.

THE WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE.

IT has been well said that the three consecutive stages of Israel's history—Egypt, the Wilderness, and Canaan—aptly represent three simultaneous conditions of Christian experience now. We are in Egypt—that is, the world—as a matter of *fact*; in the wilderness—or separate from the world, and although *in* it not *of* it—as a matter of experience; and in Canaan—the place of conflict and victory corresponding to Eph. ii. 6 and vi. 12—as a matter of *faith*. Hence the Book of Joshua and the Epistle to the Ephesians should be read together. Hymn-writers are responsible for the notion that Jordan means death, and Canaan, heaven, for the Word of God warrants no such idea. What fighting could there possibly be *after death*, in order to gain possession of the heavenly inheritance?

Jehovah's promise in Joshua i. 3, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you," is a fine illustration of the practical faith that lays hold of and appropriates the promises of God. It is one thing to know that God has given us all things in Christ (Rom. viii. 32) but quite another thing to make these blessings our own by putting our foot down upon them in practical appropriating faith. A similar thought is presented in 1 Tim. vi. 12, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life"—live in the power and enjoyment of all that is ours in Christ.

In a former paper we were considering the first of these three conditions, or Israel in Egypt; with their double deliverance therefrom, and the practical instruction arising out of it. We now purpose glancing at the second or wilderness stage, which is equally important in its bearing on the Christian life. It should be remembered that in using the history of Israel as an illustration of individual Christian experience, it must be in their collective or *national* character, otherwise much confusion of thought will arise. For instance, none of those who were of age on leaving Egypt (except two) entered the land at all; and yet, collectively, or as one people, God brought them out and also brought them in. Any other reading of the type would land us in perplexity, for we should have those brought out who were never brought in, and some brought in who were never brought out, namely, such as were born in the wilderness.

Much has been said, and even sung about the wilderness journey, but we must ever bear in mind that it was a *stern reality* to them; and these things are written for our learning to teach us practical and moral truth. Hard fact and sentiment are seldom fellow-travellers, and the child of God will not have journeyed far before he finds this out.

The wilderness, then, is just what this world should become to the Christian as soon as he has found life in Christ. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. v. 17). He is filled with new thoughts, motives, hopes and desires, and he has also a new source of joy and strength, for God Himself is his only resource now. Not only so, but new foes, both within and without, will speedily make their presence felt, who never troubled him before while he lived in the scene of their gratification. Self within and sin around will be found arrayed against his heavenward progress. He will never succeed in quenching his spiritual thirst at the broken cisterns of earth, nor can he allay his soul-hunger by turning to the fleshpots of this Egypt world.

This brings out the important difference between faith and experience, the confusion of which so often leads the Christian into bondage. Both are true. As to the one I am "risen with Christ," as to the other I am here, and it is only when we are brought face to face with the evil within and the sorrow around, that we are driven to *look up*. "Behold I am vile" yet "as he is so am I." This is the source of strength, and not until we realise the power of what He has made us, shall we be able to triumph over sin. The wilderness character of the world will be apparent in the measure that this truth is recognised.

Israel began the journey with a song (Exod. xv.) In like manner, those who have been brought up out of the fearful pit of sin's condemning power, as well as from the miry clay of its corruption, and whose feet have been set upon the Rock and their goings established, have a *new song* put into their mouths (Psa. xl. 2, 3; Rom. v. 1, 2).

Their song, however, soon died away. Murmuring and provocation speedily took its place while in heart they turned back again to Egypt. But what about our song? It was self that embittered theirs, and has not our joy been often tainted by the same thing?

It would seem almost incredible that the memory of the great deliverance could be practically forgotten so soon, were not the echoes of the same truth continually reproduced in one's own heart. Yet so it was. Three days in the wilderness and no water (Exod. xv. 22). After the song comes tribulation, often so baffling to the young Christian. They sang of the Egyptians whose dead bodies were seen on the sea shore, but found Egypt in their own hearts. It is one thing to see sin, like the Egyptian, put out of sight, but quite another to see self also condemned. Marah's bitter water was the first lesson God taught them, and in like manner we have to learn the bitterness of self, and learn it quickly too, if we would tread the journey in the power of God.

As the tree of Jehovah's choosing sweetened the waters of Marah, so its great antitype, the cross of Christ, will sweeten the trials of the daily life. How blessed it is to know that our need is the opportunity for the manifestation of His grace. The title assumed by Jehovah in connection with this act of grace, expresses a truth which it is very important for us to recognise. It would teach us that the bitterness is not so much in the circumstances as in the heart, and thus we read, "I am the Lord that healeth" not the waters but "*thee*." The experience of David (Psalm lxxiii.) is just a case in point. He thought everything was against him, *until* (verse 17) he went into the sanctuary of God, and from the altered standpoint he saw it all in a new light. The slippery places he thought were his (verse 2) became theirs (verse 18), and so to the end.

The cross of Christ is the judicial death of self, as well as the judgment of sin; thus we read (Gal. ii. 20) "I am (or have been) crucified with Christ," also verse 24, "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts;" and the trials and difficulties of the way are just the expression of God's hand leading us by way of the cross, that we may find in Himself a resource we never knew before. Blessed, indeed, is the experience when the bitterness leads or even drives us to Himself. The Apostle Paul knew something of this when he wrote Phil. iv. 19, "my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"—see also verse 11—and not only is this to be our resource but our *strength* for positive testimony also, see 1 Peter iv. 1, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, *arm yourselves* likewise with the same mind."

Furthermore, Paul not only endured, but gloried in his infirmities, that the *power of Christ* might rest upon him (2 Cor. xii. 9).

The difference between infirmity and sin is not so clearly seen by some as it ought to be, and the inevitable outcome of this is, that one sometimes hears open and palpable sin extenuated, or even excused, on the ground of its being an infirmity of the flesh—a state of things to which the Word of God lends no countenance. Such behaviour is certain to foster unwatchfulness and consequent looseness of walk, which is productive of more damage to the name and cause of Christ, than the open opposition of ungodly men. Moreover, the Spirit *helpeth* our infirmities, but through the same Spirit we are to *mortify* the deeds of the body (Rom. viii. 13, 26).

The Apostle James gives us yet another result of trials—"My brethren, count it *all joy* when ye fall into divers temptations" (James i. 2). The reason is because it is the death of self—the practical mortifying of the flesh with its affections and lusts. The believer is there learning the utter hopelessness of self, side by side with the fulness of God's grace wherein he can rejoice. Compare Hab. iii. 17-19. To escape the cross is therefore too often to lose the power of grace in the heart, corresponding to the true circumcision (Phil. iii. 3), "who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

There is a precious promise in 1 Cor. x. 13 for the Lord's tried ones, in which His faithfulness is pledged that the measure of the trial shall not exceed the ability to bear it, and the close of the verse contains the statement of a truth that is far too little realised. The way of escape is to enable the tried one to *remain where he is*. What we need is less of the cry, "Lord, bring me out of this!" and more of the desire, "Lord, teach me the way of escape, that I may be able to stay here as long as Thou wilt."

No saint can know the fulness of Christ till he proves it by his own need, and then shall he be able to join in spirit with David, in the xxxiv. Psalm, "O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him." When the saints of God have learnt, according to Phil. iv. 12, "both to abound and to suffer need," then the rich in this world will know that they have Christ in all things, and the poor that they have all things in Christ.

Marah's bitterness was followed by the wells or fountains of Elim, with their seventy palm trees, reminding us of the ministry instituted by the Lord Jesus—the *twelve* and the *seventy*—and teaching us that the only source of true refreshment, and consequent fruit-bearing, is the Word itself, as ministered by the Holy Ghost—the living water to the thirsty soul. Three stages or characteristics of the living water are presented to us in the Gospel of John:—1st. It *satisfies* (John iv. 13), in contrast with all other resources which are summed up in the words "thirst again." 2nd. (John iv. 14), "It shall be in him a well of water *springing up* into everlasting life." As water finds its own level, so that which comes from God goes back to Him. 3rd. (John vii. 38), It is an *overflowing stream*—"out of him shall flow rivers of living water"—that is, for blessing to those around, for it is only as God's children overflow, like David's cup (Psa. xxiii.), that they can in turn refresh others.

The next halting place was Rephidim (Ex. xvii. 1). Between Elim and Rephidim lay the wilderness of Sin, traversed by Israel (Ex. xvi.), the history of which is full of important instruction for those whose hearts the Lord has opened, as manifesting their failure on the one hand and Jehovah's never-failing grace on the other. "He gave them bread from heaven to eat." The subject is too full to be treated here, but the best commentary on it is John vi.

Rephidim brings us face to face with a new experience—*no water*, showing that there is absolutely nothing from below to sustain the divine life. The life that is born *from above* (John iii. 3, marg.) must be sustained entirely from the same source. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and remains so. It may be cultivated, improved, educated and refined, but it will be flesh to the end. "They that are *in* the flesh cannot please God." "They that *sow* to the flesh shall reap corruption." On the other hand, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," and requires the ministry of the divine Spirit for its sustenance. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, . . . and these are contrary the one to the other." This is the great truth taught by Rephidim's smitten rock, with its refreshing streams, and the conflict immediately following. "That Rock was Christ," says 1 Cor. x. 4, and the action of Moses sets forth the smiting of Christ by the rod of the lawgiver, when He bore the curse of a broken law, that the law-

breakers might be free. Thus Christ's *law-keeping* would never reach the sinner, but His *law-satisfying* does. The water tells of the Holy Ghost, the result of atonement, whose life-giving stream, as already noticed, not only *saves* and *satisfies*, but *fructifies* also, and is henceforth to be the only source of joy—"the joy of the Holy Ghost." The new foe who so mysteriously appears on the scene, abruptly introduced in the words "Then came Amalek," &c., is none other than the personification of that flesh which lusts against the spirit, and the conflict at once begins.

However weak or feeble they might feel in themselves, Israel had a splendid resource in the promise, yea, the oath, of Jehovah (Exod. xvii. 16), "The Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation;" and a further development of the same truth, seen in the light of the Cross of Christ, is the Christian's main-stay now. That cross is the end of the flesh as regards its *authority* over us, and watchfulness and prayer are our only safeguards against its *power*. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." The hands of our blessed High Priest will never grow weary, but as surely as our souls lose the sense of the value of His priestly power and grace, so surely will the Amalekite nature, ever lurking and watching for an opportunity, prevail.

Kadesh, just on the confines of the land, was the next point of importance reached (Numb. xx.), and the murmuring of Israel once again, after forty years of mercies, just proves that their hearts were as deceitful at the end as at the beginning—that the old nature is as incurable as ever. A new source of help and strength is shadowed forth in the command now given to Moses. With the rod of Aaron in his hand—taken from before the Lord—the symbol of priestly grace, he was told to *speak* to the rock. It would seem, from verse 11, that he used his own rod, but whether or not the truth is the same. The rock once smitten cannot be so again. Rephidim's rock is Christ's dying love on the cross; Kadesh's rock, Christ's living love on the throne. The curse of the law cannot fall a second time, and hence Moses failed to express the divine meaning attaching to it. It is most important to see that His grace was not limited by Moses' failure, for, in spite of that, "the water came out abundantly." Yet the means used were not justified thereby. People may and do contend that God's blessing proves a certain

course to be right. Moses might have so argued, judging from results, but his disobedience was nevertheless hateful in God's sight, and cost him the high honour of leading the people in.

Oh, to know the power and preciousness of speaking to our Rock! "Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John xvi. 24). The resources of grace are boundless. Man may fail, but "His grace faileth never." "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful" (2 Tim. ii. 13). We can only learn His riches by *proving* their suitability to our need. Israel were nearing the journey's end when the flesh burst forth in all its native hideousness. This should dispel the delusion sometimes indulged in that length of years in the divine life brings with it a sort of immunity from danger. It should also enforce, with terrible reality, the solemn lesson of "*no confidence in the flesh.*" It may be that we too are nearing the borders. A few short years at most and it will be all over. We shall be there together, treading the paths of glory and blessing and joy without fear of murmuring. What will the first hour in heaven be, the first glimpse of Jesus! Then as to the testimony for Him in a world quickly passing away, *but whither?* What a mercy it is that we have access to the Rock, the fountain of living water, that from us, in turn, may flow streams of refreshing for the thirsty ones—messages of life for the dead.

G. S.

THE BLESSED HOPE AND SOME OF ITS CONNECTED TRUTHS.



PROPOSE to speak a little this morning upon the Blessed Hope and some truths connected therewith. We will read a few verses in the beginning of John xiv.

"Let not your heart be troubled." How kind of the Lord to say to us, don't let your heart be troubled, and he says it again at the end of the chapter (verse 27), "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." And we know why their heart was troubled, we read it (chapter xvi.), "But now I go My way to Him that sent Me, and none of you asketh Me, whither goest Thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart (verses 5, 6). It was because He was going away from them. And then how kind the next words read (verse 7), "Nevertheless I tell you the truth.

It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." There is a kindly tone about these words we should not fail to observe. You know that these words were uttered after Judas had gone out: it was His last discourse, and with God the last is always the best, and He lets His heart go out so freely in these wondrous chapters.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me." Associate Me in your thoughts of God, and do not think that I will fail you. "In my Father's house are many abodes." So it may be rendered, the word is the same as in verse 23. "If it were not so I would have told you." "I would not have told you to take up the cross and follow Me, to incur shame, loss, and suffering, if I could not make it up to you; if I could not bring you to a better abode than that which you have lost; into greater blessing than ever you have experienced before. But I can." "In my Father's house are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you." Don't let us make nothing of the place. I think it is the tendency of some minds to do so. Some people pooh pooh the crowns of glory. I do not think it right; if God has promised us crowns, it is right for us to prize them. The place then, in the Saviour's account, is worth something. It evidently occupies a prominent place in His thoughts. "And if I go and prepare a place for you." You see He makes use of the word place a second time, and in the fourth verse impliedly, a third time. He has saved us from this world, which is polluted, doomed, and must be judged, but He has given us another, and we have a place, though we have never seen it. "I go to prepare." A very dear friend, now with the Lord, I heard once say, "It must be a very beautiful place, because He has been preparing it for nearly 2000 years." I do not take that to be the meaning of the passage, not for a moment. On the contrary, we read how that the Spirit has come to make us know "the things which God *hath prepared* for them that love Him." And in Peter we read of the "salvation *ready to be revealed* in the last time." It means, as I understand it, "I go by death and resurrection, and ascension, and session at the right hand of God, I go to take possession." In other words, He went by His own blood into the holiest of all, as Hebrews ix. tell us,

and now it is that holiest of all, the immediate presence of God (yet a place), which is our proper home. God will shake this earth and the lower heavens, and it is only the very highest heavens, where Jesus is, and which are put right by His being there, by His own blood, which will not be shaken. There only is security, and well may we pitch our tents there and nowhere else.

“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also.” “I want you with Me.” His love seems, as it were, to show itself out in every way. “I am going to buy you. My Father has given you to Me, and I want you to be with Me in My glory for ever.” And not only did He say it to them, but to His Father also, you remember, in chapter xvii. “Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.” “And whither I go ye know the way” (verse 4), for such is the correct reading. The copyist attempted to improve Scripture and spoiled it. It implies that we do not know the end very well; we do not know where He has gone very well. That tip-top supernal glory we do not know. You can see a long way up through faith, but of the bliss and glory to which He is going to take you, you have very little idea.

But now let us ponder that promise of His, “I am coming again, and will receive you unto Myself.” “I am coming.” It reminds us of that name by which He is called two or three times in Scripture, “the Coming One.” Thus John the Baptist speaks of Him as “the One coming after me.” So again in Hebrews we have it, “The Coming One will arrive and will not tarry.” So it is here, “I am coming again;” “I am on the road, am on the road now.” For the cross was on the road to His coming again. It would have been but little use His coming again if He had not gone up to the cross for our sins; our sins blocked up the road, and we should have dreaded His coming like the unsaved, and as unestablished Christians may possibly do now. The cross was one step on the road, but He finished the work on the cross, and then was laid in the grave, and on the third day stood in resurrection. He went further on the road, and was nearer to us in resurrection, though in some sense further removed. He says to His disciples in Luke xxiv., “These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you,” as if in some sense

He were removed from them, although present before them. But now He was in His resurrection body, and was going to bring us, in resurrection too, into His glory, and to lift us out of all our misery. Next, He went up to Heaven. And do not think that when He went to Heaven He sat down immediately; on the contrary, remember that Stephen saw Him standing. We had better turn to the Scripture, and if I remember rightly the word “standing” occurs twice (Acts vii. 55), “And he saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,” and again (verse 56), “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.” And if we look at the chapters before, we can see perfectly well why; and if we look at other Scriptures we are confirmed in our impression. Before such grace, as we know, was fully brought out, it was God’s will that Christ should be preached to the Jews a second time in resurrection, and He was so preached by Peter and the other apostles (from Acts ii. to vii.), and thus we find Christ continually spoken of there not as “Son,” as in the authorised version, but as “servant,” as in the revised version. Thus (chapter iii. 13), “Hath glorified His servant Jesus.” And so too (verse 26), “Having raised up His servant Jesus.” And so throughout, you will notice the message was being conveyed again to Israel, only with this addition—“the Christ whom you rejected has been raised up by God and lifted into glory, but is willing to come and restore all things if you repent, and He has proved it with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven.” What was their answer? They murdered Stephen: that was their answer. Then He sat down, and sitting down, you read in the next chapter, how that He raised up Paul, and Paul preached that Christ was the *Son of God*; and was the great minister to bring out the doctrine of the Church of God—that all who believe in this dispensation are united to Him, one with Him through the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. We read in Acts ix. 20 of Paul, that “straightway He preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.” He brought out deeper glory than Peter did, quite another thing; and remember, beloved, the greater the glory of Christ the greater our blessing. And again, it is upon the doctrine of the Sonship of Christ that the Church is built. Now I have been speaking as to that Christ sat down, and I want to be as clear on

this as I possibly can. I hold it with all my heart and have done for twenty years, that since Christ was rejected by Israel He sat down, and Scripture always represents Him as sitting, and never anything else. We will look at a few Scriptures, for I want you to see how important it is, and I want you to see that these are steps on the road to His coming again, and that He is nearer to us now than if He sat with us at the well of Sychar, nearer than He was to His disciples in resurrection, and that it only wants a step more, a descent, a leaving a higher place to come to one lower down. I say the Lord Jesus is nearer to us since He sat down. We will look at a Scripture or two. Without counting the gospels and Psalm ex., there are six. Eph. i. 20, speaking of God's power, "which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies." Colossians iii. 1. This passage is stronger a great deal in the Greek, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting on the right hand of God"—two distinct words, "where Christ is—sitting," and they are the words of the Holy Ghost. Then the Epistle to the Hebrews shows us four aspects of His sitting. The first in chapter i. 3, "When He had by Himself purged sins, sat down," that is, as sin-purger. Next in chapter viii. 1, "We have such an High Priest who *sat down* on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." Thus we see He sat down as High Priest—mind that, for it is very important. Thirdly, chapter x. 12, "But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God," because of the perfect sacrifice is the thought there. Then the fourth in chapter xii. 2, "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of the faith: who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God," and the meaning is that He ran the whole course of faith Himself; that from the first breath, when He began to obey God till the last, His was the path of faith.

It is important for us to see the grandeur of Christ's sitting down, whether we look at God, at Christ, at us believers, or at unbelievers. For example, as respects unbelievers, then Christ's sitting down is a testimony of His being doubly rejected; first upon earth, secondly when presented from heaven. It

convicts the world of His having been twice rejected, first, when He Himself walked on earth, and then when in resurrection. Secondly, it is a blessed thing for us, for it shows us the measure of His acceptance, and if of His, of ours also. If He were standing, it is obvious it is not so complete an acceptance; that was Aaron's position, as it says, "Every priest *standeth* daily, but *this One*, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, *sat down*." It shows you the infinite value, the infinite acceptance accorded to Him, and if to Him, then to us. We are not to think of Him, if He intercedes for us, that He kneels at the Father's feet—there is no Scripture for such an idea—and, in my opinion, it is derogatory to the honour of the Son of God. He does intercede, and His intercession is active, not passive; but, cannot you intercede with a friend sitting at the table just as well as kneeling at his feet? "We have such an High Priest, who is set down on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens." Then again, if He watches over us, He can do it sitting down—blessed be His name. Thirdly, it is for the honour of God. It is right that God should heap unexampled honour upon Christ, for Christ has done so mighty a work to gratify God, and God has done this. "Sit on My right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." They have turned you out, sit here until My time comes for you to trample them under your feet. And fourthly, it is for the honour of Christ, for it shows the perfection of His obedience; for every testimony of Scripture, every Scripture we can find, states that He remains at the right hand of God.

All here know that, when He comes, it will be a personal coming. I do not deny that He comes to our spirit, John xiv. 23 says so,—“If a man love Me he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him;” that is in a sense which I cannot explain, but which the Holy Ghost, by experience, makes us understand. So again, in Matt. xviii. 20, “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them,” and I solemnly believe that we have His presence when gathered around Him on Sunday morning, not bodily, but I believe something more than spiritually, how, I leave with Him, for it is not explained, and bow my head and worship. Again He said, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world;” but though He so

says, still are we waiting for Him. He appeared to Paul in person; He may at special seasons reveal Himself to us now, say upon a sick bed, but that is not the bodily, actual coming down that we are waiting for. Look at Acts i. 11, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Shall *so come*. Is that fulfilled yet? No; He went away bodily, and they watched Him go away; gradually, as He rose higher and higher bodily, He shall *so come*—that is what we are waiting for. "I am coming again." Blessed be His name, we are waiting for that. I came once, I am coming again; again—why the very word shows His meaning.

But there is a deal more even than this. "I will receive you unto Myself," as if His heart yearned for that moment. I am looking for Him to clasp me to His bosom. A place is very beautiful, the place that He has prepared; but I shall look for that, and I am sure that He will keep His word. "I will receive you unto Myself," and if I understand these two words aright, I understand He will clasp me to His bosom; that He will have His own way utterly, and before He does anything else He will just embrace each one. Not merely some of you great saints, I am as entitled to it as you, not on the ground of merit, but upon the grace of His promise; and I look for Him to press my head as it were upon His bosom, and do not see that He can do much less if He fulfils that Word fully. "I will receive you unto Myself." In Scripture we read about the judgment seat of Christ, and about reward according to our works; but bear in mind this beautiful truth, the judgment-seat comes after His folding us to His bosom. Before He looks at our works He receives us to Himself. Now, does not that take off all terror of the judgment-seat of Christ? That we are to be received to Himself, to be embraced, for His love to have its full way with us. This is the first act of the Son of God, who died, rose, ascended to heaven, is sitting there for you, and is coming down bodily for you on purpose to fold you to Himself. And, beloved, let these promises be deeply imbedded in your heart, which we have been meditating upon. I don't know if there is anyone here who has something very very bright in the future, something that he is always thinking about and that makes the eye glisten, and people may say, I wonder what makes that man so happy; maybe he is coming

into a fortune and knows it, or perhaps he is going to be married. And thus, deep deep down in your heart this truth should lie, "I am coming again to receive you unto Myself." You have many cares, so have I; you have many anxieties, sorrows, aches, and pains, but Jesus designed and God designed that this bright hope should be in your heart and enable you to look forward and upward at all times. You know that it is *the* hope and *the* promise on which I have sought to enlarge. In 2 Peter iii., in the Greek, the Lord is called "the Lord of the promise," and in Hebrews x. we read, "Cast not away therefore your confidence which hath great recompense of reward. For yet a little while (as little as may be) and the Coming One will come and will not delay," and that, if you look at verse 36, is called "*the* promise," as if there was nothing like it, as if it were the promise of promises—the tip-top cap and crown of all. And we are to pray about it, and pray earnestly for the coming of the Lord. I believe that there are three Scriptural reasons why He tarries: first, until the number of His elect be accomplished; second, until He is asked to come back, urged to come back. What Scripture have I for that? Strange that your hearts are not enough led of the Spirit to teach you that. Does the bride need proof that she longs for her bridegroom—I give you Scripture: "The Spirit and the bride say come." Come, Lord Jesus! And then the third in the words of Scripture, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, come ye out to meet Him." Come ye out to meet Him.—*Notes of addresses by W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. H.*

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY J. R. C.

1 COR. vi. 7, &c.



WE are taught in verse 7 so to consider the honour of the name of the Lord as connected with His own people, that we would rather silently bear any amount of wrong from a fellow Christian than suffer it to come before the world.

But in case any should suppose by this that sin may be made light of, the apostle immediately brings forward the other side of the truth. Having rebuked

those who were so impatient of wrong—be it real or supposed—that they would take their cause before the world's courts, he now turns to rebuke those who were doing the wrong. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God; be not deceived."

It is important to notice in how many of the epistles we find similar warnings to this against self-deception. So, in Eph. v. 5, 6: "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience; be not ye, therefore, partakers with them." Again, in Phil. iii. 18, 19: "Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." No doubt the persons here referred to were professed Christians, who had joined themselves to the people of God, but *self* was their object, and not Christ.

Again, in 2 Tim. iii. 1-5: "For men shall be lovers of their own selves . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away."

2 Peter ii. 18-22: "For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. . . . But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again: and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

Notice the "escaping" here referred to is not through "*faith*," but only through "*knowledge*." There are persons such as Herod of whom we read that he "feared John . . . and observed him: and when he heard him he did many things and heard him gladly" (Mark vi. 20).

Though he "did many things," so that an outward change may have been noticeable in his life, yet he was not saved. The change was not salvation, it was self-deception. The dog and the sow only followed the instincts of their unclean nature. It is the nature of the sow, be it washed ever so clean, to wallow in the mire. Not so the sheep. A sheep may fall into the mire, but it will struggle to be out; it never loves it, it never wallows in it.

Another striking passage is Titus i. 15, 16: "Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure. . . . They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."

These passages suffice to show that as Christianity became corrupted self-deception would increase. I am persuaded that in these last days, when the power of Satan is so great and his devices so subtle—and, on the other hand, the Gospel of the grace of God so abundantly proclaimed—there will be more and more the "turning of the grace of God into lasciviousness;" taking advantage, as it were, of the doctrines of grace to give the reins to self-will and pride and lust; as if it were written, "He bore our sins that we might have liberty to go on in sin," and not "that we being dead to sin might live unto righteousness."

Hear, then, the solemn warning of God, "Be not deceived."

Verses 9-11: The Lord had gathered out from the mass of Corinthian idolatry and wickedness a chosen people for His name. When the apostle was first there delivering the Lord's message, declaring the unsearchable riches of Christ, the opposition was so great that probably he would have left had not the Lord appeared to him in a vision, saying, "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city" (Acts xviii. 9, 10).

Some of these were at that very time such sinners as we read of here. In Rev. xxi. 8 there is a list of the sins of which those have been guilty who have their part in "the lake of fire;" and as we look at the roll of the redeemed at Corinth, we see some of the very same characters pardoned and saved!

The apostle brought no "handmaid" along with the Gospel when he came to Corinth. He resorted to no questionable or outlandish means to render the Gospel attractive. He determined to know nothing among them "save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." It was not Christ and something else, but Christ alone he preached, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. It was Christ alone that saved. No matter how deep dyed with sin, or how low they were sunk in corruption, the Lord of glory stooped to save them. They were "washed," for He purged their sins on Calvary. They were justified from all things the

moment they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; and being justified they were also sanctified, set apart for God, sealed and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. What a mighty change! What but the power and grace of God could have wrought it? Yes, Corinthian sinners once vile as those who weep and wail in eternal perdition shall surround the throne of God, eternal monuments of His saving grace!

Do not let us be afraid to trust the simple Gospel for the salvation of sinners. Let us with all boldness and confidence proclaim the story of the cross for we know "the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

Let us trust Almighty God to use the means that He Himself has appointed for lifting the chief of sinners out of his sin and uncleanness, and making him an heir of glory.

I would that in these days of many devices, we had more simple, single-hearted faith in the power of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. Many Old Testament types illustrate the power of the Gospel. To the natural mind what foolishness it was to expect the water of Jordan to cure the leprosy of Naaman! And, again, to think of a look to a serpent of brass arresting the venom of the serpent's fang as it circulated in the life-blood of the bitten Israelite! Yet to these, as the means, God had attached His power. They became the power of God to effect the result that He had declared.

And such is the Gospel. Insignificant and inadequate as it may seem in the eyes of the wise and prudent of this world, yet God has attached to it His power, so that it becomes "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

As the first-fruits offering in Israel was as it were a specimen from every field, so, through the Gospel testimony, God is gathering a kind of first-fruits out of every kindred and nation and people and tongue, and not only so, but a specimen of every sort and condition of sinner; every one of whom shall go to form that blood-cleansed company whose new eternal song shall be the Gospel:—"Unto Him that loveth us and washed as from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever" (Rev. i. 5).

Those who profess to be saved or who even think that they are saved yet continue to live in sin, what

does God say to them? "Be not deceived." Such are not the sort of people who inherit the kingdom of God. The same Saviour-God, who forgives sin, delivers from its power. The Spirit of God is mighty to subdue every sin from which the blood of Christ can cleanse. I do not say that a believer may not fall into sin, yea, daily have many sins and shortcomings to confess to God. But when he does sin instead of going on in it as his element, he will turn to the Lord in confession and receive the full benefit of all the gracious provision which God has made in Christ Jesus for a sinning child. In the main righteousness and holiness must characterize the life of every child of God. We are not called upon to acknowledge any man to be a Christian to whom this description can not be applied.

Though many of the Corinthian converts had been great sinners, deep dyed in sin, yet by the grace of God they were now set apart for Him: "But ye are washed, but ye are justified, but ye are sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. They were "*washed*" in the blood of Christ, they were "*justified*" by God the Father, and they were "*sanctified*" or set apart for God by the power and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The blessed name of the Lord Jesus was named upon them and the Holy Spirit of God had taken possession of them as His temple.

PHILIPPIANS.



THIS is the Epistle of fellowship. The place it occupies in the divine arrangement of the books of the Bible is deserving attention. Fellowship springs from being in Christ, and He in me. The Epistle to the Ephesians contemplates the believer in Christ; Colossians, Christ in the believer—lying between, comes the Epistle of fellowship.

Chapter i. calls to fellowship in the Gospel. The apostle could make request for them, for their fellowship in the Gospel, not only when the freshness of youth was upon them, but continuing unrelaxed up to the time of his writing to them. To hold forth the Word of Life was the privilege of every saint at Philippi: other and necessary works, such as that of the bishop, deacon, &c., were limited to those called and fitted of God. But this was a work

that the youngest as well as the eldest had the happy privilege of sharing in. Not of necessity that all should publicly preach, but as having fellowship together in the work of the Gospel, there was place and opportunity for all.

How does it stand with us to-day? The rule seems to be, one or two brethren bearing the burden not only of preaching the Gospel but all other work connected therewith, the rest of the saints seeming to have lost all sense of responsibility—coming, it is true, to the Gospel meetings, but only as the strangers come. Is it then to be wondered at, that results are few, “Ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little. Why, saith the Lord of Hosts? Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house” (Haggai i. 9).

When the remnant returned from Babylon there was work to be done, and we read (Nehemiah iv. 6), “The people had a mind to work.” They did not neglect prayer and watching, verse 9, and we are not surprised, that as the result of such a happy condition, leading to such godly energy, the work was finished (chapter vi. 15).

What is wanted to-day is the ready mind. Hearts warmed by contact with the living Christ, to whom it will be a joy and pleasure to help in the work of the Gospel so dear to God. Have we not read “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke xv. 10).

Too often it is the case that when some work, demanding the care of the elders *only* arises amongst the saints, instead of being left to be done by those fitted for the work, all exercise themselves therein. It becomes the subject of talk on every occasion—those who perhaps have hardly exchanged words for weeks will then find time and opportunity to spend hours together in fruitless talk over affairs that in nowise concern their activity. Hence, two evils arise,—the hands of those whose work it specially is are hampered; evils that might and should be dealt with cannot be touched—and the work that should have alone occupied the attention of those, thus intermeddling, is left undone.

How much could be done if all the saints were alive to their privilege in having fellowship in the Gospel? There are at least two ways in which much could be effected and in which all could bear a part, I speak at present of the collective testimony.

Our Gospel meetings would be larger if every saint in fellowship made it his business to invite and constrain the unsaved to come to the place where the Gospel is preached. After the meeting is over, to walk home with some unsaved one, and seek by gracious dealing to reach the conscience and apply the Gospel, would not only be happy fellowship in the work, but doubtless give the joy of being the means of leading a sinner to the Saviour.

In verse 7 of this first chapter we read of “the defence of the Gospel.” We live in a day when, as well as preaching the Gospel, there is a need for defending the Gospel—false Gospels abound. Paul testified to Jews and Greeks “Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts xx. 21). Forty years ago, in our country, the great bulk of the preaching was repentance, and even that but little understood, with the result that assurance of salvation was comparatively rare. To-day “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ” without seeking to awaken the sinner to a sense of sin and guilt before God comprises the bulk of what is called Gospel preaching, with the result, that around us on every side are multitudes professing to be saved and to have their sins forgiven, who, when tested by the Word of God, which describes the character and state of the man really born again, do not answer in the smallest degree to the likeness of the children of God. “If a man *say* he hath faith, what shall it profit him if he have not works.” His profession of faith is to him a delusion and a snare.

“What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” God hath joined repentance Godward, and faith in Christ as the testimony for the unsaved. Forty years ago God’s joining had been divorced, the first part magnified, the other forgotten; to-day the divorce continues, with this difference, that the second part is preached, the first forgotten, in either case with disastrous results.

The same seventh verse speaks of the confirmation of the Gospel. Much business nowadays is transacted in the first instance by telegram, and when the transaction is thus finished, confirmed by letter, the confirmation is necessary to finally complete the business. “Only let your conversation (manner of life) be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ” (verse 27). In our manner of life amongst men is to be found, the confirmation, or otherwise, of the Gospel we preach.

How many, well fitted otherwise to preach the Gospel, have been lamed, and their preaching become but idle words, because their manner of life was not becoming the glorious Gospel with which they had been charged.

Is it to be wondered at, that the unsaved turn a deaf ear to our entreaties, when our ways, known so well by them, are crooked and perverse. If our lives were honest before the world, it would happen assuredly that "whilst they speak against you as evil-doers," they would, "by your good works, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Peter ii. 12),—and what need we care what is said about us, if God is glorified in the salvation of the evil-speaker.

The apostle Paul could ask the Thessalonians to witness "How holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe" (1 Thess. ii. 10).

This testimony in his own conscience, as much as his faithful *spoken* testimony to Christ, enabled him to say, "I am pure from the blood of all men" (Acts xx. 26).

In verse 12 the apostle speaks of the "Furtherance of the Gospel." That such an active worker as the apostle should be cast into prison when, as the natural man would judge, his presence and testimony was most needed, would appear to be an irreparable loss. We are constantly being called to learn that God's ways are not as ours, and that which at first sight seemed most against the Gospel he would have them understand was the very thing for its furtherance. Whereas he was alone as a preacher when free to go about, now that he was in prison there were many mouths to speak the Word without fear.

On another occasion at Philippi (see Acts xvi.) he and Silas were labouring in the Gospel, a certain damsel followed them, bearing to their work a testimony that sounded plausibly. But faithfulness to God would not allow hypocrisy on her part to go unrebuked, and so Paul grieved, commanded the evil spirit to come out of her. To expose evil always brings persecution, and their case was no exception; the multitude rose against them, resulting in grievous stripes to their persons, and circumscribing their sphere of testimony to the inside of a prison. But all this "happened for the furtherance of the Gospel," as the jailor, with his whole household, were converted to God that same night.

There is a spirit abroad in our day which counsels on this wise,—admitting that there are evils, simply ignore them, thus you will have the ears of the multitude, and the Gospel will be furthered. Faithfulness to God forbids; it may be that my sphere of labour will, to outward appearance, be circumscribed, but to silently wink at iniquity before God, I cannot, and faith whispers—"though your labours may be in a smaller compass, these things have but happened for the furtherance of the Gospel."

It is sad to see so many selling the Truth for the sake of an outward show, their eyes blinded by seeming success. The word of the wise man was "Appearances are deceitful," and we have to learn that.

"He always wins who sides with God." Results are no true test of the approval of God. Our Lord's labour was perfect, yet the nearer He came to the end His following seemed smaller, and the numbers to hear Him were fewer. To judge after the spirit of the age, which, alas, has infected many who began well, His life-work was a total failure. The great apostle of the Gentiles was in a like case—at the beginning "a great door was opened for him in Asia;" at the end all they of Asia had turned away from him.

The majority, in the things of God, have seldom been right; therefore, to be blinded by mere numbers, as if this was the sure test, is to betray a limited acquaintance with the Scripture record.

1 Samuel viii. 9 shows us unmistakably that it was contrary to the will of God Israel should have a king (marginal reading especially). They got a king—such an one as they desired—Saul. In matchless grace, God could not forsake Israel, though thus rejecting Him; so we read (1 Samuel x. 1) Saul was the Lord's anointed, "The Spirit of God came upon him and he prophesied" (verse 10), and when occasion served (chapter xi. 1-11), by the Spirit of God, he did a great work for Israel. The unthinking multitude then, as now, reasoned from the success, that therefore God approved of Saul and approved their choice, and so we hear their desire for judgment on the few croakers who said Saul should not reign over them, and yet these few despised ones were those who alone had the mind of the Lord. Instances might be multiplied to prove this point. But to the soul who, like Paul, exercises himself to have a conscience void

of offence toward God first, man next, he will be able to say, in Gospel work as all else,

"All is right, that seems most wrong,
If it be His sweet will."

For this happy work of Gospel testimony the Lord requires *perfect* men, that is, those who like Job "Fear God and eschew evil;" *great* men, but their greatness to be like John the Baptist's "in the sight of the Lord;" *good* men—not the namby, pamby thing that some call goodness, but answering to the description given of Barnabas, who was "a good man, being full of faith and the Holy Ghost"—*a man after God's own heart*, like David, and he was this because (Acts xiii. 22) he fulfilled ALL God's will; *noble*, approved of God the worker must be, noble as the Bereans were, who received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily to act as was written there.

How beautiful the closing words of the first chapter of Philippians to the Gospel-minded Christian (verse 27), "Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel."

Methinks there is too much individuality in Gospel work, too little fellowship therein. Satan is the scatterer. God would bind us together that we might strive together—unity is strength. The one aim and the common object of soul-winning, according to the will of God, will bring all who seek His will to one spirit and one mind. When we say "What wilt thou have me do," in response, He as it were hands me His Word, and looking therein I find that with my fellow-saints there is one special work. To be as one man in the work of the Gospel. I may be in doubt about many things, I need be in none about this; and of this we may be certain, that not one will be forgotten, however humble his part in the work, if done before God, the day shall declare it; it will be remembered by the Lord.

It is written of Baruch, who wrought at the building of the wall in Nehemiah's day, that he "laboured earnestly:" connect this with the "striving" of the verse before us. In the affairs of life there must be earnest constant application to secure success, and nothing else is acceptable to God for His work. It is painful to see those, who in their own affairs are all anxiety, punctual to the moment, and willingly enduring hardship for present gain, but who in the work of God are careless, slovenly, and forgetful. It betokens the state of soul, when fellowship in the work

of the Gospel has become a drag. "The dew of youth" has departed, the time has fully come for confession and humbling before God, lest a worse evil befall you.

In concluding these remarks I would add, for help and encouragement, that the work of the Gospel needs *faith* (read Galatians vi. 9). If there is the "well-doing" of this work there is the sure Word, that we shall reap if we faint not. *Patience* (James v. 7) "The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it." Shall we have less patience who wait for the fruit of Gospel seed? *Humility* (1 Cor. iii. 6, 7); the operation is of God (1 Cor. xii. 6). I must be content to labour, caring not whose may be the credit on earth, it being enough for me that I am a helper in work performed for God.

Perseverance (Ecclesiastes xi. 6) "Thou knowest not," therefore, morning and evening, taking advantage of every God-given opportunity, sow the seed, we know not which shall prosper; this only we know, "God's Word returns not to Him void."

Hearts so in sympathy with the Saviour about the perishing that there will be wrought in us such reality, as shall make us weep as we bear the precious seed (Psalm cxxiv. 6), to such is pledged a time when he shall have full sheaves.

When conscious the Lord is on our side, and His hand acting with us, we will not be easily turned aside from, nor faint in the path of service for Him.

P. H.

NOT YET.

METHOUGHT my exodus had surely come;
That now this throbbing heart
Should rest, and I depart
To be with Christ in Paradise at home.
Fierce was my pain, and long each sleepless night;
Scarce could I think or pray,
But, near or far away,
The resurrection-morn appeared so bright.
'Twould be so sweet methought to fall asleep,
To leave the toil and din,
The sorrow and the sin,
And then awake, ah! never more to weep.
To solve the solemn mystery of how
The unclothed spirit knows,
In rapture of repose,
The presence of the Master even now.

There, with my Lord who died and lives again,
 To wait as heretofore,
 Till He delay no more
 His coming victory o'er death's domain.

So much I longed to go, life had no charm :
 My Shepherd's rod of power
 And staff of rest each hour
 Could comfort me, and death could not alarm.

But not as this has been the Shepherd's will :
 The fever and the pain
 Have ebbed away again ;
 This body of humiliation still

Retains the spirit I would fain commit
 Into His pierced hand,
 Until, at His command,
 It shall assume its dwelling pure and fit.

He turneth back my soul—I murmur not ;
 It may hap some there be
 Who bless His name for me,
 That I am left to share their pilgrim lot.

It may be, after all, who knows ? that I
 Shall never taste of death,
 Or breathe a latest breath,
 But be caught up to meet Him in the sky.

I know not ; but I seek again His gates,
 Amid the shadows dim,
 To listen still for Him
 Whose voice is heard by him who "stands and waits."

SHETLAND, 1st Dec., 1883. A. P. M.

"FAITH CURES."

IT is sad to know that healing by faith, which is sometimes exercised by the operator alone, and sometimes demanded of the patient as a condition precedent to the cure, sometimes accompanied by anointing with oil, and sometimes with the laying on of hands, seems to be established as a kind of business. In many places so-called "Homes" are springing up for the reception of the sick, in whose behalf prayer is to be offered without any other means of restoration; and many have regularly appointed "healing days" in connection with their ordinary ministerial work. There are undoubtedly godly men and women, who are carrying forward this business, and hence weak Christians need to be more on their guard against a phase of belief, which threatens serious dishonour to the Lord, and serious disaster to souls.

Probably no child of God needs to be informed that sickness belongs to the proper province of prayer, certainly as much as anything beside. Probably no child of God is ever sick, or ever has a dear one sick, without going to our Father about it, waiting upon Him in faith. Probably no child of God ever sends for a medical man without the reflection that, apart from God's blessing, the man will have no wisdom to make a correct diagnosis of the case, or to select the right remedies, or to be of the slightest value. Hence any intelligent Christian who chooses to employ a physician, may recognize his dependence upon God, and pray to God, and exercise faith in God, as truly as one who prefers to dispense with all remedial agencies and human instrumentalities.

Indeed, those who insist most earnestly that it proves a lack of faith to employ a physician, find their theory constantly breaking down. The brother who is better known than any other in the country for the number of his faith cures, and who is constantly receiving letters from all parts of the continent asking an interest in his prayers, is a practising physician, and habitually administers medicines in certain cases. A sister, earnest in her demand that true Christians must dispense with human remedies, was asked what she would do if a wound was received by which an artery was severed? She remained silent, but when pressed for an answer, she slowly said, "I am afraid that my faith would fail me." "No," was the reply, "your faith would not fail you, but you would show your common sense by obtaining immediately, if possible, the help of a surgeon." So it must be in the pains and perils of child-birth, and in numberless instances. Nobody but a fool would claim that in such cases, it would exhibit a want of faith to call in human agencies.

But looked at in the light of Scripture, there is nothing to sustain the extreme position of many faith-cure people. Admitting all that they claim, it does not follow that every Christian possesses the gift of healing. The inspired Scriptures say, "To one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; . . . to another the gifts of healing, by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy," (1 Cor. xii. 8-11). Yet it is said over and over, that it is a lack of faith, or some unforsaken sin, or an "unsurrendered will," which is keeping Christians sick, thus grieving and hurting many a

weak and patient saint, who is called to glorify God on a bed of suffering. This talk is unwise, erroneous: and it makes one indignant to hear these self-righteous judges of the sick children, who may be looking up to their Father with just as much faith, and with far more humility and patience.

The same censorious judges of the sick brethren ought, if consistent, to blame the devoted apostle because he wrote, "Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick," (2 Tim. iv. 20); and because in his presence Epaphroditus "was sick nigh unto death," (Phil. ii. 27); and because he was directed by the Holy Ghost to say to a sick preacher, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities," (1 Tim. v. 23). Those who abominate human physicians, assert that the "little wine" was no more remedial than if the apostle had told Timothy to eat a little underdone steak or chop. Granted; but underdone steak or chop, or a little beef-tea, to people of common sense *is* remedial, and a human instrumentality for the recovery of health.

But it must not be forgotten in the argument that there are well authenticated cases of cures wrought on those who pray to the virgin Mary, and touch the bones of dead saints; and wrought by "spiritual mediums" who are in league with the devil; wrought by magnetic doctors and travelling quacks, wrought by the followers of a Chicago fanatic or a knave, who will furnish testimonials to any extent, and summon respectable witnesses to make oath, if need be, that they were instantly healed of chronic diseases pronounced incurable by the regular practitioners. It is true that in most cases such means fail to effect a cure; and it is equally true that in the faith cures, failure is the rule, and success the rare exception.

What conclusion, then, must be reached? That it is useless to pray about sickness, and to pray in perfect confidence that our Lord is as able and as willing to heal now, as when He was upon the earth? God forbid that any Christian should doubt that He hears prayers for the sick body, as truly as He does for the sin-sick soul. But as in the case of the sin-sick soul He generally uses human instrumentality to accomplish His loving purpose, so He does in the case of the sick body; and it is no want of faith to employ remedies in dependence upon God. Christians need to be on their guard against believing everything they hear or read; and especially in these last days

when Satan is so busy imitating the works of Christ, they need to bring everything to the sure test of the written word. The sister, to whom reference has already been made, confidently appealed, as all of her class do, to Jas. v. 14, 15, addressed "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad," and evidently describing sickness occasioned by sin. When asked if she was "the elders of the church," she said "no," but justified her anointing with oil by the failure of the elders to do their duty. To such lengths can fanaticism easily lead.

FIRST CORINTHIANS.

(Continued from page 15.)



HAP. IV.—Here we have the true character of Christ's ministers illustrated in the self-denying service of the apostles, in contrast to the pride and self-conceit of those who were reigning as kings (verses 2, 9-13, 7, 8, 18, 19).

Chap. v.—Impurity in the assembly to be judged and put out by the *assembly*, not by *one* individual (verses 12, 13). Here it is moral evil under the symbol of leaven; in Gal. v. 9 it is doctrinal evil. Exhortation to separate from one called a brother whose conduct corresponds with verses 9-11.

Chap. vi.—The apostle reproves the Corinthians for going to law with each other, and that, before the heathen judges, instead of bringing these matters before the brethren and submitting to their judgment. Hence for one Christian to engage in a lawsuit, against another and provoke others by a litigious spirit, is contrary to Scripture and the spirit of Christ; rather let him suffer wrong without retaliation. In chap. iii. 16 we have the Church of God collectively—the "temple" of the Holy Ghost—here the individual believer's body (verse 19). Hence the obligation of the believer to preserve his body from all impurity and defilement—I think that is what is meant as a "vessel" fitted for the Master's use, so that he may glorify God in his body and spirit, which are His.

Chap. vii.—Gives instruction as to marriage and other social relationships. Those who marry are to do so "only in the Lord." Hence for a believer to marry an unbeliever is to act contrary to the mind and will of the Lord.

Chap. viii.—Christian liberty as to eating meat offered unto idols, and strong Christians exhorted to avoid that which would offend weak ones, or would lay a stumbling block in their way. Hence to wound a brother's conscience is to offend, to sin against Christ (verses 10-12).

Chap. ix. is parenthetical. The apostle asserts his authority to receive maintenance from the saints among whom he labours, referring to the law of Moses and of Christ. Nevertheless, he voluntarily surrendered this right, that he might make the Gospel of Christ without charge. Hence the apostle was a living exemplification of the Gospel he proclaimed free without price. A "castaway" means one disapproved, rejected.

Chap. x.—The apostle cautions the saints against idolatrous and other sinful practices to which professors are actually liable, lest they should fall under God's displeasure, as Israel did, whose history in the wilderness he cites as a solemn warning, mentioning especially five classes of sins—1, lusting (verse 6); 2, idolatry (verse 7); 3, fornication (verse 8); 4, tempting God (verse 9); 5, murmuring (verse 10). The right and proper place for the Christian is at the table of the Lord. They, being many, are but "one" bread, "one" body; hence they are brought clean out of Judaism and Paganism to a living Christ, who is to be the only *centre* and *object* of worship.

Chap. xi.—Paul censures and corrects irregularities in the assembly. Women were speaking and appearing in public unveiled, contrary to God's order and female modesty. A woman, to have her head covered, was a sign of her subjection to the man, as the Church is to Christ and Christ to God. Also, he rectifies abuses, disorders, and contentions at the ordinance of the Lord's supper. Hence some were weak and

sickly, and others slept: the result of God's chastisement. Verses 1-16 gives us God's order in creation, 17-34 in the Church. Five times the words "come together" is mentioned (verses 17, 18, 20, 33, 34).

Chap. xii.—We have the variety of gifts of ministry in the Church. The word "body" is mentioned about sixteen times, and the "spirit" ten times.

Chap. xiii. shows love is superior to all gifts, and chief among the Christian graces. As is frequently said, the gifts of chapter xii. must be baptized in the love of chapter xiii. to be exercised in the power of chapter xiv; for chapter xiii. is like the Red Sea for gifts, in which the flesh is left at the bottom.

Chap. xiv. gives instruction how the different gifts are to be exercised. Tongues were for a sign to the world, prophecy was for the edification of the Church—the saints.

Chap. xv. gives us the doctrine of the resurrection. All through this chapter it is the question of the "body," (not the soul), being raised, when it will be conformed to the image of Him who was first raised from the dead, and became the first fruits of them that slept.

Chap. xvi.—The apostle gives instructions in reference to a collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem; commends Timothy to their love and care, and exhorts them to show respect to Stephanas and his family, and all his fellow-labourers; then closes with a solemn curse on all those who love not the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence we have in this closing chapter liberality to the poor enjoined, hospitality and love to be shown to those who labour for the Church's welfare, and a final and irrevocable curse to rest upon those who reject God's Christ, when He comes. Scholars tell us "Maran-asha" is a Syriac phrase, and signifies "the Lord cometh." S. B.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender

QUESTION NO. CLXI.

Is it correct to say that because a person cannot tell "when," "where," and "how" he was saved he is therefore not saved at all?

REPLY.

We do not doubt that most conversions, especially

in these days of distinct and definite teaching as to "grace," "faith," "atonement," and "regeneration," are as distinct and definite as the Gospel truth by which they were set free. Probably the vast majority of truly converted persons now living could name the time and place of their passing from death to life through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But this must not for a moment be allowed to operate against what is equally true, that many are truly saved persons in whose experience no such definite point of change is discernable.

With some, conviction of sin is gradual and long continued, and their entrance into the peace and light and liberty of the Gospel also a gradual process, with its ups and downs, its seasons of hope and fear, more like the passing of winter into summer, or midnight into noonday, than the more sharply defined experience of others akin to the breaking of a chain, or the opening of the eyes.

Most of the miracles of our Lord were instantaneous and complete. Nevertheless, on one occasion the work was accomplished in stages. We refer to the opening of the eyes of the blind man recorded in Mark viii. 22-25. His first experience was, "I see men as trees, walking." This variety in the Divine methods of working has its counterpart in spiritual experience, and calls for extreme care in speaking about such matters. God never makes two faces alike, or two blades of grass alike—variety is a law of all His works; and neither are the experiences of any two of His people exactly alike, even as to their conversion.

Some have known the Scriptures from their infancy, and brought up under the Gospel as the most familiar sound to their ears, and instructed as to all its kindred truths; they can point to no time when they passed from death to life, from darkness into light. Yet they know and love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ as truly as others whose awakening was like the earthquake, and whose salvation was like the snatching of a brand from the fire.

But the question we are considering has its rise, no doubt, in zealous abhorrence of that formal religion which never knew conviction of sin, and never rejoiced in forgiveness; which never having experienced any change, calls in question the experience of those who know they are "born again," and rests satisfied in a profession and church membership whilst dead in sins, and as far from God and Christ as the heathen.

Few, indeed, there must be, if any really children of God, who cannot at least say, "whereas I was blind, now I see."

They may not be able to name the day or the place, but the fact of reconciliation and peace with God they do know and thankfully own.

QUESTION NO. CLXII.

Please explain Rev. ii. 2 and iii. 5.

REPLY.

In the epistle to Smyrna a time of persecution is predicted, and the suffering ones are exhorted to be faithful even unto death. There can be little doubt that this literally refers to the persecution against the Christians by Pagan Rome, during which many were slain for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The comfort to such is most appropriate. It is as if the Lord said to them, "fear none of these things; prisons and death may abide you here, but comfort yourself with this blessed thought, you shall never be hurt of the SECOND death." As we sing—

"There is no condemnation,
There is no hell for me;
The torment and the fire
Mine eyes shall never see."

In addition to this there is also the promise in verse 10 of a crown of life to the faithful.

The promise in iii. 5 to the overcomers in Sardis is equally appropriate. Many in Sardis had "a name to live, but were dead." The "name to live" may refer to their names being registered as members of the Church; and so worldly had Sardis become, that it is no unlikely supposition that the name of many a faithful one was for his very faithfulness blotted out of such a roll.

In contrast to this name to live there is seen the name enrolled in the Lamb's book of life, and His comforting message to this effect, "however others may treat you, blotting out your name and denying you as a friend or brother, I will not blot your name out of the book of life; I will confess your name before My Father and before His angels."

Whilst sincerely grateful to all those who have helped us by contributing to our pages, we would again make known our desire to be further helped by short articles, simple and practical. Most of the papers we receive are longer than is desirable. We wish to cultivate variety of teaching, and to have truth so expressed that it is not beyond the comprehension of the simplest and least educated of our readers. We should also greatly value help in prayer—the work is of such a responsible character.

“ALL YOUR NEED.”

PHIL. iv. 19.

IT strikes me that there are two or three little things in the very arrangement of this verse which are precious. Thus, you may notice, that your need and His glory are strung together, looped together as it were. As if there were two hands, the Divine hand, and your empty, tiny hand grasped by His. Your need—His glory, His riches in glory. Then the rest of the verse is chiefly made up, if we look at the two ends, by beginning with “my God,” and ending with “Christ Jesus.” Thus the two middle parts seem so nicely to fit together, and what could be better than the end and the beginning.

Now you can almost anticipate the way in which I propose to speak of this verse. There are four parts in it, three pronouns, and then a preposition “My God”—“Your need”—“His riches”—“by Christ Jesus.” I will speak a little on the first, “my God,” and revert to it at the close.

He who is infinite in resources, and Whose heart is fully towards us, He loves to give; that is His delight, to give. That shining orb in yon sky is ever giving, pouring out beams of light and warmth, not only on this planet but on many others beside; ever giving. It is a question with astronomers as to whether it is at all exhausted by having thus poured out its beams for many many centuries or no. Here have we then a feeble picture of God loving to give, giving and nothing exhausted thereby, His very nature to give. “It is more blessed to give than to receive,” and likely He takes the more blessed place. Then see that it is not merely in general that He gives, (and oh what has He not given!) but there is a personal appropriation about it; “my God,” as if He would have each one of us appropriate Him for ourselves.

Look at the next. “Shall supply all your need.” That is by nature all we have got, that and our sins. You have got two things, and these are all, viz., your sin and your need: and when you are brought to the extremity of your case, either as respects your sin, or your need, it is then God delights to act. “All your need,” your own need; and that is a beautiful word here, a word we should not like to leave out,

that word “*all your need.*” Not your known needs: for, shall I tell you an open secret? You have more needs than you are aware of; there are needs weighing you down of which you are more or less unconscious. When the Lord Jesus said in Matthew v., “Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are they that mourn, blessed are the meek.”—I have no doubt that He meant it as it were to draw the cry from His disciples, “O Lord, do make me more poor in spirit, more to groan over my failures; O Lord, do make me gentle and forbearing, knowing how much Thou hast to bear with in me.” Just before, He had been healing many of their bodily complaints, then this chapter goes on to show how He can make His disciples this, that, and the other, healing them of spiritual diseases. You have these needs, but you have only half known them. If you had a thoroughly broken will you would be so happy. I am happy then when I grieve only at what grieves my Father. We do not half realize that in brokenness of will and humbleness of heart, there is our rest; but God knows it. I am hinting this to show that there are needs of which we are not half conscious; but “my God shall supply *all your need.*”

But two difficulties occur here, and I think these may not have struck you. “My God shall supply all your need.” Now as a matter of fact we know that God allows His people sometimes to be brought to great extremities, and they are sometimes pinched with poverty. I do not speak of those who through wasting their money, spending a shilling when they ought only to spend sixpence, bring themselves needlessly low; but those who do not, are sometimes brought to great extremities. The very writer of this epistle says of himself, “In hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness;” yea, in this very chapter he tells us, “I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.” Here then is one difficulty—that God *does* sometimes let His people need. Then another is found if we add the other words to it, “according to His riches in glory;” for the difficulty is then enhanced. For it seems to say that if you want bread He will send you twenty pounds; for He is to supply your need according to His riches in glory, and He is *very* rich and will not miss twenty pounds. You want a friend, then He will raise you up twenty. No, in that sense He does not do all

these things, not in that way. Now, it has been my experience when reading the Word, and I come across a difficulty and try to pierce through it, that when I have caught the mind of God I have very much enjoyed it.

Perhaps then if we pierce this one we shall enjoy it all the more. I take the meaning here to be, not that God will not let His people suffer thus, but if we do enjoy Himself and His love, if we have confidence in Him—and nothing pleases Him in us like faith, because that is a taking grace and not a giving grace and puts Him in the more blessed place—He is so pleased whenever we have confidence in Him, that, let us suppose any need of ours, a friend, an extra sixpence, if we are really trusting Him there will come an interposition so timely that we shall see it is of God, and it will be so sweet to see it come direct from God that it will be an hundredfold more than we wanted. Suppose I am starving, and just then God sends me a crust, but if it come in that way as a direct interposition of His hand, then that crust is sweeter far than the costliest food. Has it ever occurred to you how Elijah's faith must have been tried when he was watching that brook Cherith dry up; yet it did but give God opportunity of new interposition on his behalf. But when we have exercised this faith and confidence in God, and the interposition comes in one way or another it will be so sweet. I take it to be like to Matt. xix. in effect. "He that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life;" and in another of the gospels it is repeated, "houses and brethren, and sisters, and mothers" and so on. But how can this be true? Obviously, not literally, for it could not mean a hundred fathers or a hundred mothers. How, then? I believe in the enjoyment in the soul at the response of God to confidence in the believer. That I believe is a parallel passage, (or partly parallel) to the thought we have suggested here. He will supply our need, but He will do it in His own way, and in His own time; and if we wait a little the answer to our faith will come so timely and so sweet. Ah, how sweet that crust to be sure!

But now we come to these words, "according to His riches in glory." You remember that when Paul and his shipwrecked mates left the island of

Melita the inhabitants loaded them with "such things as were necessary." I do not suppose they had so much with them in their bark as they had before, but they gave them such things as were "necessary." That is man's way, to give according to the need; and those inhabitants of Melita acted humanely and kindly in thus blessing Paul and his mates according to their need. But I have often heard the prayer put up, "bless us according to our need;" but we all here, I trust, know that God will never do so mean a thing. He looks at our need, but blesses us according to His riches. Strange perversion! Bless us according to our need! He won't do so. That God who has done everything blesses us according to His riches in glory. Perhaps it might be so if God were like the heathen gods, limited in their resources and with nothing to spare. But ponder the expression, "according to His riches in glory." Does it not show, in the first place, that when He speaks of our need He not only and solely means our temporal need, but it rather confirms the interpretation I suggested that there are needs we hardly recognise, deeper spiritual needs. Read those early verses of Matt. v. and say if you are consciously enjoying all these, if not then, "my God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory." He wants so to bless us. And next, does it not assume that glory must be a very wonderful thing, as if it were the very extremity of God's power. It says, you remember, in Isaiah, that He is going to create a new heaven and a new earth, so that the former shall never come to mind. Oh! when things are put upon a footing of redemption, and the glory has its own way, what will it be?

And this reminds me now of some things He Himself says we need; four are mentioned in Scripture, and I am not aware that there are any others. The first mentioned is of temporal need. "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." (Luke xii. 30.) Don't be anxious as to what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or wherewith ye shall be clothed, for your Father knoweth that you have need of all these. We do not always live this out you will, I think, all agree. This is one, but there are others besides. The next two are put together. In a Scripture at the end of Hebrews iv. we read, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain *mercy*, and find

grace to help in time of need." "When you need mercy come to My throne; when you need grace come to My throne." It is assumed that we need mercy to the last. Did you ever sing a hymn in your life that you did not need mercy for? Did you ever pray a prayer that you did not need mercy for? And I take you at your best. And if you needed mercy for the way in which you sung the hymn or prayed the prayer, rest assured you have needed mercy very often. Then there is one more. Look at the end of Hebrews x. and you will find God tells you of another thing you need. And do not be disappointed when you look at it; it is connected with glory and that is a very big thing. "For ye have need of patience," (verse 36.) In other words, the glory is so bright, and Jesus is so soon coming to fill you with and into Himself, that you need a little patience to wait for Him. You do not need patience if you are so little taking hold of the promise, if you are so engrossed in business, if you allow your heart to be occupied with cares; if you thus allow your heart to be drawn away you do not much need patience. But when you see the glory to be so ravishing, and are living in the glory by anticipation, then God would sober you, and tell you you must wait a little while, "for yet a little while, and the coming One will come, and will not delay." It may be you do not need patience because your eye and your appetite are so keen after things mundane; but live in the future and certainly you are one that God says will have need of patience, and He will supply that need "according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Now there is a striking expression, and which again confirms the thought that the "need" looks beyond our temporal needs, including them but not to exclude others, which we find in Ephesians iii. I will read from verse 14 until we come to the precise expression. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory." And then the glory is to be exerted—for glory as you know, is constantly in Scripture associated with power—"to be strengthened with might by His Spirit." I am quoting the passage that you may see that all the needs of your spirit which weigh you down, but of which you may be somewhat unconscious, as well as your temporal,

daily, bodily needs, God your God can and will supply "according to His riches in glory."

I pass now to clause four, "by Christ Jesus;" and let us never forget, that, although our God delights to give, He could not give us a thing otherwise. The loaf upon your table, when you go home to your meal, comes to you, "by Christ Jesus." The water you will drink comes to you "by Christ Jesus," through Him who said "I thirst." Had it not been for Him you would have been like that man who said, "Oh that he might dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue." You would have nothing, absolutely nothing. Even the unsaved are indebted to the cross of Christ for all temporal blessings. God is "the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." That is, those who believe get salvation and eternal glory, but those who do not, get abundance of mercies every day. It is as though they say, "I take Thy other gifts, but not Thy Christ;" and they get them, because "the Lord is good unto all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." But you get them, and know they come through the cross of Christ. That leads me to a question which let your hearts answer as you read this verse occasionally. Whether would you rather have even your temporal mercies come from the cross of Christ or not? Do you like to be indebted to Jesus for everything; to own yourself an abject, thorough debtor to the grace of God and the love of Christ even for the bread you eat, for the friend raised up for you, for the bed made in your sickness, and for a great variety of temporal mercies? Do you enjoy it that all came "by Christ Jesus?" "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him—with Him—also freely give us all things?" That beautiful divine way. Take Christ first, as your own Saviour first, and then He will give you anything, everything; "freely give us all things." He cannot withhold anything now. And you know the word "Christ Jesus" means Christ in resurrection. Jesus Christ is His name coming down, Christ Jesus is His name going up. So it is not only Christ who has earned these blessings for you, but He is God's administrator and gives you all things; the tiniest even, all come from that Christ in glory, God's agent, God's administrator, to fill you full.

And so we come back once more to those words

“My God.” There is the person really who loves us so much that He does not want us to rest in anything short of His Christ and of Himself. You may often observe that Paul speaks in the language of experience, as if he had long ago become acquainted with that God and in hundreds and thousands of cases had seen what a God He is. That word “my God” in the mouth of Paul is equivalent to this: I know Him well, I have known Him for many years, and knowing Him well as I do, I am quite sure, that He will supply all your need, and that “according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” And be it our desire to know that God well too; and let our need, our care, our sorrow, even our very sins cast us upon Him and make us acquainted with Him.—(*Notes of an address by W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. H.*)

ON THE WORDS AND WAYS OF THE LORD JESUS.

MATT. xi. 16-30.

IT was the saying, I have been told, of a child and servant of God, that he found a single study of his Lord and Master, as seen in the Gospels, seemed to set his soul right for the day. To this good end, as we all know, the fourfold portrait of Him in the four Gospels is given us.

In Matt. x. we have our Lord sending out His twelve apostles, and giving them purest Divine instruction for their path as His public servants. How fittingly this is followed in Matt. xi., with a view of the world's hostility to God's servants—John the Baptist in prison, and Jesus rejected by the populous towns of Galilee. Christ's perfection as a public servant shines out in this chapter in peculiarly difficult circumstances.

John, as His forerunner, was already suffering the eighteen months' imprisonment which ended in his martyrdom, and that, too, after only about eighteen months of public preaching.

Worse still, John the Baptist's confidence in Jesus' Messiahship had given way under the severe pressure of not seeing the cause and course of the Nazarene at all outwardly prospering. All the magnates of the nation were still rejecting Him. For it appears it really was despondency in *John*, and

not in John's disciples only, as some have supposed, that led to the enquiry, for it was to *John* himself that the Lord sent back word of the public evidences of His Messiahship. Nor need we wonder at this effect on John of his long and cruel imprisonment, when we see how many public servants of God have become faint hearted in our own time under far less severe tests, and that, too, although the Holy Ghost Himself now indwells us.

But this failure of a mortal and fallible public servant of God in the former part of the chapter serves only to bring out into brighter foreground Jesus Himself as the servant whom God always upheld, and who was not to “fail nor be discouraged till He have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for His law” (Isa. xlii. 4).

At this point our Lord might have been content to show Himself in *only* bright contrast to John's weakness. But He does much more than this—Jesus stands in front of His downtrod and fainting fellow-servant to uphold and defend his character. Jesus never forgot that John had baptized Him—albeit John did it with trembling and worshipping hands. Thus had they in Jordan's river *together* fulfilled “all righteousness.” And the loving and generous heart of Jesus could not forget it. Unlike us, who, alas! can easily renounce connection with a fellow-servant of our God if he faints and stumbles in his service, Jesus, our Master, speaks as well of His fellow-servant as He possibly could do with truth.

Is not this one of the lessons we have to learn from the ways of the Lord Jesus in this chapter?

Thus it was that David spoke all he could to the honour of Saul and Jonathan in 2 Sam. i., as Abigail had before told David his honours of other days when she met him on his angry way to murder her husband Nabal. Thus, also, Paul says every good thing he can of the saints at Corinth (1 Cor. i.) before he begins upon their faults—albeit they had so wounded him and ill-treated him. And thus, also, does our Lord to the seven churches. He praises them where He can.

But a second lesson shows itself in His very different way toward the “idle” and unbelieving “generation” amongst whom both He and His forerunner had laboured.

Upon them He fixed without reserve *the guilt* of their *unbelief*.

John had come to them in a way of solemn yet righteous *severity*, and they had spoken ill of him, as if he were a man of a morose and ascetic spirit. He had Himself come with not a whit less hatred of their sins, but mingling with them in family life, and joining even in their social joys (see John ii. 1-10), but they only spoke of Him as if He favoured their vices. Thus had they blamed God's messengers instead of blaming themselves, and coming as sinners to repentance.

Christ charges upon them the full guilt of all this, and points out that *Wisdom's* children recognize and honour her, and hence *they* could not be of that number.

Is not this His faithfulness to unbelievers (of whatever rank of life they be)—another point in which Jesus, as God's public servant, is an example to us?

In Matt. xvi. 1-4 we see the same condemning of men's *unbelief* as their *sin*. Pharisees and Sadducees there unite in demanding of Him some miracle as conclusive proof of His Messiahship. Our Lord's answer is, that in the earthly things of weather a very small evidence or token was quite enough for them, because they were quick and ready on such matters; and their difficulty and slowness in Divine things was because they were "a wicked and an adulterous generation;" just as in Matt. xi. He rebukes them as the *idlers* of the market place.

Do we not need such a preaching of the Gospel as shall first deeply convict the hearers of their guilt, and especially of the guilt of their unbelief?

Must they not be made to feel what Belshazzar had written on his palace wall—"Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting?"

Perhaps a third lesson to us upon Matt. xi. is our Lord preaching to Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum a coming doom which should accurately correspond to what their Gospel privileges had been.

Our Lord no more preached an equal hell to all the rebellious than He did an equal heavenly recompense to all His saints. In each case it will bear an exact and righteous correspondence to the lives that all have lived.

True—hell-torments will be as endless and eternal to all who enter it as eternal joys will be to all the saints.

But in both cases there will be different degrees. There will be "a *lowest* hell," and also "an *abundant* entrance into the everlasting kingdom."

The hell of the finally impenitent sinners of Capernaum our Lord here declares to be far less tolerable than the hell of the sinners of Tyre and Sidon, or of Sodom; and this is important to us in our preaching.

All presenting of God's truth of future eternal punishment makes our preaching hated by the pride of the wicked of course—and this difficulty we cannot even wish to avoid; but to show them God's hell to be as varied in its degrees as the varied characters and guilt of those who are sent there, has at least this in it—that it leaves the present scoffer and the finally unsaved with no excuse for their scoffing.

For it shows all the lost to have made for themselves their own punishment.

As it is so solemnly said of specially guilty Judas Iscariot, "that he might go to *his own* place"—that place which his surpassing guilt had made to be especially "his own."

A fourth and more cheering point in Matt. xi. is this—That our Lord evidently maintained His own joy in God and His communion with His Father even whilst thus solemnly denouncing the wickedness of the wicked (see verse 25).

In our own case we know how apt we are to become *hard and Pharisaic in our spirit* when the sin and the punishment of the wicked is our ever necessary theme.

To *inflict* punishment in the family, or in the Church, and *all the while* to have our own spirits still kept in the bosom of our God, is indeed difficult to us. Nor is it easy when only *pronouncing* the doom.

Jude gives it as one of the honours of Michael, the archangel, that when contending even with *the devil*, he used no railing language; but, like a reverent servant of his God, only said, "The Lord rebuke thee."

How much less should we grow hard or rough when actually needful warnings are being uttered by us?

"At *that time* Jesus answered and said" (even at the time of pronouncing such awful "woes"): "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth," &c.

The word "answered" is remarkable, for there is no mention of any *voice* of His Father to Him beyond that constant presence and voice of His God which we know He always had with Him in His soul.

Surely we also, as public servants of God, should have the same. It should be no difficulty, nor even an effort, for us to turn from speaking to the most

thoughtless and hardened audience before us to speaking TO *the God* whose servants we are, and that even audibly.

But, alas! our spirits get ruffled, and our communion with our God disturbed; and especially when our service is very public, and is much gainsayed and resisted.

In Acts vii. we see Stephen very much like the Master in this point. He condemns the Jewish council in most direct and unsparing words; but, *as at the outset of his address, when they looked on his countenance it was as "the face of an angel," so at the close he still was "full of the Holy Ghost," and "looked up steadfastly into heaven" and breathed a prayer for his murderers, which was answered (in part) in Saul of Tarsus' conversion; for, as Augustine says, "The Church owes Paul to the prayer of Stephen."*

When once the eternal home of glory comes, it is said of ALL God's saints, "His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads." That is to say—never shall any of their *service* distract them from the fullest *communion* with God and the Lamb.

But the difficulty is for us to have this true of us *now* in any goodly measure in this time of indwelling sin and outside temptations.

The *subject* also of Christ's thanksgiving in Matt. xi. agrees well with this unbrokenness of His soul's communion.

His own will was set aside, and He was accepting thankfully the small and feeble Galilean band of apostles and disciples that His God and Father had assigned Him. "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

How true it is that the essential to sustained nearness to God and communion with Him is to have our own will subjected to His. As has been often said, "There is only *one* will in heaven."

What *follows* this delighting in God's will and deep subjection to it is very instructive.

Our Lord next opens mercy's door only wider than ever to the self-willed human race in the memorable words, "Come unto Me ALL ye that labour and are heavy laden," &c.

Let no one, therefore, think that when God's sovereignty much occupies the soul of God's public servant it narrows him in his Gospel openness and warmth to the unsaved—far from it. Rightly under-

stood and inwardly yielded to, God's sovereignty becomes as the backbone and the strength of the Gospel arms of tenderness which we stretch out to this world's wilful wanderers.

The joy we find in being ourselves subject to God and His throne only makes us long to see others delivered from the vain "*labour*" of making fig-leaf garments of their own, and from being "heavy laden" by Pharisaic scribes and teachers (see Matt. xxiii. 4); for this I take to be our Lord's meaning in the words "*labour and are heavy laden.*"

How much we see of both these things in the religious "dead works" and the growing Ritualism of the present time we too well know. And how deeply we need Christ's own strength of soul and His outflow of Divine tenderness to maintain us in real Gospel warmth in such a state of things.

To us naturally it is far easier to feel for the grossly and openly depraved than for such as thus "*labour and are heavy laden.*" In Luke xv. the special glory of our Lord's Gospel parables is that they were directed to the fault-finding *scribes and pharisees* mentioned in Luke xv. 2, rather than to only the publicans and sinners.

The sunbeams that can warm a broad plain or a deep valley show something of what the sun can do; but its especial triumph is when it melts Alpine snows and loosens far-up glaciers.

Oh to shine in our Gospel preaching with some such warmth on the Christianized Pharisaism of this nineteenth century!

One more lesson seen in the Master's own ways in Matt. xi. closes the chapter. It is this:

He commends to us, as His disciples, the yoke of lifelong service to His God that He Himself wore—"Take My yoke upon you and learn of ME, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall FIND *rest* to your souls," &c.

To be set free from the "*labours*" and toil of our own will and efforts to get our sin put away, was our first Gospel mercy.

But our further mercy is to be freed from our own will as to life-work and service, now that we are Christ's and God's.

The *individual* "yoke" worn by one person seems here intended, for our Lord says, "MY yoke and MY burden;" such a yoke, that is, as the water carrier or the milkman uses.

What new *discoveries* of rest and peace and joy did our Lord make as He moved on—albeit He always was outwardly “the Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief.”

How similar His words in John iv. : “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 !”

And our privilege is to experience also the combination of outward sorrows with inward joy and peace. As the Bride says in Solomon’s Song, “I am black but comely . . . as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.”


Oh to prove this in fellowship of spirit with the Master all through our brief day below! *Amen.*

H. D.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY J. R. C.

1 COR. vi. 12, &c.

“LL things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient.” This is a most important principle. There are many things a Christian might do which would not be a breach of any law, yet upon other grounds it is not expedient he should do them.

Take, for instance, the case of a Christian sitting at table with an idolator (see chap. x. 27). The Christian is aware that the meat set before him has been offered to an idol. But he also knows that an idol is nothing in the world, and that the meat is neither better nor worse on that account. So far as he himself is concerned, he could eat it with a good conscience—to him it would be perfectly lawful to eat.

But there is another Christian present who has not this knowledge, who regards that which has been offered to an idol as defiled, and who, therefore, would violate his own conscience were he to partake. He calls the attention of the other to the fact that the meat before them was offered to an idol. What, then? “Eat not,” says the Scripture. Not on the ground that the meat is defiled; not on the ground of its being unlawful; but on this ground, that by the one who has knowledge eating, the one whose

conscience is not so enlightened, and therefore weak, might be emboldened to do that which would violate his own conscience, just because he saw the other do it.

Thus I am taught to consider others, and to consider the effects of my actions upon others; and by so doing I may often require, on account of others, to refrain from doing that which to myself is lawful.

Take another illustration. A Christian might be quite at liberty to take wine himself. It may be no snare to him. Yet he might be sitting at table with one to whom it was a snare, and to whom it might prove an occasion of stumbling. The lawfulness of taking it is not questioned, but under such circumstances it is not expedient.

The apostle would judge every thing he did in every department of his life with reference to its effects upon others. He would allow himself in nothing that might prove a hindrance or an occasion of stumbling to another. Never would he permit his knowledge to lead him into a course in which he would be a stumbling-block to the ignorant or the weak.

Again he says, “All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” We are liable, through the corruption of our nature and the deceitfulness of our own hearts, as well as through the wiles and power of Satan, to be brought under the power of, or into bondage to, things which are in themselves lawful. My business may be in itself perfectly lawful, and to attend to it diligently, my duty; nevertheless it may so acquire power over me that morning, noon, and night I am never out of it. It engages my whole attention, occupies my whole time, and taxes all my energies. Constant watchfulness and care are needed, therefore, lest that which is lawful acquire dominion over us.

Some are apt to think that strong drink is the only thing which acquires power over those who yield to it, and that if they are free in regard to this they are beyond danger. Not so. Money to one, and dress to another, and knowledge to another, and many other things, may prove to be snares as fatal, if not so disastrous in their temporal effects. We read of Isaac, that in his old age his love for venison—savoury meat—such as Esau brought him, so warped his affections and enfeebled his judgment that he failed to know the mind of the Lord as to his two sons, and

sought in opposition to God to bestow on the elder, his favourite, the blessing that was ordained for the younger.

And so may we, in service and in judgment for the Lord, be biassed by our likings—unconsciously led by our love of things savoury and pleasant into associations that otherwise we should have avoided, and avoiding openings and lines of service into which God would have led us and blessed us.

Satan will often make use of the veriest trifles to hold us in bondage and keep us from being free to serve the Lord.

Let us seek to have our spiritual senses so exercised that we may discern both good and evil, and know how rightly to use, without abusing, everything that God has given us.

It is written concerning the Lord Jesus, that He was of quick understanding (or quick scented) in the fear of the Lord (Isa. xi. 3). He was made this by the Spirit, but not apart from the Word of God, by which He lived as by His daily bread. So it is "by reason of use" (Heb. v. 14) that the Word of God will enable us to discern between good and evil. It is by habitually consulting God and His Word in everything that His principles will be instilled into us, and become part of our being.

"Meats for the belly and the belly for meats, but God shall destroy both it and them." That is to say, "meat and our natural appetites."

God has created us with these appetites, and has given meat of various sorts to satisfy them. But for a man to make eating and drinking the object of his life is folly, and worse than folly, it is wickedness. The appetite is right, and the satisfaction of it by food is right, but all to be kept in subordination to the will of God. The meat and the desire for it shall perish. They are but passing needs, like the world and the lusts thereof which are passing away, "but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (see 1 John ii. 17).

God only knows to what an extent this world lives for the gratification of its desires. "Fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind" is God's description of the natural man (Eph. ii. 3).

The tendency of modern civilization is more than ever to create desires in order to find pleasure in gratifying them.

The craving for alcohol or opium, or even tobacco,

which *must* be gratified, or if not gratified leaves a man miserable and restless, is not *natural*, it is acquired. And other things of quite a different nature may be so indulged that they acquire a power which nothing ought to possess. Others have a passionate craving for fine music, beautiful pictures, jewellery, dress, &c., desires which have been so pampered that now, unless they are gratified, there is a feeling of emptiness and unrest.

But the Christian is called to have his whole being in control, so that he is not brought under the power of *anything*, but at all times a free man—free to discern and to do the will of God.

"The body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body."

Here we have a principle of the most solemn importance. That is to say, my body is a purchased body, and therefore it is *for the Lord* who redeemed it; and, on the other hand, being redeemed or purchased by and for Himself, He says, "it is mine, I am *for it*." Spirit, soul, and body, we are the Lord's. Being His by purchase, by right, He says concerning that which is His, "not a hair of your heads shall perish."

I fear that Christians generally have almost lost sight of the fact that the redemption which God has effected concerns our bodies as well as our souls. The whole man—"spirit, soul, and body," not "body, soul, and spirit"—that is man's way, and it is often so misquoted, for man would begin *without*, but God begins within and works outward—the whole man, I say, is redeemed, and salvation is meant to show itself in our bodies.

"God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power."

The very power that raised up Christ will raise up us. His resurrection is the pattern and pledge of ours. And not only so, but that same power worketh in us even now (see Eph. i. 19, 20, and iii. 20).

"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" and in verse 19, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?"

Did you ever stop and think of this? That these very bodies of our, these weak, frail, corrupt, depraved bodies are looked upon by God as the very members of Christ? As God raised up Christ the "Head of the body," so God shall raise up every member of that body. We are redeemed by the blood of Christ,

and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Mark how practical this is—Am I using this body with all its members as instruments wherewith to serve the Lord? Are my members being used as Christ Himself would use them?

“He that is joined to the Lord is *one spirit*.”

Did God dwell in the temple at Jerusalem? Far more really and literally He dwells in us. Did we bear this in mind, how it would separate us from the world!

We read of those sins which the heathen indulged in, that they “dishonoured their own bodies.” But if such sins were shameful in a heathen, oh, what must be their heinousness in God’s sight if committed by one who is “a member of Christ!” How fearful for a member of Christ to be found drunk! How fearful for a member of Christ to be guilty of immorality! How fearful for a member of Christ to use his redeemed tongue to speak a lie, or filthy language, or to speak evil concerning other members of Christ! God would have us to live in the constant remembrance that our bodies are the members of Christ.

“IS THERE ANY WORD FROM THE LORD?”

(JEREMIAH xxxvii. 17.)

IN these days in which we live there is urgent need that our attention be called again and again to the Word of the Lord.

This is specially true of those who are young in the faith, for they are in special danger of being carried away with the error of the wicked one. Very much without the stamp of God upon it at all, is being said and done by those professing to follow the Lord. So much is this the case that one would almost think the Word of God had ceased to be the lamp to our feet and the light to our path (Psa. cxix. 105). But notwithstanding this, “the Word of the Lord endureth for ever” (1 Peter i. 25), and the entrance of His words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple (Psa. cxix. 130); therefore, let our cry still be, “Order my steps in Thy Word” (verse 133).

It was the Word of the Lord that made known to us

what we were by nature—“children of wrath even as others” (Eph. ii. 2, 3), and by that same Word we found the way of life, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. v. 1). O what joy filled our hearts when we heard the voice of the Lord saying to us: “Yoursins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb. x. 17). We were justified from all things (Acts xiii. 39); accepted in the Beloved (Eph. i. 6); raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. ii. 6), and sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. i. 13). Then it was that the cry was begotten in our hearts: “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” It was by the Spirit, through the Word, that we were taught our need of Jesus only; and, being led to trust Him for our souls’ salvation, that same Spirit, whose work it is to guide into all truth (John xvi. 13), led us to desire the sincere milk of the Word, that we might grow thereby (1 Peter ii. 2). Growing is progressive, hence the exhortation, “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter iii. 18). Then with what desire we turned up the Word of the Lord for further directions as to how we might best show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Peter ii. 9).

Now, as concerning baptism, how simple it seemed to us when we looked at the second chapter of Acts, verse 41; there we saw that they that gladly received His Word were baptized, yet how long do some stumble at this simple truth, because of seeking information from the dark traditions of men, as if there were no word from the Lord about it.

From that same chapter we saw that the Lord added to the church (verse 47). “What church?” it may be asked. We answer, the Church of God. Nowhere in Scripture is it ever called the church of a nation or the church of a man. Look, for instance, at 1 Cor. i. 2: “Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth.” That makes it plain to any unbiassed mind. Then again, from Acts ii. we saw that all that believed were together (verse 44), this also we could learn only from the Word: for we saw around us a mixed company of saved and unsaved. But the Word of the Lord said: “Come out from among them, and be ye separate” (2 Cor. vi. 17). So we learned from the Word that it was the Lord’s command and our privilege to be baptized; to be separated from the world; to be gathered together in the name of the

Lord, and to break bread on the first day of the week in remembrance of Him (Acts xx. 7), and thus show forth his death till He come (1 Cor. xi. 23-34).

And did we not see how unscriptural it was for one man to take the place of pastor, teacher, and evangelist?—for “there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal” (1 Cor. xii. 4 to the end). So, when we are gathered together in the name of the Lord, with His Word as our only guide, the Spirit having free action in the assembly to manifest the gifts given by the ascended Head, there is then an edifying of one another.

Having refreshed our minds with these few thoughts, with which we are all more or less acquainted, I should like to add a few more for the benefit of my younger brethren. You know it was to those who had embraced these truths that such words were written in 2 Cor. xi. 3: “I fear lest by any means, as the Serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.” And to another company of saints the same apostle said, “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?” (Gal. iii. 1), and again (chap. v. 7), “Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” When such exhortations were needed in the apostle’s day, with evil just in the bud, so to speak, surely in these days, when the evil is full-blown, it becomes us to exhort one another, and so much the more as we see the day approaching (Heb. x. 25); for if ever there was a time when the saints needed to take to them the whole armour of God it is now. One has fitly said, that we have the armour of *light* for the world (Rom. xiii. 12), the armour of *righteousness* to meet the flesh (2 Cor. vi. 7), and the *whole armour of God* to meet the devil (Eph. vi. 11). Now, we have just one test by which to try all modern thinkers:—“To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. viii. 20). In the face of Jude 5, 6, 7, there are those who would defiantly try to overthrow the faith of some as to the doctrine of eternal punishment—a doctrine that was introduced by the devil as far back as Gen. iii. 4, in the words: “Ye shall not

surely die.” The non-eternity theory would seem to be revived in these days. But Jude says by the Spirit: “I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, and left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day, even as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” Multiplying Scripture proofs would not satisfy “murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouths speaking great swelling words, having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage” (verse 16). But, beloved, let us be simple, and remember “how forcible are right words?—but what doth your arguing reprove?” (Job vi. 25), therefore, let us avoid the reasoning principle of the Sadducees.

Then there are those who seem never to be thoroughly convinced of what sin is in the light of God’s countenance, and who think they have attained perfection in the flesh. Now there is surely word from the Lord about this. “Ye are complete in Him” (Col. ii. 10); “But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption” (1 Cor. i. 30). Now from these Scriptures it is clear that every believer (not some, merely) is complete in Christ Jesus before God, as to their Justification, Sanctification, and Redemption. But notice, it is *in Him*. And just as our eyes are open to see this blessed standing in Him, so shall we be able to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God (Col. i. 10). “Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure” (1 John iii. 2, 3). Let us take one, for example, in full fellowship with God (see Psa. xix. 12). He says, “Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.” Again in Psa. cxxxix. 23, 24, “Search me, O God, and

know my heart ; try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Now, notice one thing in this portion of Scripture—the writer does not say, "Search me and see if there be any sin in me." Remembering this will give us the key to the passage. Ask the Apostle Paul, after many years experience, what he thought of perfection in the flesh. What does he answer? "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 12). Ask him when Paul the aged—the holiest time in all his life I believe—and what would he have said? The chief of sinners (1 Tim. i. 15). Now, let the ear try words as the mouth tasteth meat (Job xxxiv. 2).

Another very popular notion has come to the front in these days. It is not exactly perfection, but a "higher life" apart from obedience to the revealed will of God. This is most subtle, just because it assumes a reverence for God and would walk delicately like an Agag, while it sets aside the Word of the Lord like a Saul. But, on this point as well, there is word from the Lord. "Concerning the works of men, by the Word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer" (Psa. xvii. 4). The Perfect Servant (Psa. cxix. 162) said "I rejoice at Thy Word, as one that findeth great spoil;" also, (Matt. iii. 15) "It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Again, (John viii. 29) "I do always those things that please Him," and in His prayer for us to the Father before His going away: "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth" (John xvii. 17). But when you enter into conversation with some who speak glibly of holiness, and when you mention water baptism, they will tell you it is "not essential." Yet it is in the Word; and the Lord Jesus said: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (Luke iv. 4). Surely from these Scriptures we can learn that true separation in heart to God will be manifest by a desire to obey the Word. But there are some who tell us that they have got past the ordinance of baptism and remembering the Lord in the bread and wine on the first day of the week. They say that the Lord has come—that is, He has come to them; and that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; as if the

meats and drinks of Romans xiv. had anything to do with baptism and breaking of bread. John xiv. 3 is not fulfilled yet: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Then in 1 Thess. iv. 16, we read that "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven," while in Acts i. 11 we are told that "this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." We know that these Scriptures have not yet been fulfilled. Then, it may be asked, in what manner has the Lord come? In no manner at all. It is true that the Spirit has come, and by the Word reveals Christ to the hearts of His people, in all His grace and fulness, that the character of Christ may be manifested by us down here. "He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John xvi. 14). "But we all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii. 18).

Surely then, brethren, there need be no difficulty, even in these last days, as to the path in which God would have us walk. Let us walk in the Spirit and we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Let us present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service; and be not conformed to this world (Rom. xii. 1, 2). "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant." "The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way" (Psa. xxv. 9, 43). W. M.

PHILIPPIANS.

CHAPTER ii.



N a former paper the first chapter of this epistle was looked at in its teaching on the Gospel.

This second chapter exhorts us to humility, as pleasing to God; a corrective to strife and vain glory, which are the fruit of pride. The chapter commences with setting before our face Christ Jesus as the great example, and finishes by showing us two men of "like passions with ourselves," who,

in their lives and actions, manifested that true humility which receives honour from God, and is always a means of blessing to saints.

This epistle was written after the apostle Paul had been some years a prisoner at Rome. Departure from the faith had commenced, and a corresponding weakness in the Churches. At Corinth some evils were very pronounced, calling forth sharp rebuke, and in one case the solemn act of excommunication.

It would appear that at Philippi, although there was heartiness and fellowship in the work of the Gospel, the apostle was aware that elements were at work, and had already begun to manifest themselves, which, unless corrected, would inevitably lead to results the opposite of God-glorifying. The opening of the chapter, and the second verse of chapter iv., show that discords and strifes had commenced their fatal work. True, they had not reached the stage when sharpness as to Corinth was needed; but the Holy Spirit, through the apostle, would lead him to whom was given "the care of all the Churches," to look diligently, "lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble, and thereby many be defiled." He would remove the worm ere the fair beauty of the flower had commenced to wither and decay; and this he sought to accomplish by showing them the better way to honour and exaltation. It is God alone that exalts; it is ours to humble ourselves. If we exalt ourselves God will put us down.

The prince of Tyrus (Ezekiel xxviii. 2), whom most are agreed is a type of Satan, said, "I am God," and "set his heart as the heart of God." He exalted himself, and God cast him down, even to the pit. Satan is now "the prince of the power of the air." Soon God will cast him thence to the earth, and later on he will be cast further down, into the lake of fire. Over against this picture set the one in Philippians ii. Christ Jesus "thought it not robbery to be equal with God;" "but," instead of exalting Himself, took *seven* downward steps, down till He could get no lower, "wherefore" God also hath highly exalted Him, so high that He could be raised no higher.

This is the way of the Lord, it is death to the flesh; but when His way is our way, it is to have "life more abundantly."

It is true there may be honest differences in judgment over many things, seeing "darkly" as we do

and shall till "like Him." But these very differences will manifest whether there is in us that humility so dear to God (has He not said He will dwell with "him of humble spirit?"), or that pride of heart which so hinders our blessing, and brings down upon us His chastening hand.

Pride of heart has ever been the besetting sin of man, as vanity is the besetting sin of woman. "Only by pride cometh contention" (Prov. xiv. 10). Contention had begun at Philippi. It is true there can be godly contention—see Nehemiah xiii. 11, 17, 25, where we read that because of evil in the house of God Nehemiah contended with the rulers, the nobles, and the people. But, it might prove a great blessing to us to-day, if, when eager for the fray, we turned aside, and alone with God, learnt whether our contentions were the result of pride, or in obedience to the command that we should "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 2).

"Pride goeth before destruction" (Prov. xvi. 18); "a man's pride shall bring him low" (Prov. xxix. 23); because "He shall bring down their pride" (Isa. xxv. 11); "Him that hath a proud heart will not I suffer" (Psa. ci. 5); "it is one of the seven things the Lord hates" (Prov. vi. 17). King Uzziah was "marvellously helped till he was strong, but when he was strong his heart was lifted up to his destruction, for he transgressed against the Lord his God" (2 Chron. xxvi. 15, 16). Of Moab it was true "(he is exceeding proud), his loftiness, and his arrogancy, and his pride, and the haughtiness of his heart" (Jer. xlvi. 29); and of Moab it was written, "So shall Moab be a derision and a dismaying to all them about him, and Moab shall be destroyed from being a people, because he hath magnified himself against the Lord" (Jer. xlviii. 39, 42).

There was a time when Aaron's rod "budded and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." There was heavenly fruit by the power of God. But there came another time, when Israel, likened to a rod, blossomed, but it was a rod of pride that had budded (Ezek. vii. 10). The reason is not far to seek—Aaron's rod was laid up before God; Israel had, in the pride of their hearts, long before, departed from Him, so their terrible humbling and wasting came upon them.

It is sad to think of many who, like Uzziah, have been "marvellously helped," or whose rod has yielded

rich fruit in days gone by, but now they are fallen—oh! so low, as their height, so was their fall; and those beholding were dismayed and disheartened, as if a star had fallen from its place in the heavens—darkness reigned, the light was quenched.

But if "God resisteth the proud," He "giveth grace to the humble" (1 Peter v. 5). Shall we not, then, "hold fast grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear?" (Heb. xii. 28—marginal reading). "Grace came by Jesus Christ, was poured into His lips" (Psa. xlv. 2). "Looking unto Jesus," considering Him, we shall, by the Holy Spirit within us, be "transformed into the same image," thus shall His grace of humility be ours. It is a comparatively easy matter to appear humble on occasions. God is not deceived, and not for long are the spiritual deceived. What is wanted, however, is not to *appear*, but to *be* humble.

The clothing is that which is outward, hence the exhortation, "Be clothed with humility!" that those who only see the outward, our brethren and the world, may take knowledge that for this "we have been with Jesus."

But we shall never be thus worthily clothed until God sees *within* the ornament of "a meek and quiet spirit."

God's thoughts and ways are not as ours. "He" wants the ornaments *within*, simply clothing without. We act as if He had said, put the ornaments without.

What a wealth of spiritual blessedness is the possession of the humble one. God is with him of a very truth; not like Abraham at Hebron, a passing visitor, but to "dwell." He "hears the desire of the humble" (Psa. x. 17); He "saves the humble person" (Job xxii. 29). It needs not with the humble ones, crying unto God out of their distresses: their unexpressed desires are heard, nay, anticipated; and in God's own time and way He calls to honour those who, having learnt humility, will be able to bear their honours with humbleness of mind.

Those who can say, "I have set the Lord always before me" (Psa. xvi. 8), have a goodly heritage (verse 6): so good that He is all the portion they desire; having Him they possess all things, every need met, every ambition gratified. He who is a king's son can have but one ambition, that is the crown of his father. One with Christ, we are "joint-heirs with Him." Soon, very soon, this will be fully

manifested, meantime we wait; but if waiting like Paul, with our eyes on the unseen and eternal weight of glory, the present time will be to us as a moment. How quickly a moment passes! yet not more quickly than the longest term of life on earth as compared with eternity; and shall we fret and fume, and strive and contend, that we may raise ourselves in this *moment* only to be cast down by God, and lame ourselves for life?

True humility is evidenced by self-sacrifice: "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Phil. ii. 3).

Looking on my brother I see one who is "beloved of God," "a new creation;" one who, although poor in this world's goods—trying by his temper, it may be—will soon be the very image of the glorified Christ! Remembering this, his calling, I shall seek for the manifestation of Christ in him now, and I shall certainly find it; thus shall I be able to esteem him better than myself.

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. ii. 5). "He humbled Himself," thus He showed in coming to earth it was for others; in His life on earth His thoughts were ever of others, even to the looking for a place where there was "much grass" for the people to sit down, that He might feed them. In His death He gave His last words to others for their blessing. His mind will be in us when we are occupied for others, not thinking of ourselves. Faith gives me strength; shall I use my strength to override and vex my weaker brethren? "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God" (Rom. xiv. 22); and when made strong, and having overcome by faith, strength thus acquired is that we may "bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." "For even Christ pleased not Himself" (Rom. xv. 1-3).

We are nothing, except what grace has made us; and have nothing, except what we have received. To keep this in mind will enable us "to walk humbly with our God."

The working out of our own salvation, spoken of in the middle section of this second chapter, is specially connected with displaying the mind of Christ Jesus rather than the bustling activities of outward service, amidst which, too often, the "fine gold becomes dim," because of forgetting to contemplate and follow the downward path our Lord trod.

Amongst the things recorded of Timothy in this chapter (verses 19-24) we find the following:—"For I have no man likeminded who will naturally care for your state."

By nature we care for our own things, not the things of others. But Timothy had so drunk into the Spirit of Christ in self-denial that it had become to him a second nature—to care for and live for others; and the apostle knew of no man like-minded. Such heavenly characters were rare then; are they more plentiful to-day?

(To be continued.)

LETTER FROM MR. FRED. S. ARNOT.

LESHUMA, ZAMBEZI RIVER,
Sept. 10, 1883.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—It sounds somewhat strange to my ears to hear of God's saints coming together in the spirit of joyful worship, and for prayer together. I often remember the many meetings we used to have at home, and long intensely for just an hour of such blessed fellowship. Yet I am assured that I am not forgotten at your meetings, and do gladly remain here as your servant and the servant of all men for Jesus' sake. My own desire is that I may please God by making His Gospel known in all faithfulness and sincerity, so that His name may be glorified by the gathering *out of* heathendom those whom He may please to make subjects of His sovereign mercy. I rejoice to think that for the people we have a *full* and complete salvation to offer to *every* one, but towards God we can but cast poor, sinful man upon His *sovereign* grace and mercy. There has been a little to try here in the work, but much, much to encourage. I am thankful to say that I have received much of the confidence of the people; they trust me now as they did not at first. During the time I was staying at the King's Town my time was well occupied. Besides having a small day school, and time spent in conversation on the things of our God with the people, I was much occupied with doctoring, gun-mending, teaching how to sew and make shirts, &c. In the doctoring line I was several times very successful, in some important cases after they had been given up by the native magicians or doctors. The king himself had been long ill: had been

working away with all his doctors, and recovered slightly, but to relapse again. One of his headmen, who gets the honorary title of "The King's Mat," came to me to go and see his majesty. I said I did not think I could do much for him, but if I could not my God could. I told him to go back to the king and that I would follow him, which I did, asking earnestly the blessing of God upon the remedy. The next morning the king was able to attend a large council meeting, and to all appearance looked quite well. Several of the headmen came to congratulate me on my cure, but when I told them how it was God and not man that had restored the king's health, they gravely shook their heads. "Nambi," the one great Spirit who made all and rules over all, they believe in, but they only look on Him as an austere person, who only heaps sorrow, death, and punishment upon them. All good that comes to them they trace to the power and intercession of the spirit of some departed chief or forefather. The idea they seem to have is that those departed spirits whom they worship have a sympathy with them that "Nambi" has not; a sympathy with them in their journeyings, crops, hunts, cattle, wives, etc., and all the joys and sorrows connected with these things, because they, while in the body, experienced the same. Alas, they little know at what a cost our God has provided for us and for them too a Saviour. A High-Priest who felt as no man felt; suffered and sorrowed as no man ever did, who has verily a fellow-feeling with us and for us. The religion of those upper river people is widely different from that of the other tribes, it has been known to some that they believed in one supreme God, but no more is known about them. There are many other interesting ceremonies connected with the sacrificing of oxen, corn, beads, and cloth, which I hope to get more information of. They have their diviners, seers, magicians, and doctors, who work with beads, human bones, speaking horns, claws of wild animals, and a whole host of things. All those things together they call "Lequalo," and to read them by way of prophesying, &c., is "go qualo;" they give the same name to the Word of God and all other books of the white man. The only difference, they think, between our Lequalo and their's is, that ours is a confused mass of little black marks on paper, and their's is surely much more sensible,

being things and substances. Nothing of importance can be sanctified without a human sacrifice, in most cases a child. First the fingers and toes are cut off, and the blood sprinkled on the boat, drum, house, or whatever may be the subject. The victim is then killed, ript up, and thrown into the river. Burning men alive for witchcraft is carried to a fearful extent; not a day passes but some one is tried and burnt. The details of scenes that I have been forced to witness in this line are too horrible to put on paper; many a guiltless victim is marched off to the horrid pile. Two hundred yards or so from my hut there lies a perfect Golgotha of skulls and human bones fearful to look upon. Yet one gets somehow used to it and to all their murdering ways.

The trial for witchcraft is short and decisive. If one man suspects another of having bewitched him, in fact if he has a grudge against him, he brings him before the council; a large pot of water is cooked, and the accused man has to dip his hands three times into the boiling water. If the skin does not come off after twenty-four hours he is innocent, if it does come off he is guilty, and is hurried off to be burnt. My proposal is, that if they consider this a fair trial of whiteness or blackness of heart (as they call it), then let both the accuser and the accused put their hands into the boiling water. The king is strongly

in favour of this proposal, and would try any means to stop this fearful system of murder, which is thinning out many of his best men, but the nation is so strongly in favour of the practice that he can do nothing. An old friend of mine, called Wizini, who took quite a fatherly care and interest in me, for some peculiar reason of his own, was charged with witchcraft; he pleaded earnestly to be spared the terrible trial; because of his years he was spared, but banished from his people and country for life, for no other reason than that a neighbour had an ill-feeling against him. Had he been first to the king with his complaint he might have got his neighbour burned or banished instead of himself.

I missed old Wizini. When I write you again I hope to be able to give you a fuller and more interesting account of their religion and customs.—
Yours sincerely in our Lord,

FRED. S. ARNOT.

I am sure that our need is the demonstration and the power of the Spirit, to make real to our heart and consciences truths familiarly recognised.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to “prove all things,” and “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender

QUESTION NO. CLXIII.

What course does God's Word point out for a Christian to adopt who, prior to her conversion, was engaged to be married to an unconverted young man? Is she justified in (1) breaking the engagement, and (2) at liberty to marry “in the Lord;” or (3), would it be more for God's glory to remain unmarried?

REPLY.

We believe the only answer that can be given to these questions is, be faithful in dealing with the one who is unsaved, and wait on the Living God.

In nearly every such case the unsaved one will either withdraw from the engagement, or else, as in cases we have known, be himself converted.

Although betrothal, or a marriage engagement, is

recognized socially, legally, and by Scripture, as a covenant binding on both parties, yet it may be withdrawn from by mutual consent. Whilst abruptly to break off such an engagement would lay the believer open to the charge of being “a covenant-breaker,” yet, on the other hand, the Word of God remains clear as to the duty of the Christian not to be “unequally yoked,” and to marry “only in the Lord.” But in such a two-sided difficulty we may plead the faithfulness of Him who has promised to make “a way of escape.”

There are oftentimes such two-sided difficulties arising in the Christian's path, as it were a Red Sea before and a Pharaoh behind, in which the only course is to stand still and see the salvation of God!

Those who have stood still and waited for His salvation can give thanks that He did not show them beforehand how He would deliver.

As to marrying or not, after the engagement has been entirely set aside, guidance must be sought of the Lord, who has promised to give wisdom when asked in faith.

QUESTION NO. CLXIV.

What is the Scriptural meaning of the word "Repentance?"

REPLY.

Literally, the word signifies a change of mind. This is illustrated in the parable of the two sons (Matt. xxi. 29). But it is a change of mind *toward God*; and it is this which gives it its great value (Acts xx. 21). It is "the goodness of God" which leads to repentance (Rom. ii. 4). Many links there may have been in the providential chain of circumstances which led to this change of mind, and many operations of the Spirit of God upon the understanding and the heart by the Word—but all these sprang from the goodness of God.

It is characterized in Heb. vi. 1 as "repentance from dead works." That is to say, whilst it is a change of mind *towards God*, brought about by His goodness revealed to the sinner in the Cross of Christ, it is at the same time a change of mind concerning all the "works" once regarded as "righteousness," and trusted in as such, but now seen to be as "filthy rags"—"dead works."

This is enough to show that it is something far deeper than a mere mental assent to the truth of the Gospel as to a mathematical problem. This Scriptural "change of mind" invariably and necessarily implies a "change of plan"—a change in the whole attitude of the man towards God. Even where it is not a question of repentance towards God, as in the parable referred to, or as in the case of Judas (Matt. xxvii. 3), nevertheless there is a corresponding action. That "repentance toward God" will always carry with it, in a greater or less degree, "sorrow for sin" need not be questioned; it is a fact. But we must be careful not to confound the two. The sorrow is the result of the change of mind.

One Scripture may be adduced in opposition to

this, viz., 2 Cor. vii. 9, where the repentance is spoken of as the result of the sorrow. But bear in mind that this is speaking of the repentance of believers, and not of the repentance of a sinner toward God. The godly sorrow of their souls produced by the apostle's letter, and by the shameful condition to which, as an assembly, they had been reduced, was productive of a change of mind for the better—a change of mind regarding their whole conduct—a change which experience would confirm, and of which they would never again have to repent.

The word repentance is sometimes used in a wide sense as including faith, just as "believing" is often used in a wide sense as including repentance.

Heb. xii. 17 is often misunderstood. It does not mean that Esau failed to obtain repentance in himself, but that he "found no way to change his father's mind." He had committed the sin of despising the birthright, and the inevitable result followed, notwithstanding his bitter tears, which showed that he now repented of his former folly. Nevertheless, even these tears were not despised, and a blessing was bestowed, though inferior in kind.

Whilst only God can give repentance (Acts v. 31; 2 Tim. ii. 25), nevertheless we must never forget that God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. The universality of the command to repent necessarily implies that God's willingness to pardon and save has no smaller limitation (1 Tim. ii. 4).

EXTRACT.—Why do we see so much disorder around us? Simply because men are doing *their* will instead of seeking to do the will of *God*. We should have no difficulty in finding out what His will is; for Christ has said, "If any man will do *His will*, he shall know of the doctrine" (John vii. 17). "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things" (1 John ii. 20); and shall we be in ignorance of His will? And if that will goes against our own, shall we gainsay it, or shall we submit to it only as that which is too strong for us, and therefore inevitable? Shall we not rather rejoice in it, because it is the *most excellent thing*? And while we do so, let us think of Him who, even when the cross was before Him, said, "*Not my will, but Thine be done*" (Luke xxii. 42).

THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS.

THE VAIL. Exod. xxiv. 31-33.



HE vail divided between the holiest of all—the immediate presence-chamber of Jehovah, and the holy place—the place of priestly worship and service.

It was a curtain of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen, with cherubims. It was upheld by four pillars of shittim wood, set on silver sockets, with suspending-hooks of gold. So long as the vail remained unrent, the priest was shut out from the immediate presence of his God, and the Divine glory was hidden from his gaze. Only once-a-year the high-priest was permitted to enter, and that alone, with the blood of atonement in his hand, and his person enshrouded by a cloud of holy incense.

The Holy Ghost has interpreted this type for us in His own words, as found in Heb. x. 20. We read there, "The *vail*, that is to say, *His flesh*." This vail then, foreshadowed the "flesh," or the humanity of the Lord Jesus. "God was manifest in the *flesh*" (1 Tim. iii. 16); "and the Word became *flesh* and tabernacled among us" (John i. 14, R.V.). What a mystery of grace lies here before us, in the consideration of which, we need to proceed with bowed heads and reverent spirits, reining in our imagination, and being guided by the light of Holy Scripture. He was the Holy One as regards His humanity; unlike all other men, inasmuch as He was sinless; yet so near to us did He come that we are told, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of THE SAME" (Heb. ii. 14). His incarnation was a necessity in order that He might die, and so was His perfectness in order that He might die *for us*, to redeem us. There was no gold entwined amid the colours of the vail, as we see it in the texture of the ephod of the priest, for that would indicate that His divinity and humanity were intermingled, but such was not the case. He was thirsty at the well of Sychar and hungry in the wilderness, and He *felt* them both. He was weary with His journey and He rested Himself and slept on a pillow in the boat. O how blessed to know that we have such a Jesus! So tender that both the babe and the beloved disciple, might lie close to His bosom, and feel that they were at home, and yet withal He was the mighty God—

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Emmanuel. The hooks of gold by which the vail was suspended may speak of this, while the cherubims wrought in the blue, the purple, and the scarlet may indicate the presence of the Divine power that was in Him, oftentimes exerted on behalf of others but never for Himself.

It was upheld and displayed by four pillars, uncrowned and set on silver sockets—and there are four gospels giving a divinely inspired revelation of His holy birth and life, all ending with his cutting off upon the cross. We need no other "Life of Christ" to supplement them, although several have been written, bearing the infirmities of their authors' opinions, in opposition to the words of the Holy Ghost.

But the vail in all its beauty afforded no access to the presence of God, but rather barred the way; and the incarnation of Christ, apart from His death, would not of itself have brought the sinner nigh to God. We need to remember this, because there are many who occupy the place of teachers in the professing church, who are now saying that we are united to Christ in His incarnation, that God is the Father of all men whether they be born again or not, and that as a consequence all men will be saved. But there can be no union with Christ save in the new creation; no entrance to the family of God but by a new or second birth; and no place in heaven but on the ground of redemption. The vail had to be rent ere the way was opened into the presence of God, and Christ had to die ere sinners could be "made nigh" by blood (Eph. ii. 13). At the very moment of the death of God's holy Lamb outside the gate of Jerusalem, the vail within the temple was rent in the midst from top to bottom and the graves of the saints were opened. The former of these signs giving the pledge of access to God, the other of the destruction of death, and both of them fruits of the death of Christ. Blessed be God, there is no barrier now. The inner and outer courts are both open to the saints of God, and the whole range of spiritual blessings in heavenly places has been, through grace, made theirs. The saints "draw nigh" to pray and praise, and within the inner circle, in the fulness of light and love divine they sing—

"Within the holiest of all,
Cleansed by His precious blood;
Before Thy throne Thy children fall
And worship Thee—our God."

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM. *



Salvation is presented to us in God's Word in three different aspects. Sometimes it is presented as past and complete, "by grace ye are saved," twice over in Ephesians ii.; so much so, that we are said to be raised and seated with Christ in heaven. Salvation is sometimes presented in Scripture as future, thus, "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed;" again, "we look for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ," "to them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Sometimes also it is presented as going on, and in my opinion it is the phase of the truth the least apprehended. In many Scriptures it is thus presented, of which I will quote a few. "And the Lord added to the church daily those that were *being saved*" (Acts ii. 47, revised version). "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby *unto salvation*" (1 Peter ii. 2, revised version). But I had better quote a Scripture which is in the authorized version. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you" (Philippians ii. 12, 13). First it is your own, then are you to work it out, live it out. I have thus quoted Scriptures to prove that salvation may be viewed as past, as present, or as future; and now I desire to present some thoughts, which, may God bring home to you that you may see that it is a present salvation. We will read (Matt. iv. 23-v. 2.) "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching *the gospel of the kingdom*, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And His fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and He healed them. And there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan. And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him: and He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying;" and then He utters seven blessings, and if you study them at your

leisure, I think that you will see they mark growth, advance in the Divine life, and that the seventh is the tip-top one. The other two (verses 10 and 11) are appendices, and I keep to these seven. The Holy Ghost calls this "the gospel of the kingdom," He never calls it the "sermon on the mount;" which I consider to be the Devil's attempt to cast a slur upon this divine teaching by adding such an ignominious term. I think if we err anywhere, we err in this respect, that we attach so much importance to church truth and to Christ truth on the one hand, that we do not, on the other, attach the importance to kingdom truth that we ought. But do you say, what gospel is there here? What good news? In this way, Jesus had begun His reign, when He was thirty years of age, as were David and Joseph when they began theirs. Jesus begins His reign by showing who are in His kingdom. First there gather to Him a multitude of poor creatures with divers ailments and complaints, and He heals them all. Then in these words He goes on to say to His disciples, "You, my disciples now sitting round my feet, you have ailments of far more serious, awful character still, and as I have healed these of their bodily complaints, so will I you of your spiritual. You have seen how I cast out devils, how I touch the sick and the palsied and they are healed, you, my disciples (and the word means learners, not those who know everything), I can heal you too. You have deeper sorrows, I can heal you of them." And then He goes on by calling attention to the obverse, to what is lovely in His sight and in God's, to imply and hint at what is not lovely, and thus gives us His mind as to what He would have, and what His finger can produce in us. And is not that *gospel*? "We give thanks unto the Father who hath made us capable (or competent) of being partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." But capacity grows; the child of a year or two has a capacity, but at thirty or forty it has enlarged. We all have already the capacity for heaven, but that capacity grows as we know God. "Who hath translated us"—into what? "Into the kingdom"—*the kingdom*. So we are under His sway, and Jesus is our Lord; and the next words are meant, I think, by the Spirit to imply that He will treat us very kindly, but so sure as He is our Lord, He will break us down. "Into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Colossians i. 12, 13). He will treat you

* Notes of addresses by W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. H.

very kindly, but He won't allow insubjection. And it implies training, tutelage, inasmuch as when we are subdued we shall be in the kingdom of the Father. Would it be a gospel to any here to have their sins forgiven, and to keep all their bad thoughts and evil nature? By nature "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries," and much more. Such would be the devil's gospel and not God's. God's gospel is not only to forgive our sins and to give us a new nature, but to take us in hand and to bring us into subjection.

Now here we have in these opening verses of Matt. v. His way with us. And in looking down the passage I would notice these two points. First, the tracing of the character; secondly, the blessing attached. Now, as I read these first three, what is the response of your conscience: The poor, the crushed, the broken in spirit,—is that like what we always see in all Christians? Do they always tremble at God's word? Oh, there rise before me in all my experience very, very many Christians whom I have come across in my lifetime, malicious, sarcastic, envious, tattlers, busybodies, rejoicing at evil, (and I know nothing more demoniacal), and yet they *appeared* to be believers; their eye glistened at the name of Jesus, but when I read such a text as this, where has it been? And I won't allude to many other forms of evil, your own mind can readily and easily supply them; and alas, we are all more or less unsubdued. Therefore the Lord, the *Lord*, must take us in hand. "That pride, that envy, that sarcasm, that malice, that evil speaking, I cannot like it in you; I like the very opposite, the poor in spirit." I have said these blessings rise to a climax, but between ourselves, I feel the Lord must needs yet bring me into number one. I am not so experienced in number seven, but I feel that the Lord has much to do with me as to number one.

Then, when I am poor in spirit—and I could name some that by varied experiences are a good deal broken down—then He goes on to mourning about our sins. It may be sin in others, or sin in the world, but oh, it must surely be of what we feel of that horrid flesh in ourselves. And do you mourn about it? Do you weep before the Lord about it, and sigh to be delivered from it? Then follows the meek, the gentle, the yielding. You see they naturally follow one another. If you see your own

naughtiness, and feel the efforts of self and of the flesh arise within you, you will not be overbearing. They follow in beautiful gradation. But you think, perhaps, that it is a very small thing to be meek. Is it? Just read 1 Peter iii. 4, "The hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." God does not reckon as you do. Perhaps you may think that persons who are full of themselves, and with high-flown notions, are those whom God likes. "The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." Do you want His judgment? And the same Jesus who healed these poor things of their bodily complaints, can give you all this. You have the nature, but I want you to bear in mind what is the force of the words in Colossians. You have the nature, but the nature can be developed and grow; we are all capable, but capacity grows, as the child of two becomes the man of forty. And we are in the kingdom of the Son of His love who can produce it in us.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness." Not righteousness before God, there Christ in resurrection *alone* is our righteousness. It refers to what the Lord produces in us, and means uprightness of walk. Happy they who pine, literally pine, to be upright in walk. Who groan "Teach me, oh God," and if there be anything wrong drag it out to the light. God must judge evil some day, shall He judge it now, or when He is upon the throne by-and-by? "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." "He that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons," refers as much to Christians as does verse 1 of the same chapter iii. 25 of Colos. It is a letter addressed to the *saints*; and, if you want to read the epistle aright, read it as a prelibation of the judgment seat of Christ. In Ephesians, it is whatever *good* thing you do; in Colossians, it is whatever *bad* thing you do. The question is, whether you would like to have the Lord deal with it then, or make you a different man now? Choose! Your evil He will judge, because He is a Holy God. Shall He tell you then how naughty you were, and let you suffer loss of reward in His kingdom; or shall He deal with you now, and make you say, Lord, I do not want to defend anything wrong? He will judge it now in grace, or then, and you will lose reward.

The first four blessings are of righteousness, the last three are of grace. The first four are more individual, the last three concern us in our association with others. "Blessed are the merciful." Of course when we are thus made to mourn for sin, and are made meek and gentle, no wonder if we are not then hard upon others; indeed, we cannot be. One person you may be very hard upon, that is yourself; and every night you may be judging your actions and your thoughts, and weeping almost about the failures of the day. But do you mean to tell me, that the man who weeps about his failures before God, can go out and be harsh, censorious, and overbearing with his brother? The two are impossible.

"Blessed are the pure in heart." Oh, to think, that out of the very heart from whence proceeded by nature, "evil thoughts, murders, adulteries," and so on, God can take that heart and make it pure. How can He do that: Look at Acts xv. 9. "Purifying their hearts by faith." And again in 1 Peter i. 22, "Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit." So you see how God does it. Your heart by nature is like a nest of vipers, and then God pours His love into your heart, by faith you take that love of God into your heart, poured in by the Holy Ghost, according to Romans v., and the light of God according to 2 Cor. iv.; and as you take in that love that God gave His Blessed Son for you; that Christ hung upon the cross for you; that Jesus bore your sins away, that subdues you and breaks you down. Then you really begin to love back again, to enjoy God, to delight in His love. What a change! And thus is God developing His work in you. "Purifying your hearts by faith," and the more you drink in of the love of God (Rom. v.), and the light and glory of Christ (2 Cor. iv.), the more do you walk in the light of His countenance and the joy of His love.

Now God sends you with a message to others, when He has thus filled you with His love and with His light. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." The word "called" is what is termed a Hebraism, and is equivalent to "they are the children of God." God is a peacemaker, Christ is a peacemaker, and thus are we to imitate God, and to carry the love and the light we enjoy to others. Rivers of living water are to be flowing out in place of the murders, adulteries, and evil thoughts. Again, I say, what a change!

(To be continued in our next.)

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY J. R. C.

1 Cor. vi. 20.



HAT we may further gather the teaching of Scripture regarding our bodies, turn with me to Rom. vi. In verse 6 we read of "the body of sin," in verse 12 "your mortal body," and in chapter vii. 24, "this body of death." Again, in Phil. iii. 21, "our vile body," or "the body of our humiliation."

Although, as to the body itself, moral evil does not attach to it, for it may be used as an instrument of righteousness as well as an instrument of sin—nevertheless, the Scriptures referred to, shew the degenerate character of even our corporeal nature. And, indeed, in view of these Scriptures and of all experience, it cannot be denied that, even in our bodies there is an affinity for evil which renders them much more easily and readily instruments of sin than of righteousness. I mean that the material corruption inherent in our flesh through sin, gives to our very bodies an affinity for, or inclination towards the moral corruption of our nature. Hence it is that the desires and appetites which are natural, require to be reined in or held in check, so long as we are dwelling in these bodies of sin and of death, of mortality and corruption. Hence the necessity for a change of body in order to the enjoyment of the Sabbath rest of glory. How could it be complete without that change, which we so delight to anticipate, whether it be in resurrection or at coming of the Lord, from the carnal, the mortal, the earthly, the corruptible, into the spiritual, the immortal, the heavenly, and the incorruptible?

In chapter ix. of this epistle (1 Cor.) we see a man in downright earnest to live for God. Before his mind, as an illustration of his position, is one striving to obtain the prize in one of the Grecian games. To excel in such sports involved a life of continual self-restraint. "Every man that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things." So, says the apostle, "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection," and this word "keep under," is stronger in the original, and means to "beat it black and blue,"

rendered in the "New Revision" "buffet or bruise." Implying a tendency to resistance, which requires strong measures to bring it into subjection. And thus he imposed a continual restraint upon even natural and lawful desires, with a view unceasingly to one end, one purpose of his life, viz., so to run as to win the prize, so to wrestle that in the day of awards he might be the victor crowned, and not the vanquished one disapproved.

But there is another side to this line of truth on which Scripture gives definite instruction. In Col. ii. 22, 23, we read of "the commandments and doctrines of men," of "a shew of wisdom in will, worship, and humility," and also "neglecting (or 'punishing, or not sparing') the body."

There is such a thing as a "punishing of the body, which is not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh" (see New Revision, Col. ii. 23). It may proceed from a false humility, such as our Lord refers to in Matt. vi. 16, "Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, and appear unto men to fast. . . . But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face." It is not the will of the Lord that one should look as if their body was "neglected," filthy, and miserable. He commands on the contrary, "wash and anoint." God would have His people to be a happy people, and to appear so to others.

The temperance in all things, the cleanliness, the sufficiency, the peace of mind, the rest of heart and conscience, the hopefulness of a life of faith and obedience to the Word of God, are all conducive to good health and comfort, and this of itself is in many cases a notable testimony for the Master whom we serve.

There are no doubt many exceptions, some for the service of Christ have brought themselves into poverty, suffering, yea, "nigh unto death." If it be in obedience to Him, and the outcome of faith and love, He will own it and recompense it.

But, *as a rule*, it is not the will of God that a Christian should neglect his body in any respect. Whilst not pampering or indulging in laziness or in luxury, any more than in positive sin, yet ought he to have the sleep,—God given sleep, which his body requires to fit him for daily duty; the needful food which, with thanksgiving and the blessing of God, is for his sustenance, and thus give honour to the God that "giveth us all things richly to enjoy."

One word in conclusion on the last verse of chap. vi. "Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body."

The Lord Jesus, before He went forth to the cross, could look up into His Father's face and say—"I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." Though His fixed purpose to glorify His Father brought Him at last to the cross, yet He laid down His precious life in the assurance that the Father would raise Him up and glorify Him with Himself.

And as the object of His life was to glorify God, the same ought to be ours. Whatever of loss or suffering may be involved in obedience to the will of God, we have the same assurance which sustained His soul, "He which raised up the Lord Jesus will raise up us also." Even though we may be called to pass through death, nevertheless, these bodies are precious to God and to Christ. They are part of that for which He covenanted when He came to finish the great redemption work.

The resurrection of the body is part of the triumph of Christ. Till then His triumphant power over the adversary is not fully manifested. So long as there remains the dust of one redeemed one in the earth, His triumph is not complete.

We wait the moment when the dead shall be raised and the living changed. Then shall be the gathering together unto Him in the air, of which our gatherings together every Lord's-day are an antepast and pledge.

May we be taught by His spirit to live more in the power of this blessed hope.

THE FLESH OR FIRSTBORN.

PART I.—CAIN.

LET us endeavour to gather up from Scripture some of God's thoughts concerning the flesh. Every one who has been "born again" know less or more of that evil nature which "is enmity against God," but it is well for us to learn yet more *fully* how *entirely* that nature is opposed to *Him*. One of the figures which the Holy Spirit would make use of, in revealing to us the completeness of man's ruin, is found in the

Old Testament in the character of many of the "firstborn." If God says "the elder shall serve the younger," He has a purpose in it; and if we find that God's choice has ever been the "*younger*," surely it becomes us to inquire with reverent hearts, Why is this?

"Howbeit that was *not first* which is spiritual but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual" (1 Cor. xv. 46). Thus we discover that the "firstborn" is flesh "of the earth earthy," and that the second birth is Spirit—"the Lord from heaven." In Gen. iv., Cain, the firstborn of nature, comes before us as a representative man. What a solemn picture! May the Lord give us eyes to see clearly in him, something of all that terrible havoc which has been caused by sin.

He "was a tiller of the ground," the ground that had already been cursed for man's sake (chap. iii. 17); but his spiritual blindness does not appear so much in his tilling of the ground as in his supposing that the fruits of a cursed earth could be accepted of God.

He approached that Holy One as though no sin had caused separation, and as if no justice required satisfaction. How blind! How self-satisfied! How dead in sins! He worships, but he knows not the character of the *One* he appears before, he knows not His requirements; yea more, he cares not to know his own relative position toward God. His spirit and offering might have been becoming and acceptable had there been no sin to atone for; God was looked upon as being altogether such an one as himself (Psa. l. 21). There was no recognition of the solemn fact that sin had put a distance between God and man, and that that gulf could only be bridged by the justice-satisfying sacrifice.

As a worshipper, Cain may have appeared devout, but one word from God suffices to draw forth the concealed pride of his heart. Only let him be reminded that he is a sinner, that his worship is not accepted, and the mask of deception drops off. Now the concealed hatred becomes manifest in the "fallen countenance," and the carnal mind displays its enmity.

God is love, and would thus reason, "Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen?" But wounded pride would not seek a reason, nor admit that there could be a right cause for rejection.

The God who loveth righteousness was not at fault. Cain had no reason to be displeased with his treatment, for, had he come in the right spirit and with the right offering, he would have been accepted, as was his brother Abel. His countenance fell because his *will* was crossed, because his *way* was opposed by righteousness and his sin uncovered. "Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil"; but probably Cain knew not until now that his were. Should he not, then, have thanked God for the undeceiving, evil-revealing light, and bowed his will before its holy rays? But he did not.

Nor is he alone in all this, for unsaved, unconverted men and women are doing to-day the very things which he did. "Worshippers" flock by thousands every first day of the week to their "houses of prayer," but what can they bring to God? Only let a faithful servant of God meet them at the door with words of light and truth, showing them their need of a sacrifice, even "the precious blood of Jesus," and see how their "countenances fall." "Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain" (Jude 11.) Bloodless worshippers, "they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they His council." Their highest thought is to please Him by bringing an offering of *their own*, and thus to win His favour. But can the best of an evil nature be good or acceptable with Him? Surely he requireth not this at their hands, nor will He accept it. Let the words go forth with unmistakeable clearness, "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Whether it be received with thankfulness or rejected with pride of heart, it is the plain duty of all who have been saved or warn unconverted sinners of the danger of their being eternally in hell, through trusting to anything that they have done or brought to God. Justice can only be satisfied with what God Himself has given—"with the precious blood of Jesus."

In these latter days men are following yet more manifestly the foot-steps of Cain than in former days. Nor does it require a very spiritual mind to discern this. What was meant by the display of fruits and flowers which but a short time ago adorned the interior of a great many so-called places of worship? "Oh, it was harvest thanksgiving!" A good name indeed; but the true answer is, It was Cain's offering.

There is yet another aspect of the life of this typical man which it might be well to consider. We

have seen him in his religious character; let us now glance at him as the "murderer."

Saul of Tarsus and the Pharisees generally possessed this double character, "touching the righteousness of the law blameless," yet murderers of the deepest dye. The blessed Son of God was hated because He testified of the world that the works thereof were evil (John vii. 7); but who gave the fullest expression to that hatred? Were they not the religious ones, chief priests and Pharisees? Their hypocrisy was revealed and rebuked, their pretensions were all known to Him and by Him exposed, their "countenances fell," and nothing short of the slaying of the Righteous One could satisfy them.

Thus did Cain. It was impossible for him to kill that God whose voice rebuked his blindness, but it was in his heart to do so. Yes; the carnal mind would drag Jehovah from His throne and seat itself upon it, and, but for the feebleness of its arm, this would have taken place long ago. Failing this, the rejected worshipper found a victim—one who was in fellowship with God, who was accepted of Him. He is within the power of his arm, and now the earth drinks the blood of the righteous Abel. The deed is done which manifests the real nature of the firstborn. All that was in has come out. No longer can he pretend to be what he is not. A fugitive and a vagabond is he in the earth, and out from the presence of the Lord he goes, and dwells in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. Out from God's presence; how solemn! Yet his true place;—"flesh," cannot dwell in God's presence. Nature's desires are to get away from God as far as possible. How uncomfortable poor unsaved ones feel when brought into contact with living power in preaching. The less of God's presence there is in a meeting, the better can it be endured and tolerated by the unawakened, and unconverted. The more unreal the religion is, the more popular will it become.

Oh, should not "the man of the Spirit" sit down and weep for the condition of the masses who congregate each Lord's Day to worship! There is nothing in all their "service" to show them where they are; they sit as God's people do, but God's voice is not heard. Did but one rise in their midst with a heart full of the presence and power of God and proclaim with clearness and faithfulness the truth, "Ye worship ye know not what," how soon would Cain's disposition unveil itself!

Those who seek to proclaim the gospel publicly in these evil days should encourage themselves in God. If the halls, where Christ is preached be not crowded with "delighted hearers," don't let us feel discouraged; only, let us see to it that no stumbling-block of man adds to the offence of the cross. Only those souls with whom God works are able to endure a real searching time in His presence; the residue will seek for some place where their consciences will be less severely dealt with. Thus, like Cain, the land of separation from God's presence will offer a more congenial settling place to them. The "firstborn" is "of the earth earthy," it loves the world and the things thereof.

Cain might give to his sons and descendants names which correspond with those of the sons of God,* but their natures were unchanged. Building cities and making a comfortable home of earth belied the heavenly profession; their way was one of increasing darkness and departure from God, until at length the end was reached, and, instead of having improved or repented—Lamech makes his own confession—a murderer worthy of vengeance seventy and seven-fold (vers. 23, 24). And will not such an end be reached by the fair pretenders of to-day who know not God, yet bear the name of Christ; whose hopes and aspirations are earthly, and "in whose heart the world is set?"

We who are saved can praise God that our "old man," or "flesh," or firstborn," has been crucified with Christ; hence an end of it for eternity.

W. J. E.

What is the difference between Peace with God and the Peace of God?

Isa. xxvi. 3; John xiv. 27; Rom. v. i; Ephes. ii. 14;
Phil. iv. 7; Col. i. 20; Col. iii. 14.

PEACE WITH GOD is got by believing in His Son Jesus Christ. It is the assurance from God's own word, that "whosoever believeth in Jesus hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death into life." It is when the sinner—after trying in vain to make his own peace with God—has his eyes opened to see that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto

* Compare names of children of Seth with those of Cain.

Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," but, "having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself;" and then the sinner, believing this, has "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

THE PEACE OF GOD.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." The question of sin has been settled, but "in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world;" and "these things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace," for "He is our peace." "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." And just as we "in everything by prayer and supplication let our requests be made known unto God," so "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

M.

NEGLIGENCE IN REGARD TO THE PERISHING.

(Read Prov. xxiv. 11, 12).

THESE words of Holy Scripture are of weighty, *individual* import. "If thou forbear to deliver." Every Christian, whether man or woman, is under a solemn obligation to God in this respect. Each may do evangelistic work in his or her sphere. It is not merely a question of "privilege," but one of the deepest *responsibility*. We fear that this is to a large extent overlooked.

Doubtless we all rejoice to hear of the activity and success of others in gospel work, but are we *individually* concerned to win souls for Christ? Do we make it *our own* business? None need excuse themselves upon the grounds of inability or youth.

The blind man (John ix.), upon the very day he received his sight, not only bore testimony of his Healer, but inquired of others, "Will ye, also, be His disciples?" They cannot possibly go out of their depth if they only narrate their conversion to God and invite sinners to Jesus.

Is not the growing indifference of many Christians in regard to the unsaved, appalling? Around us, on every hand, thousands are being "drawn unto death." Be-

neath their very feet a dark satanic energy is doing its deadly work—participators in the death of Adam, away from God, they pass heedlessly along the broad road to destruction.

Sometimes, as we muse upon this subject a fear comes over our mind, lest in eternity souls writhing in unutterable pain and anguish shall have bitter memories of our indifference who profess to be Christians. The thought haunts us! Shall it be that some poor, damned souls shall have occasion to reflect on us? "They never lived as if they believed it, they never preached as if it really possessed their hearts."

Already the unconverted "are ready to be slain," they need not commit another single sin to ensure damnation! and can we, who know their danger, stand by and see them perish? Oh, for more divine vehemence as we raise the cry of warning! Were the terrible realities attached to an eternally-burning hell more realised by each of us, what a difference it would make in our whole behaviour and preaching! If it were verily burned into our very being, what different results would be manifest in our endeavours to rescue the perishing! Who among us could look into the face of God and say, "Behold, we knew it not," referring to the perilous state of the lost? Then let us take heed, while guarding ourselves against such an utterance, lest our *actions* demonstrate such a condition of soul.

"He who ponders the heart" considers, and the time of reckoning is to come. Our own souls, once in the grasp of Satan, are now in the safe keeping of Almighty God. A consciousness of danger caused us to flee to Christ, and we are safe. "Delivered from so great a death" ourselves, can we be negligent as to the imminent danger of others? The judgment-seat of Christ is before us, and individually we must give account to Him. "Shall He not render to every man according as his work shall be?" Thank God we are eternally released from the doom and penalty of our sins, but shall we not "suffer loss" at the judgment of works unless we awake to a sense of the Lord's claims upon us here? The thief on the cross, receiving the mercy of salvation just ere he breathed his last, passed into paradise. He had no opportunities for service. And shall it be with any of us that, after years upon earth (with innumerable opportunities for service), we shall be, as he, "saved, yet so as by fire?" To bear, throughout eternity, no marks

of the approbation of Christ? How easy to sing—

“Oh! how will recompense His smile,
The sufferings of this little while.”

But do we mean it? Does He, who searches the heart (as our lips sing such words), see that we really covet and anticipate the Master's smile and “well done?” Crowns of righteousness and glory await the faithful, devoted servants of Christ; but if we desire our brows to be adorned with their splendour, it will only be because we merited them at the Master's hand by our manner of life and steadfast adherence to His will during our pilgrimage here.

The Lord stir up our hearts, and give us heaven-born zeal, causing us to know in power what it is to please Him.

F. A. B.

“THE SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH.”

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.



WHEN I was asked to say a few words this evening I was specially requested to speak to young Christians upon the study of the Scriptures. Surely we could have no more important subject, and perhaps I might add, we could scarcely have one more difficult. It may be dealt with in such a variety of ways. I propose to ask you to turn to a few passages that will teach us something of the gradual development and inspiration of the Bible. The *first* allusion to the Book is in Exod. xvii. 14, where after Amalek had fought with Israel and been discomfited by Joshua “with the edge of the sword.” “The Lord said unto Moses, write this for a memorial in a *book*, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.”

Another allusion is in Deut. xvii. 18, &c., where God said, when Israel “will set” (verse 14) a king over them. “And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a *book* out of that which is before the priests the Levites; and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep *all the words* of this law and these statutes, to do them; that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment to the

right hand or to the left; to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.” The history of the kings given us in Scripture shows that their prosperity and blessing were in proportion as they obeyed this book. And if they wandered from God it was by a reference to the law that the evil was brought home to their consciences and that their restoration was effected. Turn to one notable instance of this in 2 Kings xxii. 8, &c.: in the time of Josiah “Hilkiah, the high priest, said unto Shaphan, the scribe, I have found the *book* of the law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiah gave the *book* to Shaphan and he read it. Verse 10—And Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a *book*. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass when the king had heard the words of the *book* of the law, that he rent his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah, a servant of the king's, saying, Go ye, enquire of the Lord for me and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this *book* that is found: for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this *book*, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.” Thus the evil was discovered and judgment was deferred in the days of Josiah, and there was a revival amongst the people, for (chap. xxiii. 22), “a Pass-over was kept such as had not been holden from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah.” One other remarkable instance of a similar kind I will ask you to turn to in Nehemiah viii. Here we read, verse 5: “And Ezra opened the *book* in the sight of all the people (for he was above all the people), and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Verse 7—Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites caused the people to understand the law; and the people stood in their place. So they read in the *book*, in the law of God, distinctly, and gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading.” Verse 12—“And all the people went their way to eat and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared

unto them." Verse 14—"And they found written in the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month." Here was a command as plainly written as language could make it, yet it had not been kept by God's people for centuries, even "since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun, unto that day" (verse 17). And when the people obeyed it "there was very great gladness." Thus we find that when those who had wandered came back to God, according to His Word, He was ever ready to bless, so that the gladness of former times was restored to them, and each revival in its attendant blessing seemed to bring them further back in restoration than the last. In the time of Hezekiah they went back a little way: 2 Chron. xxx. 26—"There was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, there was not the like." In the time of Josiah, as we have seen, 2 Chron. xxxv. 18: "there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept." But in the time of Nehemiah, much later in history, they went much further back in experience, even to the days of Joshua. The lesson such Scriptures should impress on our hearts is the immense importance of a literal—a close adherence to the Word of God, and a determination, at any cost, to come back whenever we find God's people have wandered. An objection is often raised, "but it is no use in times like these for a few to attempt it." But let us not listen to men; let us come back to the obedience of the apostles and the early Christians, for there is everything we need in our God and He is ready to bestow every blessing if we will only obey Him. Let us come as *individuals*; let us come as *twos* and *threes*, or as two or three hundreds, or thousands, if we can get so many to do so, but if our brethren will not come, still we *must*, for that is the path of true happiness and peace.

I must pass on to notice, in a few words, a precious Scripture in Psalm xl. 7, quoted, as you are aware, in Heb. x. 7, and referred to our Lord who says, "Then said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me," or as it may be rendered, "In the roll of the book written of me;" words implying that HE is the subject—the substance of the book—similar to Rev. xix. 10, "for the testimony of Jesus is the

spirit of prophecy." Then in Jeremiah we have two striking allusions to the book, one in chapter xxx. 2, where the Lord God of Israel said to His servant: "Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book. For lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord; and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it;" a prophecy yet to be fulfilled. And another in chapter xxxvi. 2, where the Lord said to Jeremiah "Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee *against* Israel and *against* Judah, and *against* all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah even unto this day." And when Jeremiah committed the words to Baruch, (verse 4), and Jehudi fetched the roll and read it in the ears of the king (verse 21) "it came to pass, that when, Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth" (verse 23). Thus they rejected the Word of God that was *against* them, but they could not get rid of it in that way. "Then took Jeremiah another roll and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein, from the mouth of Jeremiah, all the words of the book which Jehoiakim, king of Judah, had burned in the fire; and there were added besides unto them *many like words*" (verse 32). Ah, my brethren, we cannot destroy God's words with a penknife or a fire; and if there is one lesson more than another that I would impress on young Christians it is this—never reject any word of God that is *against* you; let it reach the conscience and the heart; bend the ear and the knee about it, or there can be no progress in the things of God. Now, ere we go on to the New Testament, we have two passages in Daniel to glance at. In chap. ix. 2, we read, "I, Daniel, understood by *books* the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem." Although Daniel was himself a prophet (and this may be a fitting place to remind you that a prophet spoke or wrote by direct inspiration, whereas a teacher can only teach what has been written by others), yet Daniel did not learn by inspiration what *could be known* by the *books* already written. God would not

thus teach him what He had otherwise plainly revealed, and in chapter x. 21, when the Lord Himself appeared to Daniel in that most remarkable vision, He said to him, "I will show thee that which is noted in the *Scripture of truth*." That is the only instance in the Old Testament of the word "Scripture" being used, so that it is *a passage of special interest and importance*.

Passing now to the New Testament, I will turn to two occasions on which the Lord's own use of the Scriptures is taught us. Of course we could give many examples of it, but two must suffice as our time is limited. One in Luke iv. 16, 17,—where we read, "And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, and as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read, and there was delivered unto Him the *book* of the prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, the Spirit of the Lord is upon Me," &c., &c. Another in Luke xxiv. 27, where on the day of His resurrection when speaking to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the *Scriptures* the things concerning Himself," and in verse 44, "He said unto them, these are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written *in the law of Moses* and *in the prophets* and *in the psalms* concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures." Now, turn to 2 Timothy iii. 14-17, perhaps the most important passage bearing on the gradual development and inspiration of the Scriptures. Paul says to Timothy, "continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures (or the sacred writings, R.V.) which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (or is God-breathed), and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." I would say humbly as many others have said before, that I think the translators of the revised version made a great mistake in rendering verse 16, "every Scripture inspired of God,"

as if there were some Scriptures inspired and others not. Every Scripture is inspired of God. "Holy men of God spake as moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter i. 21); and we need all that has been thus written. There is not a precept we should not obey—there is not a promise we should not cherish in our hearts—there is not a warning to which we should not give heed—there is not a recorded fact we should not believe—there is not a prophecy (unfulfilled), the fulfilment of which we should not expect. We need *all* "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." I need this lesson as much as any present—we *all* need it; it is a lesson for the times in which we are living. Let us now notice two passages in 1 Peter, to impress upon our hearts the *use* of the Word. In chapter i. 23 we read, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever," and at the close of verse 25 it is written, "And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you." In working to win others to Christ, and I hope we are all of us doing this in some way or other, if saved ourselves, I trust there is not one amongst us who is not, in private or in public, by preaching to many or speaking to individuals alone, labouring for souls—well, if so engaged, let us remember the importance of putting before them and getting them to rest upon *God's Word*. There are many conversions in these days of excitement and of superficial work said to take place without it, and I would not say that *all such* conversions are spurious or false, but I do solemnly say—for I know it by some experience that many are so, and that even when real there is rarely the same steadiness and establishment of soul as when the anxious have been pointed to one or more passages of Scripture, and *rested* on what God has said. Then in chapter ii. 2, Peter speaks of "new-born babes," desiring "the sincere milk of the Word," that they may "grow thereby." After we have life we need food, that we may *grow*, and there is a great danger of forgetting this and neglecting God's means of growth. Only last Sunday evening I went to a prayer-meeting where many young converts were gathered, and I was much pleased to hear several engage in prayer; it was refreshing to hear them plead for the conversion of others, for relatives and schoolfellows, workmates, &c., but there was no

apparent sense of *their own need*; no expressed desire for more of God's Word that they might *grow*, and I am sorry to say it is one of the weak points in much work that is around us. Souls are saved, and then set to work, but few comparatively are *fed*, or exhorted to feed upon God's Word. Let us then use the Scriptures, and now observe two or three passages that tell us something of the danger of not knowing them, and of their abuse. In Matt. xxii. 29, our Lord says, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God," so that error results from ignorance. Then in Mark vii. 7, He says, "Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of man;" and again, in verse 13, "Making the Word of God of none effect through your tradition." There were many traditions in those days that hindered those who held them receiving the Word of God, and in our own day the same evil is at work, so that we need carefully to "prove all things" and to "hold fast (only) that which is good." Let us examine doctrines and commandments, to discover whether they are from men or from God, and let us reject that which is human and believe and obey only that which is Divine. In 2 Cor. ii. 17, Paul says, "We are not as *many*, which corrupt the Word of God," or as the marginal rendering gives it, "deal deceitfully with" the Word of God. How solemn, that not a few but "*many*" did so. Again, in chap. iv. 2, he says, we "have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." There are many now as there were then who not only teach traditions of men instead of Scripture, but who take God's Word and corrupt it. And one other similar passage let us read, 2 Peter iii. 15, 16, where Peter says, "Our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction." This verse is very interesting, as showing that Peter classed the writings of Paul with "other Scriptures," thus proving their inspiration. But my reason for reading it now was that we might see how many "*wrest*" God's Word "unto their own destruction."

I hope I shall not weary you if I finish with three verses which will teach us something of the *value* of God's Word. Two of them are in Psalm cxix. In verse 130, we read, "The entrance (*Heb.* opening) of Thy words giveth light," so that if we want light on any subject that perplexes our hearts and consciences in these difficult days, the right way to get it is to search for God's words. It will then be not "I think," but "thus saith the Lord." For instance, if we are troubled about the various opinions expressed as to the coming of the Lord, let us turn to Scripture and make sure that we have what God has had written for our learning about it. If the subject be baptism, let us banish the thoughts and writings of men, and read God's words on baptism. If uncertain as to the truth about ministry, let us find what God has revealed on ministry; and so with each subject as we go on in our experience, for only thus can we be separated and preserved from error and established in the truth. The other verse in Psalm cxix. to which I referred, is 165, "Great peace have they which love Thy law; and nothing shall offend them, or (they shall have no stumbling-block)." Observe, that it is a definite statement of a fact, not a promise. "Great peace *have* they," and the word *law* is used as in many other passages in a comprehensive sense, including much more than the moral or ceremonial law as generally understood; it includes all that God has revealed, therefore if I *love* that law, notwithstanding all the difficulties, the divisions, the errors, the dangers of the path, I *have* "great peace" and if I have not this "great peace," there is something wrong between my soul and the Word of God. There is a flaw—an omission—an addition—a sin indulged—a truth rejected—an error held, or some weak point that I want shortly to discover, and by the Word to correct. The last verse I will specially commend to your notice is Prov. xxiii. 23, "Buy the truth, and sell it not." Perhaps some young believer says, "I thought God's truth was all free, without money and without price;" and so in one sense it is, but it is none the less true that it costs us something and sometimes a good deal to obey God, and our unwillingness to pay the price is one reason why some of us get on so slowly or perhaps are backsliding instead of progressing. We want to be willing at any cost to have, to practice, and to teach God's truth; and once held, on no account, for no apparent

gain to sell it. Better stand with a few or even alone, with truth on our side, than have tens of thousands of believers at our feet because we are compromising or holding back what God has written. I remember, about twenty years ago, being in a large meeting of Christians in Freemasons' Hall, when I was a young convert, and when many other young believers were present, a very aged brother commenced his remarks, as he held a Bible in his hand, "Are you prepared, dear brethren, to go where this book will lead you?" I thought, and no doubt many others did so too, that I was quite prepared for anything that could happen from obedience to God's Word; but we little knew the full meaning of our brother's question and subsequent exhortation. Well, dear brethren, I would repeat it to-night, "Are you, are we, prepared to 'buy the truth and sell it not?'" One more circumstance. Some years ago in L— there was much prayer and conference about young converts, and after many brethren had prayed and spoken, our well-known brother, Mr. R. C., rose in his own quiet way to close the meeting. I cannot quote his exact words, but I give the substance of them. Speaking of the young converts, he said, "There are two certainties; one is, that they will go wrong if they neglect the Word; the other is, that they will prosper if they search, cherish, and obey it. Let us then resolve to do this and it is an absolute certainty that our path will 'shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.'"

LETTER FROM CANADA.

34 HIGH STREET,
TORONTO, February, 1884.

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,

Another of our annual Canadian conferences has come and gone. As usual, it was held in the city of Hamilton on 18th, 19th, 20th, and 21st January, and a goodly number of Christians from various parts of Canada and the United States were present.

WEDNESDAY EVENING.—A Prayer Meeting was held in the Gospel Hall, which was well attended.

THURSDAY MORNING.—After a time spent in prayer Nehemiah viii. and Daniel iii. 14 to end were read. "If we are to enjoy the presence of the Lord in fulness and power, we must know what it is to be in the furnace. It is not when we are walking carelessly

and getting on nicely with the world, that we are conscious of His smile. We need God with us. Nothing will do but God Himself, and we have Him in the person of Christ. Romans xii. 1 was read—The three young men (Dan. iii.) literally presented their bodies as living sacrifices, rather than turn aside from the path of obedience." Philippians iii. was then read and commented on. Malachi iii. 10-12 was read. "Get alone with God in the intervals of the meetings; if there is anything between us and Him, confess it and have it put away. Were we to do so, blessing would be the result. EVERY MOMENT SPENT OUT OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD, IS AN ETERNAL LOSS. Time spent by the children of Israel in departure from God and in captivity, was not reckoned by Him. Each one is a power for good or evil; if in fellowship with God, for good; if out of communion with Him, for evil."

THURSDAY AFTERNOON.—Exhortation was given from Acts xvi. 12-15, particularly the words "If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there." As the Word of God finds a place in our hearts, we will be faithful to Him. We ought to be able to say to each other 'If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord.' We are not any longer our own; we should be the willing slaves of Him who bought us with His blood." We were reminded of "the time of our first love, when our hearts beat true to Him, and our one desire was to please Him well. In a little while we shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. We will then see the influence our lives have exerted—influences reaching into eternity. Do we know anything of 'the pure delight of a single hour' spent with Himself? Be much with God in secret—like our perfect Example, who rose a great while before day to be alone with His Father. We should be faithful at home, at business, or wherever we may be." Luke xxii. 8-11 was read, dwelling on the words "where is the guest-chamber?" "Where is the guest-chamber for our Lord? What is it like? Is it swept out by the besom of His own word? a room made ready for Him? If this were so, what meetings we would have."

Another read 2 Kings ii. 1-14, dwelling more particularly on verse 14—"Where is the God of Elijah?" "Elijah and Elisha, types of Christ and the church. The mantle, the power with which Elijah served Jehovah. In Acts x. 34-8, 'God anointed Jesus of

Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power.' In Luke iii. 21, 22, the fulfilment of words spoken in previous Scripture. In Luke's gospel we see the Lord seven times alone with His Father in prayer. Here was One who was dependent on God. At His baptism He was specially endued with power. Elijah going through Jordan is not a comparison, but a contrast to Calvary. Elijah crossed dry shod, but all the waves and billows of God's wrath went over the Son of God."

"In Acts i. 2, we have Christ giving commands to His disciples through the Holy Ghost. It was the same mantle whether in doing good to the world, dying on the cross beneath the load of sins, or commanding His disciples after the resurrection. In Acts ii. the mantle of power descended upon the disciples. Before Elisha took up the mantle of Elijah, he tore his own in pieces. Before we can live and preach in the power of the Holy Ghost, we must tear our mantles. We get them torn in 1 Cor. i. In John xiv. the Lord said to His disciples, 'Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to my Father.' Elisha did greater works than Elijah. Peter with the mantle of power did a great work at Pentecost, when 3000 were saved. Morning by morning Christ had His ears open for instruction, and so He was able to speak a 'word in season' to the weary ones who came to Him. If *He* needed this, *we do so far more*. In Acts xiii. we have Paul and Barnabas separated for the work, and going out with the mantle of power, and the result is, we read in chapter xv. that there were brethren in every city where they had preached. Well may we ask 'where is the God of Elijah?' Where is the God of Pentecost? the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? the God of Peter and Paul?"

FRIDAY MORNING.—2 Cor. v. 8 was read. "God did something *for* us, something *in* us, and something *through* us. He justified us freely by His grace, and created us anew in Christ Jesus, and now He desires to do something *through* us. In order to have Him do this, we must be clean vessels, 'for the Master's use made meet.'"

FRIDAY AFTERNOON.—John xx. 19-23, and Acts xxvi. 13 to end. "The Lord Jesus came to manifest what God was; and we are left here for the same purpose. In Acts xxvi. Paul could say, I would to God that all who hear me to-day were as I am. It should

be the aim of all, particularly of those who preach or take a prominent part in assemblies of God's saints to say the same. They should be examples of godliness to the saved and unsaved."

Song of Solomon ii., "no acceptable service could be rendered to God, whilst out of communion with Himself—'Let me see Thy countenance.' This is what God desires. Numbers of Christians cannot look into His face because of something between the soul and Himself. 'Let me hear Thy voice.' The 'little foxes' must be caught. Whatever there is about us not according to the mind of God should be put away. 'Oh, my dove, that art in the cleft of the rock, in the secret place of the stairs,' shews us the believer's security; one who is born again cannot be shaken off the rock. Trees most shaken take deepest root. So with saints. Christ is the stair from earth to heaven, and we are hidden in Him. It is impossible to get on with God in the world, without much dealing alone with Him in secret. Christians should set apart stated times, when everything else is laid aside, for dealing with God, and in the closet. We should TAKE TIME for this. Daniel with much more to attend to than any of us, found time to be at the mercy seat three times a day."

FRIDAY EVENING.—"The people amongst whom Samuel had lived from childhood bore testimony to his consistent character. Paul went to Thessalonica in the fulness of the blessing of Christ, and such was His life that He could say 'ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves amongst you.' Let us seek to be able to say the same."

An address was given to labourers in the gospel, urging upon them the necessity of walking with God if they wished to be made a blessing to others. "Strange, children" were brought into assemblies through preachers and overseers being away from God, and thus they were blind, and had not spiritual discernment to detect the counterfeit from the genuine.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON.—The following Scriptures were read and commented on.—"Filled with the knowledge of His will" (Col. i. 9). "Filled with the fruits of righteousness" (Phil. i. 11). "Filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephes. iii. 19). "Filled with the Spirit" (Ephes. v. 18). A practical address followed on fellowship with God.

"The meetings would soon be over; we would be

returning to our homes, and what will be the effect on us in our every day life." The necessity for seasons of secret prayer was strongly urged. "Every morning before going to our daily work we should be alone with God, and have our souls strengthened and refreshed through prayer and meditation on the word. If we did not attend to this we would soon be cold and dry. Heads of households were exhorted to raise the 'family altar,' and have prayer at least once every day."

LORD'S DAY EVENING.—The Opera House was filled to its utmost capacity, and the gospel was proclaimed.

MONDAY MORNING.—A meeting of those who had not left by the early trains was held in the Gospel Hall, which was crowded. A short address was given on fellowship, from 1 John iii. 4.—"Fellowship meant partnership. God has taken us into partnership, and in all our dealings, business or otherwise, we should have due regard to this fact. We are no more at liberty to do as we please, than one member of a firm is to act independently of other partners. Our privilege is to live for God, and He will look after everything else."

Another remarked that "God has been humbling us in His presence during the meetings, and has drawn us nearer to Himself. We feel more like new-born souls again. We were still poor and needy, and require daily strength to go on with God. Attention was called to the fact that it was in a time of prosperity that God said that the children of Israel should be circumcised. The gathering together of the kings against them was nothing. God looked after that; but the Gibeonites came with guile. They had just gained a victory over Jericho and Ai, but they neglected to ask counsel from God, and what trouble they afterwards brought upon themselves."

MONDAY AFTERNOON AND EVENING.—A meeting, specially for labouring brethren, was held in the Gospel Hall. A goodly number of evangelists and elder brethren were present. The condition of the assemblies was spoken of and dwelt upon, and the fear was expressed that more unsaved persons than we imagined were getting in amongst us. Satan has changed his tactics. Previously he tried *opposition*; but finding that to fail, he has been bringing in "strange children."

The brethren began to fear that there were some

who had been deceived with a spurious conversion. Searching meetings were held, in which the possibility of persons missing Christ and getting hold of something else, was brought out prominently. The fruits of the new life were mentioned and dwelt upon. The result was that some who were supposed to be *away from the Lord*, found out that they had never been to Him. Instead of being *backsliders*, they discovered that *they had never gone forward*. "Numbers in these days profess to be children of God. They have "no doubts" about it. "God says so, and they believed it." But GOD says nothing of the kind. They have reasoned themselves, or been reasoned into it. There is no progress made, no knowledge of conflict, no fruit of the Spirit, no love for the perishing, no heart for secret prayer. They are "deceived" souls, thinking that they are saved, but have only got the "plan of salvation" in their heads; and Christ is not in their hearts. Unskilled labourers in after meetings have unwittingly done much mischief. Away from the Lord themselves, and lacking spiritual discernment they have healed the hurt slightly. Instead of finding out the condition of each individual case, they have dealt with all alike, and it is to be feared told some that "according to God's Word you have everlasting life," when they were but condemned sinners on their way to hell. Under clear Scriptural gospel preaching, there is great danger of unawakened, unconvicted souls getting hold of the *theory* and missing the *reality*."

"What a need in those who take oversight of singleness of eye and devotedness of heart. 'He that lacketh these things (the graces mentioned in previous verses) is blind, and CANNOT SEE AFAR OFF' (2 Peter i. 9)."

TUESDAY MORNING.—A number of labouring brethren who had remained behind, met for prayer and conference. In the afternoon we were scattered over different parts of this vast and ungodly continent.

These "notes" are necessarily short and very imperfect. I trust, however, that they may be helpful to some dear child of God, and that as the result of their perusal the Lord Jesus may be honoured, and the readers of the "Northern Witness" stirred up to remember at the mercy-seat brethren who are trying to preach the gospel in Canada and the United States.—Yours by wondrous grace,

ALEXANDER MARSHALL

78 CAMBERWELL GROVE,
February 19th, 1884.

DEAR MR. CALDWELL,—Would you allow me to add somewhat to your reply to Question clxi, as to the non-necessity of a person telling when, where, and how he was saved. The more so, as in your reply, you appeal little to Scripture, which, if it were more heeded, would have saved this annoyance to the churches of C—.

I notice then, that when the fact is not put in the Word *historically*, the Spirit of God usually uses the *present tense*, ὁ πιστεύων—he that *believeth*. That error and device of Satan to throw back souls on past experience, and also to divide churches on the subject, comes of neglect of these Words of God. Take an extreme case, he that believeth on Christ, from him shall flow rivers of living water. You can scarcely say that such rivers are *then* flowing from him, when he is in a violent passion, or in the act of yielding to some sin. That is to say, he is not then acting faith in Christ;

he is not at that moment drinking in God's love. Hence for the time, his soul is in a bad state. And so constantly God expresses Himself in the Word. See for instance John iii. 14, 16, 18, and compare with this line of truth the way in which the same is put in Peter, "To whom *coming*, ye are built up." It is not enough to come to Christ once and live on a past fact; we should be coming to Christ daily, hourly. But this Satanic device exactly reverses this way of God, and directs the soul to a past experience. And I may add that in the course of a tolerably long ministry, I have generally found that the most genuine and satisfactory cases, were not those who had leaped at a go into a certain position, but those who had been led by the Spirit through painful experience, first, in other words, through the seventh of Romans into the eighth. I could add much more, but refrain myself.—Yours in much love,

W. LINCOLN.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender

QUESTION NO. CLXV.

Kindly give the meaning of the word "perish," as found in John iii. 16 and in 2 Peter ii. 12?

REPLY.

The two words are different in the original. 2 Pet. ii. 12 is better rendered in the New Revision—"Shall in their destroying surely be destroyed," or perhaps thus—"Shall in their own corruption be utterly corrupted." The word in John iii. 16 is the one most frequently used, and is rendered "perish," "destroyed," "lost."

Of its being rendered "perish," we give the following instances by way of example:—Luke xi. 51, where it simply means that he was murdered, and leaves untouched the question of his being eternally saved or lost. In this case there can be no doubt he was a saved person. The same applies to 1 Cor. viii. 11, where the "weak brother," being stumbled, is brought under the judgment of God which to him, as a child of God, would take the form of chastisement,

though possibly even unto death (see 1 Cor. xi. 30-32). Luke xiii. 33 illustrates the same use of the word. Then such passages as Luke xiii. 3 and John iii. 16, x. 28, 2 Peter iii. 9 give the deeper signification of perishing eternally. Luke v. 37, "the bottles perish," *i.e.*, being leathern bottles which have burst and are too old to repair they are rendered useless as bottles—in that sense they "perish" or "are destroyed."

Of its being rendered "destroyed," we give the following examples:—Matt. ii. 13, xii. 14, Luke xvii. 27, John x. 10, James iv. 12, Jude 5.

Then of its being rendered "lost," we note the following:—Matt. xviii. 11, Luke xv. 6, John vi. 12, 2 Cor. iv. 3.

Bear in mind that all these are the same word in the original and it at once becomes evident that those who attempt to attach to it the idea of annihilation are grievously mistaken, and are contending for, and seeking to wrest Scripture so as to make it appear to support, a Satanic lie.

Notes of Addresses given at the Glasgow
Fast-day Meetings, April 2nd to 4th.

PRAYER MEETING, WEDNESDAY, 2ND.



R. Groves read and commented on Psalms cxxxi. and cxxxiii.

Nothing so hinders fellowship with God and His people as a haughty heart and lofty eyes; also, seeking to exercise ourselves in things too high for us—that is, aiming beyond the measure that God has given us. “I have behaved and quieted myself as a weaned child.” Another important thing for Christians to learn, that of quieting themselves. It is very easy to be restless, and very hard to be quiet. I like to give the Hebrew of these words. The thought in them is that of the child that has been recompensed by something better. In the original it points you onward to what you are recompensed by, and not to what you are weaned from,—“Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever.” If we are going to get a blessing to-morrow, we must be expecting it, looking out for it, and even now having in measure that which we hope to have to-morrow. These words occur several times in these Psalms, such as Psa. cxxi. 8: “The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in *from this time forth*, and even for evermore,” right onward to eternity. We are called to lay hold upon a present God. The reason that we are weak is that we have not laid hold upon a *present God*.

Psa. cxxxiii. 1-3.—Let us remember that fellowship in Christ is the result of the anointing which came down from the Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, and touches each one of the very least of His members. We need a little more spiritual sensitiveness to discern the fragrance of the holy anointing oil; if we discerned it more in one another we would find our fellowship with one another increased and drawn out.

Thursday, 3rd April.—Mr. H. Dyer: The apostle says to us fellow-saints, concerning our profit as assemblies of believers, “Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold-fast that which is good” (1 Thess. v. 18-21). Through the goodness of our God openings are amongst us for ministry of His precious Word: that He would speak not only what He will, but through whom He will;

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keeping close to the Scriptures of truth, and given in the Holy Ghost. I am reminded of a verse, by one already quoted, in Isa. lxiv. 5, “Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness,” &c.

Leaving of first love is a fore-front sin in our God’s estimation; and displeasure of our God is to us, His saints, a solemn thing. “We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,” &c. The High priest of Israel wore his golden crown upon his brow, because of the iniquity of their holy things (Exod. xxviii. 36-38).

John in his first epistle says it is when we are walking in the light as He is in the light, that we have fellowship one with another; then it is that the blood cleanseth us from all sin. O how linked together is this seeking of the face of our God, and with it a continuous and deepening sense of our sinfulness even in our holy things.

“We all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities like the wind, have taken us away.” What then? Is there ground for discouragement? By no means. There is no portion of all Isaiah passages that is richer in encouragement to the feeble remnant than this one. I would say a word about this passage entirely. Look back to where this particular passage begins (Isaiah lxiii. 7). It is one section right on to the lxv. chapter verse 1. Let us read the first part of it, “I will mention the loving-kindness of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed upon us,” &c. (9th verse): Then follows the mourning language of the prophet over their national sin and rebellion; then follows the mighty power of prayer bestowed upon them. O that our prayers, whether in our closet or in our assemblies, were more like this—a taking-hold of the loving-kindness of God. 16th verse: “Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, Thy name is from everlasting.” Compare this with the verses at the beginning of the lxiv. chapter. See the mighty power of prayer here—the cold chill waters of the soul are turned into fervent heavenly heat. Then follows further down the verses that I read, “Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember Thee in thy ways.” Not only those who remember Thee in their prayers, but remember Thee in Thy ways, and obey Thee in those ways also. Whenever you read this Isaiah passage, remember the place it occupies. A little further back

we have the glorious vision of a millennial age; and now the prophet passes from this view of the glorious future to the business of the present. What does he make the business of the remnant in view of the coming glory? Gathering up the loving kindness of the Lord. There is not even the slightest indication of that coming glory, but there is this ceaseless loving-kindness; and my present work is to mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord. In the 5th of Romans the apostle Paul writes to them saying, "We rejoice in hope of the glory," but more still, "we glory in present tribulation, for the Holy Ghost is now pouring the love into our hearts." Glorifying in future grace, and the loving-kindness now present. I will mention and expatiate upon it day by day. Then comes one of the most eloquent passages in Isaiah, not on glory, but on present loving-kindness—upon the fatherly character of Jehovah. Because of the loving-kindness of such a God, gathered around His mercy-seat, we pour out our hearts in prayer, and we beseech for all the power of the Spirit now. We ask for present grace in view of coming glory.

"Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness." It is not only necessary that we pray for others, but that we also seek grace, that our ways be according to God. While we pray for unconverted friends, see that we walk in the grace of the Gospel before them daily. See that you yourselves tread the ways of the Lord, who shall answer your prayers by making you channels through which His grace may flow out to them.

The first principle is, that God is our Father; the second, that we seek His face and take hold of Him in prayer; the third, that God takes up the one that is walking in His holy fear, and uses Him for the blessing of others.

Cornelius was a door of grace to the Gentiles, because he not only knew that there was a God of grace, but he waited on Him in prayer. The angel of God said unto him, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God," thou shalt be a door of grace to the Gentiles. God indeed meets the one that rejoiceth before Him and worketh righteousness—those that have communion with Him in His ways. How very painful when in assemblies of believers, meeting to the name of the Lord—if you judge by their prayers, you would think that they would rend the very heavens, and cause God to come

down in power and blessing; when you inquire regarding their walk before the world—in the workshop, in daily business life, and in the family—you find that there is a sad inconsistency between their prayers and their footsteps of daily life. Do we ask why we are not used? Let us examine ourselves, and we shall get the painful, wholesome, and profitable answer. May God give us grace so to walk in His ways, that we may indeed rejoice before Him.

Mr. Lear: Scriptures read, Isa. l. 4-8; Psa. xl. 6-8; Mark xiv. 32-42; Psa. xxi. 1-6.

You will see that these Scriptures refer to the Lord Jesus Christ. When our brother Dyer quoted these words, "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness," I thought that they were blessedly fulfilled in the Lord Jesus. He was the only One that God saw on the earth who had no rebellion in His heart; from the manger till He cried, "it is finished," He never disobeyed His Father, but perfectly fulfilled His will. Whilst that is the negative, the positive side is more blessed still. He said and could always say, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God." No wonder that His Father rejoiced to bear testimony to the delight that He found in His Son—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." There was little around Him with which He had, or could have fellowship; little that made His heart glad down here. His daily and highest joy was in communion with His Father, and in doing His blessed will. He looked forward to the cross, for He knew all that was to happen to Him. The time drew near when He was about to lay down His life; when the love that filled His soul was to have its fullest manifestation. He that was always filled with the Holy Ghost, was the One that manifested the most perfect dependence upon His Father. Never one prayed as fervently; never did God's eyes behold on this earth such a scene as Gethsemane, when His Son lay prostrate on the ground, and said to His disciples who had no fellowship with Him in what He was passing through, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death."

Perhaps I am speaking to some who have come from circumstances of sorrow and bereavement. We who are His people know that the curse is gone, Christ has borne it for us. We were singing those precious words,

"Jesus, the name I love so well."

What is it that makes that Name dear to us? Gethsemane and Calvary; the more real they are to our individual souls, the sweeter will be our song, as we pass on our wilderness way. We love that precious Name, because it speaks of that One who willingly went to the deepest depths of death for us. As in Gethsemane, the Lord was in Spirit at Calvary, so in John xvii., He is in spirit beyond the cross and in resurrection. Gethsemane's scene was Calvary in anticipation. There He entered in spirit into its mighty depths, and anticipated its solemn verities—its deep darkness, and the forsaking of God. May God instruct our hearts concerning both scenes.

Let us look for a little at the bright side of this subject—Christ in resurrection. "Thou hast made Him most blessed for ever: Thou hast made Him exceeding glad with Thy countenance" (Psa. xxi. 6). I remember our beloved brother Heath saying in connection with these words, "The joy of the Lord Jesus in resurrection is as full as the sorrow of Calvary is deep." "Thou meetest Him." O how God delighted to lavish His honours upon His blessed Son. There He is now in the place of dignity, honour, and glory. He is exceeding glad, and we are called to share with Him in that joy.

Mr. Holiday: We have been already reminded of the important connection between our life and our prayers, and I thought it might help if, through God's grace, we are enabled to follow that a little further.

There is a danger that we take isolated passages about prayer, and treat them as if they were all that God had said about it. Let us look at a few Scriptures upon this deeply-important subject.

Matt. vii. 7: "Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Evidently, from the three different words the Lord uses here, He would press upon His disciples' hearts that there must be reality, earnestness, and instancy on our part in our prayers. Mr. Moody has said that he does not believe in a man knocking at a door and then going away. How many of God's children do this with regard to their prayers? If our prayers were of the character indicated here—asking, seeking, knocking—there would be patience shown as well as earnestness and reality. Because this passage is sometimes taken alone, we find prayers that are

not asked in subjection to the will of God; and we expect God to answer them, because we are earnest and persistent in asking from Him; and we are disappointed that we do not get what we have asked.

John xvi. 23: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you," &c. Here is another view of our subject: the name of our Lord Jesus is to be linked with our requests. It is easy to put these words at the end of a request, and say that we have asked in His name. Our brother has just been saying, concerning the character of the prayers of our Lord Jesus, that there was never such fervency and subjection of heart as in His prayers. Surely to ask anything in His name must be to ask in the way that He prayed, and to have something of the same character of subjection that He manifested. Surely there is a laying-hold of what He is to God: the remembrance of His infinite preciousness to God, when in coming to Him, we mention His precious name. There are terrible things committed through forgetfulness of these principles. A book on the subject of "faith healing," by a leader in this matter, was put into my hands. I was horrified to find, in reading page after page, the deliberate teaching that in our prayers to God we need not put in such a thought as, "if it is the will of God;" they say that faith claims as a right the thing asked. Remember that if we ask in His name we do not claim it as a right; but we should be ready in subjection of heart to wait His time and way of answering our prayers, if according to His will. This leads us on to another Scripture on this subject.

1 John v. 14: "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." Remember that these are all different aspects of the same subject—earnestness and instancy, linking with our prayers the name of Jesus, and asking according to His will are parts of the one subject. Thus we see the deep importance of being instructed in the will of our God from the only source, the precious Scriptures of truth. If we are to be men and women of prayer, let us remember this, that we must know the Word of God in order to be rightly directed in asking of our Father. Jesus never had an unanswered request,

because He knew the mind of His Father, and therefore asked what was according to His will. The real prayer of faith is characterized by the petition being according to the will of God.

If this is to be one of the conditions of getting anything that we ask, the very fact, that having asked we do not get it, ought to keep us low, waiting for God to show us why our prayer has not been answered. If we have got a single eye to know the will of God, and to do it; *this* must be according to His will, and therefore, we can ask it with confidence of God, Who alone can make His will known unto us. Even then we must be content to wait till He makes it known to us; and we must learn not to act till we know His will, and then we can go on in faith.

“Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God; and whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight” (1 John iii. 21, 22). This takes us back to what we were learning from Isaiah lxiv. 5, where we were reminded that God meets him that is obedient. Here is the secret of real confidence of heart before God, “this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us.” Knowing the will of God implies fellowship of soul with God. Where does it come from? Why, what we have got here, “if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God, then whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments.” Now, observe how all these things link themselves together, and we must not separate the one from the other. It is this knowing and doing the will of God; this subjection of heart to Him which is the only condition in which God can make His will known to us. Our fellowship with God is just as we walk in the light. “Walking in the light” is only another name for “keeping His commandments.” Some people think that walking in the light is only having a certain amount of knowledge. It is *doing His will*; then there is real fellowship with the heart of God, and God is not hindered in making His will known unto us. Knowing the will of God, asking according to His will, subjection of heart, and linking the precious name of the Lord Jesus to all our requests, is what God desires and honours. And so we shall be able to wait for the answer, and continue instant in prayer,

going on from week to week, and from year to year, still keeping a hold of God—going on in fellowship with Him.

We often think we are walking in fellowship with God and asking in faith, but God has to teach us how far this is true. We have been already reminded of the 17th chapter of John, but at the end of the preceding chapter we get a searching example of this that we are speaking of. The 17th of John begins with “These words spake Jesus.” What are these words? He looks right up to heaven, implying that in spirit He enters into the very holiest. We have the Lord Jesus here in the character of the great High Priest going into the holiest on behalf of His people, with their names upon His breast. As He enters into the presence of God He reminds us of what He said,—you will find the words referred to in the 16th chapter, 30-33. “His disciples said unto Him, Lo, now speakest Thou plainly, and speakest no parable. Now we are *sure* that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask Thee, by this *we believe* that Thou camest forth from God. Jesus answered, *do ye now believe?* Behold, the hour cometh . . . that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone,” What a solemn commentary upon their assertion, — “We know, we understand, we believe.” “You think you know, but the moment is at hand when that will be tested.” That is what God has to do with us constantly. We sometimes think that we have a hold of God when we are in the meeting and listening to the Word of the Lord, as it comes in power to our hearts, but God will test us and manifest to ourselves and others our want of faith and ignorance of our hearts. Next morning, when we are among the ungodly in the workshop, it may be, some remark is passed about us and our temper is shown, and hasty and ungracious words are spoken which at once show that we are not in communion with God. God would thus search us and say, “*Do ye now believe?*” Ah, we little know our own hearts. If Peter and the other disciples had taken more heed to the words of the Lord Jesus, and allowed Him to search their hearts, they would not have been seen sleeping in Gethsemane’s garden, but in fellowship with their Master. They did not know their hearts; but He knew them.

Observe the blessed connection between what He said to *them*—to search their hearts—and what He

says to the Father with regard to them. Speaking to them He says, "do ye now believe? The hour is at hand when you will all forsake Me," and then He looks right up into heaven, because in spirit in the presence of His Father. What does He say on their behalf there?—"I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world . . . and they have kept Thy Word . . . I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou did'st send Me." The very thing that He searched their hearts about, saying to them, "do ye now believe?" He looks up to His Father and says, "they have kept Thy Word;" "they have known that all things Thou hast given Me are of Thee;" "they have received Thy Word, and believed that Thou hast sent Me." How does the one statement seem to contradict the other? Because He knew, that however feeble the hold they had of God, yet by His grace they had laid hold of and believed in Him. He would test us again and again to give us to know the real from the sham, Thank God "for such an High Priest," who, though He knows our hearts, can speak to God on our behalf. Peter, after his restoration, could say, "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee," but he could not say that to his fellow-disciples. And so it is with any of the Lord's children who may have fallen into sin and dishonoured His Holy name; they cannot say a word for Christ to those before whom they have failed. They cannot say to them, "You know that I love Jesus," but they can go into His presence and tell Him all about it. While they are conscious they have failed, they are also conscious of the grace that has restored them.

I don't know a greater danger that we are exposed to than that of thinking that we are asking in faith and pleasing God, when it is manifest to God and our brethren that we are not going on rightly. It is good to let Him search us, for He can mention to God all that is indeed real in us; and yet make known to us what is not real. Let us thank God for such an High Priest, who can present us to Him in all the preciousness of His precious name.

May we seek to walk humbly before Him, day by day, saying, "Search me, O God, and know my

heart; try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psa. cxxxix. 23, 24).

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

(Continued from page 52.)



HAVE spoken now somewhat hurriedly upon the characteristics, and now let us look at the blessings attending them. And rest assured that when the Lord comes He will attach these blessings, and that every bit of unrepented malice or spitefulness you will hear of. "He that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong that he hath done." It just comes to me that the Lord loves to make promises; it is His element we might say, He seems so to enjoy giving. He might have stopped here. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are they that mourn; blessed are the meek; blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." Suppose it had read so, it might have done. But that is not His way. Oh that good God and precious Christ are always giving. If only we would open our mouth very wide here, He would delight to fill it. Or according to the New Testament, "According to your faith be it unto you." A singular expression this, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." There is no other like it, so far as I know, so we cannot compare it. Elsewhere, we read that we are in the kingdom, and the kingdom in or among us; but here it is, "theirs is the kingdom." I cannot dogmatize as to the meaning, as there is no other Scripture to help. Whether it means that they shall reign on earth, like Rev. v.; or whether it is tantamount to the expression, they are in the kingdom and the kingdom in them, I leave to you; I am only a humble expounder of Scripture. Generally speaking, we can recall other parallel passages, but in this case not. Anyhow, this is parallel. "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with Him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." They have God for their companion, they who are poor in spirit. "Whoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in nowise enter therein." Lord make me this little child! Not merely the naming of Jesus, Lord, Lord; it is lending the willing ear, trembling at His word, desiring to know

and to do His holy will. Do not be led away by the shams and professions of the present day, here is the real thing, and it is as uncommon now as when the Lord spake the word. Do you see a difference here? "And there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan." But He gathers His disciples round Him and says to them, I want you to be poor in spirit, and can make you so. As it were, He made a little circle out of that huge mass. And there is that huge mass of profession now, saying, I am saved, but I shall do as I like. And is that being "poor in spirit?"

Then, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." We can apply that to ourselves, because no one can say he does not sin; happy they who confess it. And then when they confess it, and deal frankly with God about it, they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Undoubtedly, the Gospel of Matthew has to some extent a Jewish aspect about it. The full truth of God as to all His counsels was not revealed at this time; it was partly revealed by Christ, as in the Gospel of John, and more still when the Holy Ghost came and inspired the apostles. Still there is truth in this verse as respects ourselves. Those of a pugnacious temperament generally make themselves enemies; those who are meek and yielding, generally win their way. There are some herbs which, if you tread upon them, all they do is to yield a grateful and pleasant odour; may we be so. If we are reviled, if we are despised, if we are scorned, let us not render evil for evil, but contrariwise, blessing; "knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing." People always standing up for their rights live in constant turmoil. So that I think, there is truth for us even in verse 5. Life, even humanly speaking, is more pleasant when we are not pugnacious and quarrelsome, as some Christians are.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." After uprightness with God; Scriptural obedience, we will say. Who hunger with desire to do God's will, to please Him, to let His Word search them, "they shall be filled." So I understand the meaning. And the word "hunger and thirst" is striking, it is not only hunger, or thirst, but both. As if it were intense desire for simple, humble, true-hearted

obedience to Him. It seems to me very strong language. "The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way." "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies." If a person does not know His will, it is not God's fault; and there are many Christians who do not. They who hunger and thirst after righteousness *shall be filled*. "Shew me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths." So does verse after verse of this Psalm (xxv.) keep chiming in with this truth.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." We ever want mercy. We had mercy shown us at the beginning of our Christian course; we have had mercy shown us to-day, and shall need mercy, if Jesus tarry, in our dying hour. Yea, we shall need mercy (Paul says so) of the Lord in that day; mercy to the end, mercy from first to last. Well, the way to enjoy it is to be merciful. We must bear in mind that our heavenly Father, having forgiven us ten thousand talents, expects us to forgive our brother the hundred pence. He will not have us hard upon our brother whilst weeping before Himself; He expects that, if you have been dealt with in the way of grace by Him, you in your little way shall deal in grace with others. I believe it to be a cause of many heart-burnings among the children of God, not showing grace one to another. If there is grace in me, and grace in you, and you have more than I, then, if we quarrel, it is for you who have the greater grace to try and get at the little grace in me. If you have much grace, you ought to succeed in appealing to the less grace in me, (God with His great grace succeeded with you) and thus shall we be drawn together, instead of being separated by mutual heart-burnings. I feel this gospel of the kingdom is very practical, and do not wonder that the devil has got Christians to disparage it; to be full of Ephesian truth, and to speak of Matthew as "Jewish." My prayer is in that sense, may I be Jewish too. Would not you like to have all these blessings, and for the Lord to take you in hand and make you His as thoroughly as He can? The only clause that I can see here as really Jewish is, "they shall inherit the earth;" and you have seen a way in which we may understand that about ourselves.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." I feel we have got here a promise of promises,

one of God's great promises. I don't know how big it is; I feel it is very big, my spirit, my individual spirit, makes me realize it to be a very big promise, but I feel like a fly in a cathedral, that it is a deal bigger a promise than I have any conception of. Why, if there were nothing else about heaven in all Scripture, it appears to me a very grand conception of heaven; to see God. Then God make us, keep us, pure in heart. Look to your motives, your thoughts; and the love of God taken into the heart is God's grand corrective of our motives, thoughts, and such like. Like as certain medicines are good remedies for certain complaints, well, here is God's recipe for everything wrong with the heart. Then another question occurs. Do some take in God's love more than others? Surely they do. What makes some Christians so much brighter than others? There are some brighter, more cheery and hopeful (I do not mean about earthly things), for some do take in more of the love of God than others, for again it is, "according to your faith be it unto you." But oh this promise, "for they shall see God." All these characteristics are in germ in each one Christian. It is not that one is "poor in spirit," that another is a mourner, that another is meek, merciful, and so on. These are characteristics of each, only in variable proportions. Some persons do grieve about sin in themselves more than others, at least, I think so. Some do more long and pine for obedience, not according to the dictates of men, but according to the simple, pure word of God, than do others. The fact is, we are in the kingdom, and are being broken in; and the Lord has a good deal to bear with, I trow. But oh this promise, it staggers, it is beyond me. It is a wonderful promise! "They shall see God." And of course, if we once see Him, He will never let us go away any more; once with God, with God for ever; you know that. Ah, even in Matthew, which is called so Jewish, when the Lord opens His mouth, what grand things He says; what glorious heart-cheering hopes He does give us, what a prospect does He put before us; to see God. And not a glimpse and off again, it does not mean that; "they shall see God," means they shall see God once and for ever, be permitted to have full view of His divine perfections, see Him as He is. Now, this ought to encourage us, and to encourage us to seek after purity of heart; because we are in the kingdom, and being in the

kingdom, it is a matter for the Lord Jesus in His disciplining of us, exercising our faith, and pouring in the love of God, so that our heart is purified.

Then lastly. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." The thought that arises in my mind as I read this word is a painful one. When we think of all the controversies and strifes amongst the Lord's people, one would almost think it had been written, "Blessed are the *disturbers*." At the beginning "all that believed were of one heart and one soul," and it has never been so since. I feel humbled when I read this word "peacemaker," as a characteristic the Lord expects us to display. How many, for instance, are given to tittle-tattle, to misrepresentation, to making the worst of a thing. We cannot have been mixed up with any assembly without knowing much of the reverse, even amongst Christians. This is evidently put here by the Lord Jesus as if it were the tip-top one, as if it were beyond even purity of heart; for I have not a doubt these blessings rise one upon another. They begin with being poor in spirit, as if that were the way to arrive at being a peacemaker, to have a very low opinion of yourself, to mourn about your failures. It is a way traced by the Lord Jesus, as it were the steps of a ladder, and the climax is nearly reached when He says, "Blessed are the pure in heart;" but He has something to say even beyond that, and you can see that it is, "for they shall be called the children of God," for this is really the germ of the gospel and epistles of John. For that is just God's way to make peace. Did not God make peace between Himself and us? Did not Christ? As we have it in Ephesians ii. And now the Lord tells us He would have us copy God, be "imitators of God." "Blessed are the peacemakers." And don't forget the steps of the ladder. First, broken in spirit, then self-humbled about our daily faults; next, to be meek and gentle yourself; fourth step, to be merciful; fifth, to hunger and thirst after uprightness of heart; sixth, to be constantly taking the love of God into your heart; then comes the last, "Blessed are the peacemakers." And, bear in mind, the Lord implies Himself that we can get even a higher blessing than purity of heart, that is, living out God every day of our lives. "They shall be called (*i.e., they are*) the children of God."—Notes of addresses by W. Lincoln communicated by J. S. H.

THE FLESH OR FIRSTBORN.

PART II.—ISHMAEL.

HAVING glanced at Cain, the "firstborn," in his double character of worshipper and murderer, we might now look at *Ishmael*, who was also "firstborn."

God had "brought Abram forth abroad," and commanded him to look toward heaven and behold the stars, filling his heart with the promise that his seed should be as numerous as they. "Abram 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. 20, 21). But whilst Abram's faith was strong, his patience was wanting. Gen. xvi. shows the strength and activity of human will; quiet waiting upon God gave place to impulsive fleshly action, and the child born as the result of this compact was pre-eminently "*born after the flesh*" (Gal. iv. 29) "by the will of man" and not of God.

Before his nativity the angel of the Lord made known to Hagar something of the character her son would bear. "He shall be a wild man, his hand will be against every man and every man's hand against him, and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren" (chap. xvi. 12). Unlike to Cain, who *went out* from the presence of the Lord, *Ishmael* never seems to have sought that *presence*, but was content to dwell before his brethren. In this respect he was no hypocrite; he did not assume a position for which he had neither heart nor inclination; he was in the fullest sense a man who made no profession whatever. A wild man, lawless, and recognized no restraint either from God or men, one whose *own will* was paramount. Is it not sad indeed, to find so many, in these days, who look upon it as a special virtue to make "no profession of religion." They seem to consider that because of this they are exonerated from much, if not all responsibility as sinners, and even hope that this circumstance will stand them in good stead in the day of judgment. But let not such be deceived, a day of reckoning is fast coming—a day when "the despisers of those that are good" shall be confronted with all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed. "We don't make any profession," say they—but why?

Is it the result of honesty and conviction of heart? No, but that they may give unbridled neck to their lusts. It is convenient for them to "make no profession." Even the Cain-worshippers, who are unconverted and ignorant of God, are despised for their "weakness" by the *Ishmael* of to-day. How quickly the world is hurrying on to a time of unprecedented trouble, when the sham religion of unregenerate men will no longer hold its votaries and dupes, but will give way to the blasphemies of infidelity and atheism; when ecclesiastical and political authority will be alike rejected and overthrown, and anarchy, like a mighty wave, shall sweep the earth. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished, *but chiefly them* that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, *and despise government*. Presumptuous" are they, *self-willed* (2 Peter ii. 9, 10).

Thus we see that the irreligious impiety of the last days will meet with righteous retribution at the hands of a sin-hating God. Surely the *Ishmael* spirit is not to be looked upon with indifference by any child of God. Whilst we rightly pity those who are deceived by a carnal false religion, let us exercise great care that we do not seem in any measure to justify those who regard all religious profession as folly. 2 Peter iii. 3—"There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after *their own lusts*." They have done with profession. But are they anything the better for it? Alas, no! They are but riper for the sickle of wrath—"their damnation slumbereth not." They have passed from that stage in sin's dark road, where man for ages stayed to bow his head (if not his heart) in recognition of God as Creator, into a region of "outer darkness," where gospel tidings bring no ray of light. Their ears are stopped, "and they are willingly ignorant."

Abraham desired for *Ishmael* that he might live before God (Gen. xvii. 18), but this could not be. He was "born after the flesh." God promised to bless him (verse 20), but the covenant was to be with Isaac (verse 21). It might be well, at this juncture, to notice the character of the dwelling-places selected by these two children. "Where a man's treasure is, there will his heart be also." And it is perfectly clear that the child of nature and the child of grace cannot, in this sense, dwell together, inasmuch as their aspirations are totally different. We must,

therefore, be prepared to hear that Ishmael and Isaac fixed their abodes according to the inward desires of their souls. Gen. xxi. 9 shows conclusively that they could not dwell together, for the rejoicing subsequent upon the weaning of the "child of promise" only served to show how opposed in heart Ishmael was to all that was of God. In Gal. iv. 29 the Holy Ghost interprets this "mocking" to mean persecution. "He that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit." Without dwelling further upon this circumstance, it may be observed that the flesh, whether in believers or the unsaved, is never so active in opposition as when the "new-born babe" is being weaned from the milk, viz., advancing in strength and knowledge of the Lord (see Isa. xxviii. 9; 1 Cor. iii. 2; Heb. v. 12). Ishmael was cast out, and being without the influence of further restraint, chose his future dwelling-place (verses 20 and 21). "And God was with the lad, and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer, and he dwelt in the wilderness of *Paran*, and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt." It may be said that because "God was with him" that therefore he (Ishmael) was not God's enemy, but does it not rather prove that grace follows sinners even when they have forgotten God? Was it not even thus with the "rich man," who had all his lifetime "received his good things" from God, whose grace he never recognized? Did not the Lord set a mark (or watch) upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him? Grace followed him. "Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have . . . trodden . . . which said unto God, depart from us; yet He filled their houses with good things" (Job xxii. 15). However, we are not now considering the goodness of God but the vileness of man. The wilderness of *Paran*, with all its glory and beauty (for *Paran* means this), offered to the carnal Ishmael many inducements as a dwelling-place: in it he was not likely to meet with a will stronger than his own, and his lawless acts would be unrestrained. Here the wildest pursuits of nature engaged his attention and satisfied his heart.

I would humbly suggest that *Paran* is in many respects an apt type of the world; it has attractions and fascinations for those whose eyes have not been enlightened, and who do not see beyond the present.

A wife out of the land of Egypt (chap. xxi. 21) is

quite in keeping with the entire history. One who would make him happy in his forgetfulness of God was his choice and "helpmeet." Thus it is to-day—the world loves its own. The history of this child of nature closes with the remarkable words, "*and he died in the presence of all his brethren*" (chap. xxv. 18). He lived before them, and as he lived so he died.

In so far as Ishmael represents a principle, it would be but folly to attach blame to him because of his actions. It is impossible for the flesh to live in God's presence; fallen human nature is utterly incapable of enjoying that presence, and the Holy Ghost wants to teach us great and unalterable truths concerning our own natural corruption, rather than that we should find fault with him (Ishmael); nor, does the Spirit of God desire to stir up the question in our minds as to the eternal future of him whose life we have been considering. To Isaac it was given to enjoy the love and presence of God, and his choice was to dwell by the well *Lahai-roi*, "the well of Him that liveth and seeth me" (Gen. xvi. 14). Under the eye of God he was happy, and so the "born-again ones," children of the light, are only at home and happy as they "walk in the light." W. J. E.

Is it necessary for a Person, in order to be assured of Salvation, to know the exact day, hour, and moment of his Conversion?



HIS is a question, I have been told, upon which many assemblies in some parts are being much divided. My answer to it will be found in the remarks I am about to offer.

John iii. 8 contains these words: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." It is necessary, in order to see the force of the passage, that you should bear in mind that in the Greek "wind" and "spirit" are the same word. Now the points I shall press upon your attention are these: first, we will look a little at the way of the Lord; secondly, we will look at the distinct testimony of Scripture; and thirdly, I will show you what are the divine tests whereby we may know of the true conversion of others, I say of *others*, not of ourselves.

First, look a little at the way of the Lord. Of course there must be some moment when any soul who is the Lord's has really bowed down and accepted salvation, and seen that he was saved. But the wind bloweth where it listeth, and no hard and fast line, I think, should be laid down as to the exact moment being known when this takes place. God is a sovereign God, and acts as such. I believe that where the gospel is continually preached, and where people ordinarily hear the gospel Sunday after Sunday, or in the case of children brought up by godly parents, that the usual way of the Lord is for the truth to break upon the mind like a very gentle breeze. On the contrary, when a person or when a district is brought under the sound of the gospel for the first time, never having heard such things before, then very probably the effect will be like sound of a rushing mighty wind, and souls will be overpowered thereby. One passage I will at once quote, because it is a much neglected Scripture in these days of hurry and bustle and jumping into truth—of hurrying souls, they being satisfied if only they can cry "hallelujah"—while some of the old chapters are getting quite neglected, and only a few pet Scriptures pass current. You must know that Romans v. 12 commences a new section of the epistle. The subject up to there is about justification, but from that verse the subject is life; and if we look down the following verses we see death flowing from Adam the first, and life from Adam the last. In chapter vi., when we have got that life, we are said to be dead, buried, and risen with Christ (very little is said about the ascension in Romans). Then in chapter vii. (this is the unfashionable chapter now-a-days) the writer seems to narrate his experience as to how he was brought into Romans viii. 1. According to the writer of this epistle (and he was an inspired man) he did not jump all at once from Romans vi. into Romans viii. 1, but the Holy Ghost shows us that he went through the singular (that is now-a-days) experience of chapter vii. And it must have taken some while, too. And he ends chapter vii. with, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" then we have, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." I can tell you particularly the reason why I will not consent to cut this chapter out of my Bible, for when I was led to the Lord some forty years ago and more,

it was for a long time the only chapter in the Bible that gave me any comfort, so I am not going to give it up. A person might think that if any one's experience could be summarised briefly, so that he could speak of the day, hour, and minute of his conversion, it was this very writer Paul, because he beheld the Lord Himself visibly, and heard the Lord Himself audibly. Probably most would think that there were no preliminary or successive stages in the case of the apostle Paul's conversion, but undoubtedly Stephen's address in Acts vii. made a great impression upon Paul. We are told that there were men of Cilicia contending with Stephen, and Paul was a Cilician. And by comparing these following Scriptures we may see further that this is so. Acts vii. 44 (of Stephen's speech), "Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen;" with Hebrews viii. 5, "As Moses was admonished of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle, for, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount;" verse 48, "The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands;" with Acts xvii. 24, "God, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;" 53, "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels and have not kept it;" with Galatians iii. 19, "The law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator;" verse 60, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;" with 2 Tim. iv. 16, "I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge." I think that, carefully comparing these, we can have no doubt but that Stephen's speech made a deep impression upon Paul. Moreover, from whom did Luke the writer get this, that "all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel"? Luke was not present, at least, I infer not. He might have got it from God, you may say. But God never uses miraculous means without there is need. I believe that he got it from Paul, for Luke was a companion of Paul. "Oh Luke," he may have said, "you should have seen that beautiful face, radiant with the glory of resurrection; and then I held the clothes of them that stoned him." Again we read, "Paul yet breathing out threatenings," showing that he was not comfortable, that there was a struggle going on.

And then the Lord appeared to him; and was all done then? With eyesight lost for three days he neither did eat nor drink. Then Ananias was sent for, scales fell from his eyes, his sight returned, and he arose and was baptized. What I have been trying to show is, that in the case of the writer of the epistle to the Romans there was in his conversion a process.

Secondly, let us look at the distinct testimony of Scripture. First, I would have you to remember that salvation in Scripture is always spoken of under three aspects. Sometimes as past and accomplished, "by grace ye are saved through faith;" sometimes as present and going on, "The Lord added together daily such as were being saved" (revised version); and sometimes as future. Now let us look at some of the direct testimony of Scripture. I would remind you that you will not find in Scripture once (unless as a mere historical fact) "whosoever believed," or "he that believed." God never makes a promise to him that believed. Turn to Scripture and see. "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" (John iii. 14, 15). Whosoever believeth—you see the difference?—that is, in the act of believing now. It does not fix your eye on that which is past, a week, a month, or forty years ago, but on this, "whosoever believeth." So again do we read in verses 16, 18, and 36 four times over in this one chapter, and never once "he that believed." Take another passage. 1 Peter ii. 4, "To whom coming," *coming*; is "coming" a thing of the present or of the past? Look again at John vi. 56, "He that eateth My flesh"—does that direct your eye to the past or to the present?—"and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me and I in him." So also verse 57. Now I think I have given you enough Scripture to establish this point, that Scripture ever directs your eye to a living Christ, with whom you are to transact business just now, and never turns your eye to the past as a ground of rest and of assurance for your soul. Not to that which took place yesterday, but ever "he that believeth," "he that eateth." Now do you catch my thought as far as I have gone? There is such an awful tendency in these days to make a fuss about men; and is the Lord dead? Or is He risen and does He look after His sheep? The atmosphere of the

religious world is loaded with bad doctrine, and it is only living continually upon a living Christ, day by day and hour by hour, that we can be kept. And if ever, dear friends, the devil worries you as to whether you were converted six months or six years ago, the remedy is to drop at His feet and then and there drink of His blood and eat of His flesh, and then the devil will soon leave off his temptations.

But we will pass to our third point, and look at the Scriptural test as to how we may know of the conversion of others. The Scriptural ones are not these which are popular. First, I would premise a most important point again—assent is not faith. A person may hear, and approve, and in his mind assent, but that is not faith. I ask your attention for one moment to the proper way of beginning John iii. I believe the devil made the division by cutting off the last three verses of John ii. from Chapter iii., with which it properly should begin. Now read those last three verses of John ii.: "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in His name"—that is, they assented—"when they saw the miracles which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man." Now there follows a word which is left out in the translation. "But there was a man." Now comes a true case. There should be a "but" there, there is in the original. "Many believed in His name" (don't be in haste to count conversions), "but Jesus did not commit Himself unto them; but" (now for the true case) "there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus." And he, you may have observed, was led on step by step. First, he came to Jesus by night but he was not converted then; the Lord directed his eye to the cross, but Nicodemus did not believe then. In chapter vii. we see him still amongst the council, but evidently anxious in soul and not happy; he was not out and out for Christ, or he would not have been there. But presently Jesus dies, and when He is brought to the sepulchre and is buried, Nicodemus bends over the body of Christ, and then, I believe, he was converted. There were stages by which that soul was led, not in a hurry, for "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Then what are the

scriptural tests we must apply in order to ascertain the conversion of others? First and foremost, is obedience to God's word written. I don't mean a man's living more religiously, and just instituting family prayer, and so on; they may be steps, or they may not. But obedience to God's word written is God's first test. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Arise, and go to Damascus, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Of course I cannot obey that word more than I know it; but a person cannot hear that word for years without acquiring some knowledge of it, and obedience to God's word written is God's grand test of conversion, and without, it, it is a spurious thing and a sham, however much the professor of it may shout Hallelujah, and attend to ordinances and rites. "Ye turned to God from idols." Not to idols, to make much of men. "From idols, to serve the living and the true God." And the word in the original is "to be the slave of": utter submission, entire obedience. The second test is time. Now, I am going to give you a very homely Scripture, though a very unfashionable one; but, as our Lord Jesus Himself uttered it, it is worthy of respect. All know it, but the worst of it is in these days of popular excitement, most people shut their Bible and take up popular theology instead of scriptural theology. I refer to the parable of the sower. We will look at it in Luke viii. You will observe that in the popular theology there is no room for a verse like verse 13. "They receive the word with joy," they shout "Hallelujah," and sing lovely hymns. "And these have no root." Oh, I wish this were not forgotten; and people will not wait, and time, according to the Lord Jesus Christ, is His test. "These have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." In the next verse we read, "they bring no fruit to perfection," and, if we attentively consider these three classes of unsaved hearers, we may observe that the first throw off their profession quickly, the second go on longer, the third longer still, and it does not necessarily imply that they throw off their profession at all, and so prove themselves unsaved, for the parable of the tares follows in Matthew, and these are the aggregate of the three classes in parable one. They do not throw off that which looked like reality, but there is no communion with God, they forget that it is "he that believeth" and not "he that believed," and they run

after this man and that. Oh; Jesus, Son of God, thou great Shepherd of the sheep, may we know Thee, Lord Jesus! Then what is it that leads real Christians to neglect this warning so much? The desire to see results. And the consequence is that oftentimes there is added to the assembly many who turn out to be unsaved and who give great trouble, and even when they are converted are the most unsatisfactory cases. Time is God's second test, but it is a most unfashionable one. A third test is in growth; growth in the ways of the Lord, growth in the fear of the Lord, growth in the knowledge of His word and obedience to the word. I need hardly prove that from Scripture, so I pass from it as my time has just expired.

I would now just remind you of three tests for ourselves if we are converted. The first is God's word, to take Him at His word. "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent me." He that *believeth*; you can see the force of the present if you take that passage in John vii., "He that believeth on Me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Is that true of every saint? Why not? Why, the very reverse is very often true, and instead of rivers of living water, it is passion, malice, and all sorts of evil things. Rivers of living water do not every moment and in every manner of life flow out. "He that *believeth*": as you are living on the fountain so will the stream flow into and out of you, living water. The second is a risen Christ: if I want to know my salvation I have not got to run after this man or that; a risen Christ, a glorified Christ, is the second proof of my being God's—raised for my justification. And the third is that His spirit beareth witness with my spirit, that I am a child of God. Thus have we the Word of God, a risen Christ, and the Holy Ghost bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God. Oh; beloved, may we be kept from all the popular and spurious theology of the day, and all the new fangled doctrines that are floating in the air, and hold fast to *all* the Word of God, for Christ's sake.—*Notes of an address by W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. H.*

The Church at Smyrna was in poverty, but Christ says of them, "Thou art rich" (Rev. ii. 9).

The Church at Laodicea said, "I am rich;" but Christ says of them, "Thou art poor" (Rev. iii. 17).

THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS.

THE ARK.—Exod. xxv. 10-12.

THE only vessel within the circle of the Holiest was the Ark, with its mercy seat. We find it described in Exodus xxv. 10-12. It was a chest, or coffer, made of shittim wood, overlaid within and without with pure gold. It had a crown, or band of gold around its top, a golden ring on each of its four corners, and two staves of shittim wood, overlaid with gold, where-with it might be borne along the desert. Within this Ark lay the two tables of the law; and, later on, we find there was a golden pot with manna, and the budded rod of Aaron deposited within it.

Here, as elsewhere, we see the God-man in the gold and the shittim wood. The unbroken tables within the Ark remind us of the perfect obedience of Christ. We are at once reminded of the words, true only of Him of whom the Ark is a type—"I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within my heart" (Psa. xl. 8). There, and only there, had God's will its dwelling-place: of Him, and Him alone, can it be said that He loved the Lord His God, with *all* His heart and soul, and strength and mind, and that He did so continuously and constantly. The first two tables were broken beneath the Mount, by Moses, when he saw the people engaged in worshipping the calf of gold. Of what use could such a law have been to them? Its first commandment claimed complete allegiance to God; its second forbade the making of a graven image; and its third, the taking of God's name in vain. While Moses was on the way from God to the people with these commands, what were they doing? They had made a graven image, they were doing homage before it, and declaring it to be the god who had redeemed them. Such was the reception given by man to God's most holy law, and such is man's treatment of it still. His rebellious heart is estranged from God, it is not subject to His law, nor can it be. The tables are broken, and, with fallen man, they can never be renewed. How foolish then for men to think that, by observing fragments of a broken law, they can satisfy God, or justify themselves. Yet how many seek by such a path to reach the Kingdom of God, and how zealously they cling to outward forms, and mingle law and grace.

How strangely it must sound in heaven to hear from congregations, Sunday after Sunday, chanted in a single breath, such words as, "incline our hearts to keep Thy law," followed by, "save us by Thy grace." But salvation is not a complex thing, made up of law and grace, else grace were no more grace. The sinner has broken the law of God, and thus forfeited every claim to righteousness on that ground. Moreover, he is under its curse, and awaiting its punishment. But there was One—different from all others—in whose heart the claims of God had their honoured place, and He was Jesus Christ the Righteous. Perfect in His unswerving fidelity to God, and in His love to men, in Him, the claims of a holy God were fully met, and all His righteous requirements satisfied.

J. R.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

WE want more faith in the living God. Oh, to trust Him with the simplicity that the disciples of old did (see Mark i. 16-20). Christ called and they obeyed; He said "Come," and they came: they forsook and they followed. They forsook all that this world could give—parents, business, all, and followed Him. Oh, to follow Him—not to be taken up with service, outward worship, or anything apart from Him. Those dear disciples had not one thousandth part of the knowledge and privileges that we have, but they simply believed and obeyed. Oh, to be more like them in this respect—

"I would follow Jesus
Anywhere, everywhere,
I will follow on."

That implies keeping close, and having my eyes on Him, imitating,—and whom should we copy besides Him, the meek and lowly One, the obedient One, the holy and spotless One.

But not only were they to follow Him, but we find in chapter iii. 14 that Christ desires to have them *with Him*. Communion, hearing His words, and becoming acquainted with Himself, becoming intimate with Him; and then comes service, "And that He might send them forth to preach." I cannot be fitted for service without having been with Him. How often we have made this mistake, and thought that because we knew something of God's

Word, and were able to speak a little, that we could be of some service to Him. 'Tis in His presence that I learn my insufficiency, my utter helplessness, and also, blessed be God, Himself and His all-sufficiency.

THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST.

A LETTER.

IN the letter of — reference is made to 2 Cor. v. 10, and the perplexing thought presented that all, converted and unconverted, are to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ and to receive according as each has done here below. Were it really so there would be an end of all hope for every one of us. No present peace, no future safety, nothing but despair would remain. Had we then to give account of our sins before His scrutinizing eye, and receive accordingly, would there be any joy in the prospect of meeting our loving Master? But inasmuch as He has loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and that there is no record against His people—no condemnation, all dread is taken away. Nothing awaits us at His tribunal except joy.

But what, then, is the purport of the text? Had our worthy translators rendered the words without putting in any words of their own, it would have read thus: "For we must all appear before the tribunal of Christ that each may receive the things in body, according to that he hath done, whether good or bad."

This is written by the apostle to the saints of God sanctified in Christ Jesus; those who are desiring to please Him, to whom resurrection and glory are promised. These promises are not the portion of the world at large. The unsaved, the unbeliever, is not spoken of in this passage. It refers solely to the Christian. His neighbours think him mad; those of his own kindred speak against the follower of the Nazarene. But whether his course is approved by them or disapproved—whether he be accounted by them mad or sober—it is only fallible human judgment. The master who employs his servants is the person to decide whether the servants have conducted themselves according to his orders. And so, in his first letter to the same parties, the apostle writes: "It is of very small importance that I should be

judged of you, or of man's day—He that judgeth me is the Lord."

Again, he tells us that the work of each Christian shall be tried by fire. If approved, he shall receive a reward. If burnt he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. By the unerring discernment and judgment of Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire will this scrutiny be exercised. Some of us will have no reward: others amply recompensed with living garlands of glory—all children of the Most High: all loved with an everlasting love: all heirs of life and immortality, abiding in the house of our Father. How deeply important for us to learn and attend to His orders, lest we fail of the prizes He deigns to bestow upon His children who please Him.

PHILIPPIANS.

CHAPTER ii.

(Continued from page 46.)

THE rapturous, uncommunicable joy that is the sure portion of those who have denied and thus humbled themselves for others, has never been known by those who have not in meek humility preferred other persons and interests to their own. It needs but one draught from this well to create a thirst for more. Many know not what self-sacrifice means, because they never once denied themselves in the sight of the Lord. There is a self-denial like the Pharisee's prayer, to be seen of men—it is a weariness, and only practised where seen, and to be known by others; as it brings no strength or joy from the Lord, there is no pleasure in it. But he who has learned the way of Christ Jesus would not exchange his present bliss of fellowship with the Lord in humility for all the honours his brethren and the world could heap upon him.

The Apostle John supposed that the world itself could not contain the books that should be written, if all that Jesus did had been recorded (John xxi. 25). Although not recorded on earth they are all recorded in heaven; and perhaps it will be one of our pleasures in heaven, at home, to hear the wonderful things He did when here. And so, my brother, not an act of self-denial, the fruit of the lowly mind in fellow-

ship with the Master, shall pass unrecorded there, although unnoticed or ignored down here. And rich thanks will be given at that day by God Himself to the obedient one, who, like His own well-beloved Son, cared not for His own things, but those of others, whilst here on earth.

Of Epaphroditus we read (verses 25-30) he so cared for and thought upon these saints at Philippi that when he was sick nigh unto death it was to him a cause of grief that they should have heard of his sickness, as he judged this would make them sorrowful, and so cast a shadow on their happiness and joy. And this very sickness had been brought upon him by his strenuous labours on behalf of the Apostle Paul—labour and service that it was the privilege, nay, duty, of the Philippians to have done him. How near this approaches to the Master, who, instead of reproving the disciples, found an excuse for them, saying, “the spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak” (Mark xiv. 38).

It has been sometimes said, when self-denial has been urged, and the Lord Jesus presented as our example, “that was the Lord; it is different with me.” This is but justifying the flesh and hardening the conscience in disobedience. What man *has* done, by the grace of God, man can yet do, by the same grace, “grace is given according to the measure of the

gift of Christ” (Eph. iv. 7). When we can measure and estimate the gift of Christ, then may we begin to limit the “grace of our God, which is exceeding abundant.” In the subject we have been considering, Christ is the standard; but He is, indeed, very gracious, because to encourage us He has set before us in the same place those two men who, like ourselves, were dependent on Him for all, and gained for themselves an imperishable record.

“We, then, as workers together, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain” (2 Cor. vi. 1).
P. H.

AN ANTIDOTE TO FALSE DOCTRINE, ON THE PRINCIPLE OF “PREVENTION BETTER THAN CURE.”—The Bereans “received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether those things (though preached by an apostle) were so. *Therefore* many of them believed . . .” (Acts xvii. 11, 12).

Will you be a Berean, searching—*i.e.*, examining, as in a court of justice—(Luke xxiii. 14) every thing you hear, no matter by whom spoken, by the standard of the Word? (Isa. viii. 20).

Oftentimes SELFISHNESS makes LONG prayers, whilst LOVE makes SHORT prayers, that it may continue LONGER in PRAISE.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to “prove all things,” and “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender

QUESTION NO. CLXVI.

What is the “loss” which saints will suffer at the judgment-seat of Christ? (1 Cor. iii. 15.)

REPLY.

That it is not the loss of our soul’s salvation is evident, for in 1 Cor. iii. 15 it adds, “but he himself shall be saved.”

He who lives with the kingdom of God and its coming glories full in view (1 Thess. ii. 12) and who is, whilst here on earth, labouring, running, fighting, with a view to the “crowning day,” the day of glorious rewards, will best understand the meaning of the “loss” here referred to.

The school-boy before whose mind, through session after session of his school life, has been the ultimate obtaining of “the gold medal” and the honour of being “dux” of the whole school, understands what it means to *lose the reward*.

This may serve to illustrate the meaning of Rev. iii. 11, “let no man take thy crown,” and 2 John 8, “that we receive a full reward.” The honours in David’s kingdom were bestowed upon those who had been valiant for him and his cause in the day of his rejection. So will it be in the kingdom of Christ—the honours of His reign will be bestowed on those who have been sharers of His sufferings, and this in proportion to their loyalty to His NAME and His WORD (see Rev. iii. 8).

QUESTION No. CLXVII.

Is it right for God's children to put their farms into the Land Courts (Ireland), and go to the law, seeking reduction of rent?

REPLY.

The prohibition against "brother going to law with brother" (1 Cor. vi. 1-8) applies in a case where, both being Christians, the only Scriptural appeal is to those in the Church whom God has endowed with wisdom. To the decision of such both parties ought to be subject. The Christian is rather to "suffer himself to be defrauded" than so expose the shame of the family of God to the world (see 1 Cor. vi. 7). But when either landlord or tenant is not a believer, appeal to those within the assembly is impossible. The Government under whose rule our lot is cast has appointed a court for the equitable settlement of such questions. We believe this to be one of the very purposes which God has in view in ordaining government in the earth. The judge is "the minister of God to thee for good" (see Rom. xiii. 4, &c.).

The rent of a farm is a business contract, which at one time might be right and moderate, and at another time unrighteous or exorbitant. The court is the officially appointed arbitrator, and both parties being bound to abide by the decision of the court, there is at once a settlement of the dispute, which ought to do away with all bitterness or animosity.

QUESTION No. CLXVIII.

Does Matt. xviii. 17 mean that the offending one is to be "as an heathen," &c., to the one who he has offended only, or does it include the whole Church? In January No. of "NORTHERN WITNESS" you say, "Let him be to them."

REPLY.

The word "them," in January No. of *Northern Witness*, was a printer's error, which we regret passed unobserved in proof.

But in reply to the above question, it is only necessary to refer to the following verse, "Whatsoever ye shall bind," &c.

The binding and loosing cannot be taken to refer to anything but the receiving into or putting away from an assembly of God on earth; and the teaching of Scripture throughout is that such ought ever to be the act of the whole assembly.

Such an act, solemnly performed, after such steps have been taken as Scripture appoints, and upon

grounds laid down in the Word of God, has the sanction of God Himself. It may be only "two or three" who thus subject themselves to God and His Word, and own the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ in their midst; but the smallness of the gathering, or the weakness and confusion around, in no way affects our responsibility to act in conformity with the Divine instructions, and in no way detracts from the validity of the action, if it be according to the Word and in faith.

QUESTION No. CLXIX.

How are we to understand John vii. 39: "The Holy Ghost was not yet given," while, previous to this, certain things were revealed to Simeon by the Holy Ghost, and others were "filled" with Him? (Luke ii. 25-27, &c.)

REPLY.

From the beginning the Spirit of God has been the sole agent in all the operations of God (see Gen. i. 2, vi. 3, &c.). No life was ever communicated, no grace was ever imparted, no ministry was ever effectual, except by the Holy Spirit of God.

But, whilst this is abundantly taught in Scripture, we are also shown that there is a sense in which the Holy Spirit was to "come" after the ascension of the Lord Jesus to the Father, in which He had never before come. It is so definitely put by the Lord in John xvi. 7, that there can be no more disputing the "coming" of the Holy Ghost, than the "departing" of the Lord Jesus. Prior to Pentecost the Holy Spirit is spoken of as "coming upon," "filling," operating in various ways in and through the people of God, and others as well, such as Saul, Balaam, Caiaphas, &c., but not as "dwelling" or "abiding." Then, the "coming upon," or "filling," was rather that of a heavenly visitor than an abiding friend.

His *abiding* is first spoken of in connection with the Lord Himself (John i. 32). Then He speaks of it as the portion of those who believe in Him after His being glorified (John xiv. 16). Also, as abiding "in," not merely "with" or "on" (see ver. 17).

Again, not until after Pentecost does the Holy Spirit become the portion of *all believers*. Formerly a prophet or king was specially gifted in a temporary way. Now, all who are quickened by the Spirit are also baptized by that Spirit into one body, and indwelt by the Spirit (see 1 Cor. xii. 13, vi. 19).

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY J. R. C.

CHAPTER VII.

NOW concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto Me." Notice these words, for they give character to the whole chapter.

This chapter was specially written in answer to questions that the Corinthian believers wanted light upon from the Lord. They wrote to the apostle that they might know the mind of the Lord upon the subject of marriage. In reading this chapter we should bear in mind that, although Corinth was one of the most cultivated and highly civilized cities on the face of the earth, yet their moral condition was very low. The marriage contract seemed to have no power, and was totally disregarded. The gospel comes in, not to set aside the order of nature, but to restore every natural relationship to its proper place and order. The grace of God that hath brought salvation has also brought us the purest, holiest, and most exalted instructions regarding every natural relationship. It is through the gospel—through what is called Christianity—through the truth of God, as we have it in the New Testament Scriptures, that, in those countries where the Word of God is taught and regarded with some degree of reverence, marriage is upheld, and the rights of all protected and preserved. The woman, instead of being a slave, is put in her true place as the man's equal and companion. The world is greatly benefitted by the doctrines of Christianity, although it rejects Christ.

"It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband," verses 1, 2. Put alongside that a few verses in 1 Tim. iv. 1-4: "Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry," &c. Satan has his spirits in the world, and his doctrines come in to undermine and corrupt the doctrines of Christianity. Christ's authority and teaching is superseded by the doctrines of devils, and every doctrine brought in among the

saints that is not found in the Scriptures is a doctrine of the devil—it comes from Satan. "Speaking lies in hypocrisy," speaking what is opposite to God's truth. "Having their conscience seared with a hot iron," *i.e.*, they are past feeling. "Forbidding to marry." Now, this unquestionably points to the Roman Catholic doctrine of the celibacy of the priesthood, as if it were a higher and holier state to be unmarried than to be married. The Scripture does not say that one state is holier than another; on the contrary, we read in Heb. xiii. 4, "Marriage is honourable in all." The first of the Lord's miracles was performed at a marriage feast.

Nevertheless, the apostle states here decidedly that it is good for a man to be unmarried. Mark how wise are all God's instructions. He recognises differences of constitution between one and another. It was no snare to the apostle to remain unmarried, he was a freeman, and could go alone to the ends of the earth happy in the Lord. There are others that could not do this, being differently constituted. Paul walked in a higher path than most, and few were constituted to follow in it. Another man might be qualified by God to bring up in a godly way a large family. The apostle recognises such natural differences, and allows liberty for each to occupy his proper sphere. I remember once walking along some cliffs by the sea-shore. I was accompanied by some who were accustomed to go along these cliffs every day. I said to one, "I don't much like this, I feel my knees shaky." He said, "Get out of this, then." I soon saw the wisdom of this. In all probability I would have become giddy as well as shaky. I felt that I was not fitted to walk where he could walk unharmed. Thus one man differs from another. One can go if the Lord calls him alone without companionship, and another requires company. The Lord recognises this difference. While He says that it is good for a man to remain unmarried, yet it is added, "every man hath his proper gift of God." He may remain single for the Lord, or marry in the Lord.

Verse 8—"I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I." This shows us that the apostle was unmarried.

Verses 10-12—"And unto the married I command, Yet not I, but the Lord, let not the wife depart from her husband; but, and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let

not the husband put away his wife. But to the rest speak I, not the Lord." The apostle in some places says, "not I, but the Lord," and in other places, "the Lord, not I." Some have taken these expressions to show that all Scripture is not inspired. But this has nothing to do with inspiration. All that he writes is inspired. Paul is the instrument that the Holy Ghost used to make known the mind of God. The Apostle Paul says of a number of things, "I have received this from the Lord"—certain instructions and commandments he received from the ascended Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Such as we find in 1 Cor. xi. 23—"I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." This is something more than inspiration; also in 1 Thess. iv. 15. This is not only inspiration, but implies a direct personal communication from the Lord Jesus to himself. We must be very much on our guard as to this modern doctrine of Satan that all Scripture is not inspired.

Verse 10—"Yet not I, but the Lord."

Verse 12—"But to the rest speak I, not the Lord." He got the one from the Lord, but he gives the other as a man enlightened by the Holy Ghost to know what the mind of the Lord is. Whilst he says in one place "the Lord says this," and, in another, "I say it, not the Lord," yet both are equally inspired, the difference being that in the one he writes as guided by the Holy Ghost, and, in the other, that which was received from the lips of the risen Lord Jesus.

This passage is evidently written in answer to questions sent to the apostle concerning the case of a converted husband whose wife remains unconverted, or the converted wife and the unconverted husband. It was very natural that they should have a difficulty upon this point because of the teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures. Jehovah was very plain as to His people Israel not making marriages with the idolatrous nations (see Deut. vii. 1-6).

It was a natural thing that these young converts from heathen idolatry brought newly to the knowledge of the Lord, having had the Scriptures read to them by Jewish converts or others, should say, "If God did not allow His people Israel to marry with idolaters because they would turn their hearts from the Lord, then if I continue with my unconverted husband, or if I remain with my unconverted wife, he or she will turn away my heart from the Lord."

Turn to Ezra x. Ezra was a man of God, and

when he heard that the people of Israel, whom God had chosen to be a peculiar people, had gone and married idolaters, he regarded it as a fearful calamity. How many of God's children go and marry the unconverted and think little about it? And instead of their brethren humbling themselves before God about it, they seem quite unexercised and indifferent.

Ezra x., verse 1—"Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children, for the people wept sore." The man of God wept and the people wept. If any of us are to be used by the Lord, then let us know that He uses those who are weeping before Him about the sins of His people. He will not use in judgment those who are stout-hearted themselves. It is the weeping elders that have a weeping congregation gathered around them. Stout-hearted elders don't get weepers after them. If we had more weeping elders we would have more weeping congregations. There's hope for a man when we see him weeping for his sins. It is a sign that he is being humbled, and God will yet bless him. "Shechaniah . . . said unto Ezra, we have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and those that tremble at the commandment of our God, and let it be done according to the law" (v.v. 2-5). Not only were they not to marry strangers, but, after they had married, they were to put away all such wives, and not the wives only, but also the children born of them.

Turn to Nehemiah xiii. 23-25. "In these days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab; and their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and bade them swear by God saying, ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves."

There was a man acting for God. I don't say that this is the way we are called to act, nor is it the way

that the apostle acted. It was spiritual power he exercised, not physical force. Nevertheless God would have us show holy indignation against all sin. He would have His people to be a holy, separate people now as then.

In view of such Old Testament Scriptures as these, the question would arise in the minds of these Corinthian believers, "Am I to put away my wife?" "Am I to separate from my husband and children?" The apostle, in answer to this, gives the mind of the Lord: "Let not the wife depart from her husband; but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband put away his wife" (verses 10, 11). Here is the plain statement of Scripture, that the believing wife is not to depart from her husband. But if the idolatrous husband says he won't have her, what is she to do? Is she to leave him and marry some one else? That would close the door against the husband for ever. The Lord would rather keep her waiting continually before Him for his salvation, so that, when converted, the way would be open for their being happily reunited.

Therefore, it is not for the Christian to separate, but to show how she can suffer and bear, and thus to win the unsaved husband, as we read in 1 Peter iii. 1, "Likewise ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands, that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives." That does not mean without the word of God. It ought to be, "that if any obey not the word they also may *without speech*," that is, without the woman saying anything, "be won by the behaviour of the wife." There is nothing so likely to be used by God in the salvation of the unconverted husband as the godly life of his wife. Then let Christian wives who have unsaved husbands take encouragement and bear patiently, and wait in faith for the Lord to save.

THE NAZARITE.

NUMBERS VI.



HAD better make a preliminary remark or two. The word "Nazarite" means "a separated man," and it is so explained in the following verses. And the word "separate" (in verse 2, &c.) and the word "conse-

crate," as in verse 12, are the same Hebrew word—*Nazar*.

In looking down this chapter with reference to God's instructions about the Nazarite, we shall find three double truths. The first double truth is this: what the Nazarite was to be separated from, and what was his power to obey. If you look down the chapter you will find he was to separate himself from three things, or rather, I might say, there were three things which were to characterise his Nazariteship—separation from wine; to let no razor come upon his head but to let the hair of his head grow; and thirdly, to come at no dead body. These are evidently all and each of them symbolic. Wine is the emblem of mirth and joy. If we turn to Psa. civ. we find it written, "wine that maketh glad the heart of man." And if we look at Eccles. x. 19 we find, "wine maketh merry." This, then, is the first: the Nazarite, the separated man, is to separate himself from merriment. It is not God's wish to deny us any good thing, He created all things for us richly to enjoy; but the earth has cast out *Him*, that is a great fact. Sometimes when I hear of friends dying I think to myself, what really is the relation of the unseen to the seen world? And I say that the best way of finding the answer is to think of Him who came into this world, its Creator, and was cast out crucified and slain, and is now on the throne of God. Can I love the world, enjoy the world, love the things of the world that repudiated Him? I cannot do it. In matters of detail we must judge for ourselves, we are left to do it. Thus in 1 Cor. vii. 30, &c., I read these words, "And they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not, and they that use this world as not abusing it," or, as we have it more correctly in the margin of the revised version, "as not using it to the full." But how far we do use it, how far we do enjoy, anything in this world, is a matter between Him and our souls. But the Nazarite was to deny himself wine, or earthly joy, because (as we shall see just now) he was to find his joy in God.

Next, he was to let no razor come upon his head, or, in other words, to let the hair of his head grow. Now long hair, as we are told in 1 Cor. xi., is a symbol of subjection. Thus the woman is enjoined to have her hair long as a token of subjection to her husband. The Nazarite was to let his hair grow as a symbol that he had taken the place of

distinct, deliberate, entire subjection (as we shall see directly) to an unseen One. You know I have sometimes remarked that the Lord Jesus should have our wills completely at His disposal so as to, as it were, turn them round His fingers. And what is more flexible than hair? And the flexibility of the hair is a symbol of the subjection of our wills to Christ.

Thirdly, he was to come at no dead body. Separation from death. Concerning that again we are told in 2 Cor. vi. as to its application. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God. Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing," that is, death; that unclean thing is death, and the sign of death is corruption. The Nazarite was to be separate from death.

Now these three very solemn vows were what every Nazarite took upon himself, (or, as in the case of a Nazarite such as Samson) was born unto.

Look at the second part of the double truth here, the power that the Nazarite had in order to obey. God never gives anyone a command without giving power to obey. The word "I cannot" ought not to be found in a Christian's dictionary, "I shall not" is unfortunately common, but "I cannot" has no business to be there. "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." Now look at the power to obey, what was it? Read verse 2, "When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves *unto the Lord.*" Again verse 5, "until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself *unto the Lord;*" and verse 6, "all the days that he separateth himself *unto the Lord;*" and verse 7, "because the consecration of his God is upon his head;" and verse 8, "all the days of his separation he is holy unto the Lord;" so also in verse 12. See, then, there was the power of separation. An invisible Being—a real Being, but it was in His presence he made himself and kept himself a separated man. Let me quote a few passages further to enforce this. "Walk before Me, and be thou perfect," said God unto Abraham. So

of Moses it is said "he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." There is power in having to do with Him. If the world would enchant our souls and allure us, then His smile will counteract its influence. If the flesh suggests "disobey this once," a glance from His eye will defeat it. If tempted to mingle with death, the remembrance that we are under His eye will be again our power of separation. As I read these verses it seems to be as if this separation were in one sense a voluntary thing, as if it were quite left to the soul to settle with the Lord as to whether he would be a separated man or not. Read verse 2 again and you will see it is so. Act as you like, only let it be under His eye. If you can do this or that under His eye, do it; if you can do it intelligently under His eye, do it. I think I will here read you an extract. When Matthew Henry, the great commentator, was dying, a friend was at his bedside, and he used these words to him; said he, "You have been accustomed to take note of the sayings of dying men, this is mine: a life spent in the service of God and in communion with Him is the most comfortable and happy life that anyone can live in this world." Let us never forget this. In one sense the separation was enforced, in another it was voluntary. If we use this world, not to use it to the full. And is there not much power? Think what there is in the future! To see God, God unveiled, God in all His glory, in all his unveiled beauty. Is the anticipation of that without power now? What say you? And to be with Him for ever in His immediate presence, is there no power in the anticipation of that? Ah, but it is not anticipation quite, we have the foretaste of these things now. Yes, he sees us, and we see Him, and our eyes meet; there is our power. Samson got caught in the meshes of the world by Delilah, for Delilah represents the world, and she cut off his hair. He betrayed his secret. A Christian's secret is God Himself. And so it was with Samson, the presence of God with him, which he betrayed: then the presence of God, which was his power, was lost to him for a time. "And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him." It is a terrible state of soul that, when a soul can go on in sin and not be conscious of the backsliding condition into which it has sunk. "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" (2 Peter i. 9). Here,

then, is the first double truth—separation from the mirth of this world, from the unsubject will, and from death; and the power, Himself who said, “Walk before Me.”

We pass now to the second. If we look at verse 9 of our chapter we read thus, “And if any man die very suddenly by him, and he hath defiled the head of his consecration, then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing, on the seventh day shall he shave it,” and so continued in verses 10-12. There is Christ. Christ came to do the will of God, separated Himself to do God’s will. “Holy, harmless, undefiled; and separate from sinners,” though freely mingling with them. Yet we see that He ever served God in His obedience. Turn to Psa. xl. 9, 10. “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation” (*i.e.*, Israel). “I have not hid Thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation: I have not concealed Thy loving-kindness and Thy truth from the great congregation.” But in the course of working out the will of God our sins fastened themselves on Him. Read on in the same Psalm and see. “Withhold not Thou Thy tender mercies from me, O Lord: let Thy loving-kindness and Thy truth continually preserve me. For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up.” “*Mine* iniquities,” not His own personally, but because laid upon Him. That, I believe, is the meaning of these words which say in verse 12, “but the days which were before shall be lost, because His separation was defiled.” He became, through infinite grace, connected with our sins, our sins were laid upon Him and He sunk into the dust of death. Israel should have been Nazarites to God, but they got mixed up with the nations, and Christ took up that place. But lo, in resurrection, He begins His Nazariteship over again, for see, “on the *eighth day* He shall bring,” &c., verse 10, and the “*eighth day*” points to resurrection. In seven days’ work, as it were, of doing God’s will, was His Nazariteship carried on, and He died. But now, in resurrection, is He again up there the Nazarite. I would remind you of those words in Matthew ii. 23, “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.” Now there is no place in any of the prophets where these words occur. Two or three different interpretations are given of this. I believe all are

true. One is, that it refers to that prophecy, “Behold a man whose name is *The Branch*”—*netsar*. The second is, that it refers to the fact that he should be poor, despised, and of no account here, not drawing His joys from earth—and He did not; and attention is called to the word “prophets” being in the plural, and that no particular one is intended. And thirdly, it is believed there may be a reference to His being the Nazarite, looking at the very lowly place with which He associated Himself, for it was the most lowly city in all Galilee, the lowliest province of the lowliest country in the world; but up there He still says, “I am Jesus of Nazareth” (see Acts xxii. 8). He still keeps His Nazariteship. But I will quote another Scripture, which will present to you the double truth. “For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” (John xvii. 19). And again, “Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Heb. ii. 11). He has taken the separated position again in resurrection, and now is associating with Himself those that believe on Him through the word of the apostles, through the truth,—with Him in resurrection glory, and thus is He sanctifying us. It is in this way we become saints. If we look at Rom. i. it says in verse 7, “To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, *called saints*” (leave out the words “to be”), that is, “saints by calling.” God and Christ have called us. In one sense we are born, and so Nazarites, like Samson, and are thus saints; in another sense it is a voluntary matter, and, by accepting God’s call, we become Nazarites or saints, for they are the same in meaning—a saint is a holy, a separated person. But it is not a bit of good being separated, except as we are separated to God. What is the good of becoming a Good Templar, or merely to belong to a society? But to be separated to God there is joy in it now, there is power in it now, there is something real, abiding, eternal in it now. “Saints by calling,” and you have heard His call, and thus are you born, and you heard and you gladly obey, and God shows you by these three specifications how voluntary is your action, and you must judge for yourself how far you allow yourself in the use of the things of this world under His eye and how far not. The case of Christ and His saints is the second double truth. The loss of His Nazariteship through death, but beginning it

again upon the ground of the sacrifice completed, of the blood shed. Read verse 11 and you will see, in the ground of the blood of the offering; thus is He again a Nazarite in resurrection, and we are partakers of the heavenly calling—we are Nazarites. God does not begrudge you the things that he has made, He only says they are defiled, marred with sin, let them go and I will give you something better, specially Myself, and that is your power to let go.

And now the third double truth. "And this is the law of the Nazarite, when the days of his separation are fulfilled." Ah! beloved friends, it will be very beautiful when the days of our separation are fulfilled. I must confess I sometimes feel wearied of service and work, and a longing for rest. "And this is the law of the Nazarite when the days of his separation are fulfilled." Ah, when! Certainly they will be when the Lord comes, for then will He separate us bodily into His presence. Or it may be before, by death. And do you observe how He enters heaven? If you look down the verses from 14 to 17 you will find mention of *all* the offerings, every one; He enters heaven according to the full value of the blood of Christ, according to the entirety of God's judgment of the work of Christ. Now is not that a good way to enter heaven? It is beautiful! Nazariteship is not a normal thing, but abnormal. It is not that God wants it so, and that it suits God's heart. They are beautiful things by which you are surrounded, but they are defiled, so He would say to us, "until My time comes, be content with Me and with My smile, and do not be a partaker of the world's joy; be implicitly obedient, and avoid contact with death." Yet it is very striking that our obedience will crop up there as well. It says in verse 18, "And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings." The peace offering is the emblem of communion particularly, and as for that long hair, he was to put it under the peace offering. When we have entered heaven upon the credit of the blood of Jesus, according to its full value there, God will look at our obedience; He will look as to how we grieved the Spirit or walked in the Spirit, how we were led of the flesh or of the Spirit, giving way to the one influence or the other. You see that is a very striking thing. Everything comes

up there, not only the full value of Christ's offering, but also our obedience too. And see again here, too; God does not begrudge us anything, because it says in verse 20, "and after that the Nazarite may drink wine." Christ will drink it new with us in His Father's kingdom. He will make us to sit down to meat, and come forth and serve us. And even in one passage (Judges ix. 13) it says, "wine which cheereth God and man." Christ will see of the travail of his soul and will be satisfied; and we shall be with Him, and shall be satisfied too, and shall rejoice too. And when God sees Christ satisfied, and us satisfied, God will rejoice, and there will be the "wine which cheereth God and man," the true joy of heaven. Hence I read of the drink offering, which elsewhere we learn to be "half a hin of wine."

Then see the close of this third double truth—the full revelation of the name of God. "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them." Or, as it is in the New Testament, the Father's love, Christ's grace in becoming poor that we might become rich, and the Holy Ghost's communion giving us to know God's love. We enter into these things in measure now, but what will the fruition be?

"He's gone! The Saviour's work on earth,
His task of love is o'er;
And lo! this dreary desert knows
His gracious steps no more.

Oh! 'twas a waste to Him indeed,
No rest on earth He knew;
No joy from its unhallowed springs
His sorrowing spirit drew.

He's gone; and shall our truant feet
And ling'ring hearts delay,
In a dark world, that cast His love
Like worthless dross away?

Hopeless of joy in aught below
We only long to soar,
The fulness of His love to feel,
And lose His smile no more,"

Notes of addresses by W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. H.

When prayer leads the van, in due time deliverance brings up the rear.

Notes of Addresses given at the Glasgow
Fast-day Meetings, April 2nd to 4th.

(Continued from page 69.)



R. H. Groves.—I wish to speak for a little on the various fellowships brought before us in the Word of God. I will consider with you just a few of them. Turn with me to the 1st Epistle of John. There are three fellowships mentioned in the first chapter.

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write unto you that your joy may be full” (1 John i. 1-4). The power for fellowship with God, fellowship with the Father, the Son and fellow-saints, results from the manifestation of the Divine eternal life. Let us take this for granted—that we shall never know fellowship with God, with Christ, nor His people, but as that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested while on earth, is also manifested to and in us. All the difficulties and perplexities that surround us in our Church fellowship, and with God and Christ, result from the feeble grasp that we have of that eternal life that was with the Father, and which has been manifested. It seems oftentimes as if we thought that we could get into fellowship as into a theory—as if we could get into fellowship with God without that which constitutes fellowship, which is *oneness*. Just in proportion as our hearts are in sympathy with God shall we have fellowship with Him. We often wonder that fellowship is so hard to realize, but the reason it is so is, that we allow our hearts to wander away after a thousand things instead of God. Fellowship is one of those precious words that we have frequently brought before us in the Scriptures; sometimes translated communion, partership, &c. We want to know a little more of the partership that we have in God, in Christ, and in one another. How is this to be realized in the soul? By the manifestation of

that Divine life which was with the Father being manifested toward us and in us. Christ is the centre of all fellowship; it springs from and revolves around Him.

1 Cor. x. 16: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?” &c.

Turn with me to Leviticus, where we read of the Peace offering. The Lord Jesus Himself is the Peace offering, because He is the great centre of fellowship between the soul and God. It is just as our souls get under the mighty influence of the cross of Christ that we get drawn one to another. It is as the mighty love of Christ in its fulness is revealed to our souls that we find that we have common sympathies and hopes—we have all things in common with God, Christ, and one another. The Lord Jesus says to us: “Mine are thine, and thine are Mine” (John xvii. 10.)

Why is fellowship so hard? Because love is so little manifested. When the power of eternal life is in the soul, we know then that fellowship is no up-hill work. It is impossible to climb up into fellowship. We must just glide into it by the mighty outpourings of God into our souls. There is nothing we need so much in these days of divisions as being drawn closer and closer to the Christ of Calvary.

The Peace offering is that which unfolds what we have in common in Christ Jesus. There are three parties spoken of in connection with the Peace offering—God, the priest, and the offerer. We read in Leviticus 3rd chapter that certain portions of the Peace offering were laid upon the burnt offering altar. 11th verse: “And the priest shall burn it upon the altar: it is the food of the offering made by fire unto the Lord.” In the Old Testament eating is always accompanied with the idea of fellowship.

The next party who had to do with the Peace offering was the priest (vii. 14, 15).

The sons of Aaron, also, had a share in the Peace offering. God has His part, also the high priest, and the sons of Aaron, as worshippers gathered around the altar, all having fellowship in the Peace offering.

Thus you have the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ as the Great High Priest, and the whole family of God in their priestly character, as worshippers all having a common interest in the Peace offering—Christ crucified.

God wants to stir up these hearts of ours that we may feel more this reciprocity of interest, through the grace of God, concerning Christ's glory and kingdom. The Lord's children have one common object in view, and thus we are brought to the next point in this line of connection.

All our difficulties arise from our hearts not being right with God, and not being brought into the real joy of that fellowship which God would have us realize with Himself and one another as fellow-believers.

Turn now to John xvii. 11: "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one as we are." What we have here is fellowship in the relationship of a common Father, the One whom we all call "Abba, Father." That at once brings us into relationship with one another. All bound by a common tie—that blessed Fatherhood of our God that rests upon us all who are born again by the Spirit of God. As our blessed Lord taught His disciples first of all to say, "Our Father." That word "our" seems to bind us all together in that blessed eternal fellowship into which we, as His children, are brought.

You will notice that is the very point that the apostle John in his epistle so beautifully singles out as the portion of the babes. "I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father." I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake." He begins with that which is perfect—that which nothing can be taken from or added to; our relationship to God in Christ through the atonement. This we hold in common with every one born of God. The apostle Paul, who was so deeply taught in the mystery of the Gospel, and to whom the Lord revealed so much of His will, held it in common with the weakest and youngest babe in the family of God, who was as much a child of God as the great apostle.

I have been delighted with that expression of the apostle Paul (2 Cor. i. 21): "Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ." He does not say, "He that stablisheth you, faulty Corinthians, with us the great apostles," but "us with you." He puts the Church of God—every member of Christ's body—in the place of power and security. All alike secure and safe in the keeping of Christ. This fellowship we have in common with every redeemed

child of God. The ground of our fellowship is the atonement of Christ; and the power in which this fellowship is maintained and exercised is the Spirit of God, by which we say, "Abba, Father." This is the door of fellowship through which every child of God enters. God wants us to realise this more completely and fully day by day. It is narrow in a sense—"strait is the gate, and narrow is the way." We want to bring something in with us. We come into it as babes born of God. Let us ever remember that the work of Christ is absolute, complete, and perfect. What we have in Christ we have in common; and it is this that God wants us to know.

17th verse: "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth." This is a stage further. It is just as if the apostle would give us the door at the beginning and the door at the end. The door at the end is union in the glory—that is absolute, complete, and perfect. Now what lies meanwhile between is this mighty work—God, the Holy Ghost, leading from the door through which we enter in to the door of eternal glory, which we shall enter by and by. The one is based on the Father's name, the will of God, and the gift of Christ. That which we know now as we are passing onward is the operation of the Spirit of God, and that is not absolute. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." Let us take heed to this word of the Lord. Why is it that we don't all see and understand the truth of God alike? We have got the same Scriptures, the same God, the same Christ, the same Holy Ghost. Whence then, the differences amongst God's children concerning His Word? Nothing but this, the grieving of the Spirit of God within us hinders the development of the Divine life and the realization of the perfect will of God.

He that walks closest to Christ will find the path narrowest of all. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way," as we are led on in the pathway of self-denial and crucifixion—trampling sin in the dust by the power of the Spirit of the living God.

If we want to know much of God and Christ, and the consolations of the Holy Ghost, then let us seek to realize what David uttered: "O how I love Thy law!" (Psa. cxix. 97). He does not say, "O how I love Thy promises." Many of the children of God read their Bible to find out the promises. The promises of God run after us while we run in the way of

God's commandments. The promises of God are the children's footmen—look after the precepts and the promises will look after you. Every precept is a fortune to every child of God.

The second point of union that we find in this 17th of John we have in verses 17-21: "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth, . . . that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in us."

What God wants here is a separate people. If saints and brethren are not so separate as they ought to be, let us seek of God that in the power of a joyful separation we may win their souls into fellowship with ours. I was very much struck in reading the 32nd chapter of Exodus the other day, to Moses, that blessed man of God, when he was up in the mount with God, at the time of Israel's apostacy in the matter of the golden calf, the Lord said, "Let Me alone, that My wrath . . . may consume them." When Moses came down from the mount He spake hard words to the people, but when he was up in the mount with God he interceded for them. He said, "Lord, they are Thy people; Thou hast brought them forth out of Egypt." He reminded Him of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and he prevailed. There is a striking contrast between Elijah and Moses. Elijah made intercession against Israel, but Moses interceded for them.

If we have crooked and worldly saints to deal with, don't let us think that we can put them right by hard words; but may we be so living in the presence of God that our faces will shine with the joy of the Lord, and God will, by His grace in us, attract them from their worldly ways. Worldliness does not pay; conformity to its ways does not pay. Nothing but obedience to God will pay. Though you be crowned with a crown of thorns, every thorn will be a diamond, and the crown will be a crown of glory.

Moses said to the Lord, "If Thy presence go not with me carry us not up hence." "We would rather remain here in the desert with Thee than go up to the land without Thee."

It is our communion with God that surrounds us with a halo of spiritual life and joy by which the very world and saints around can see that we have Christ with us.

If you met a man on the street who had just got a fortune, I am sure his face would shine. As children

of God we have infinitely more than £10,000 a year. Does the world see how rich we are, and how we are enjoying the grace of God? I think you will agree with me when I say that those who know most of the grace of God are the most tender with those who don't see with them. "We shall be separated from all people because Thou goest with us." The path of truth is the separate path; but don't let God's children quarrel with those who don't see the measure of separation that they see. Let us bask in the sunshine of that blessed fellowship. As God shines upon us, may we so reflect the light that it may attract others to it. "Come thou with us and we will do thee good, for the Lord has spoken good concerning Israel."

Look again at the 17th of John. First we have got the oneness in our common relationship with the Father, secured to us through the atonement; then, secondly, in connection with the truth, the Spirit and the Word of God; now comes the third point of unity, "the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them, that they may be one." This is the point that lies beyond us yet. There is the point behind us, which is perfect, complete, and absolute. There is the point of our present journey and pilgrimage while the Spirit is with us, seeking to lead us into the deepest, fullest, and most complete revelation of the Father and the Son to our souls.

The Spirit is seeking for ungrieved fellowship, and it can only be attained by implicit obedience. I do thank God for His children who see the path before them very narrow, and are content in the joy of the Holy Ghost to walk in it. There is an opposite spirit seen in many of God's children—the joy of the narrow path has gone, and its brightness is dimmed; therefore they fail to attract others into the narrow path with them.

I find in the epistle to the Ephesians the same three points that we have seen in the 17th of John. The early part of the epistle to the Ephesians leads us into the absolute nearness of our standing in Christ, where there is no measure, but where all is infinite, and where this infinite greatness belongs to every child of God, summed up in that word, "in Christ Jesus." When we come to the 4th chapter we find the same line of things that we get in these words, "sanctify them through Thy truth." Here you find diversity, hence the need of the continued

exercise of forbearance with one another. God has so appointed in His infinite wisdom that the Holy Ghost is to guide us, against and in opposition to, this flesh that we shall carry about with us to the very end of our pilgrimage. Before we enter the gate of glory it will be gone for ever. The mighty reality of the work of Christ for us only becomes real to our souls as in the power of the Holy Ghost we are led into it.

God would reveal Himself—His glory and greatness—to His people, but this cannot be done unless they are walking in subjection to His Spirit and Word.

“With all lowliness and meekness.” Mark these words, for they have to do with our life-long history, as by the guidance of God, the Holy Ghost, we are being led onward and onward to the eternal glory. “Till we all come into the unity.” Until we all come to the realization of that for which, and toward which, the faith upon which we rest points forward, viz., conformity to Christ. That is the glory which lies beyond us. It is very remarkable that those sixteen verses of this chapter have to do with the work of the saints of God in the Church, showing what great importance the Spirit of God attaches to it.

If these things are to be real to our individual souls, it will only be as we get near to the cross of Christ. The Lord enable us to cultivate fellowship more with the Father and the Son. Then fellowship with the saints will be more realized and blessed. We shall fall into it, as a matter of course, and shall know more of its joy. Let us pray the Lord unitedly to make us patient one with the other, the weak with the strong and the strong with the weak; and that we may be helped of Him to bear one another's burdens and infirmities; and God will reward us for it by and by.

It is an easier thing to kick a brother out of an assembly than to bear the burden of his weaknesses, foolishness, and sins. God holds us responsible for measuring out to one another what He is meting out to us. Many a child of God is withered in his spiritual life because he has dealt hardly with his brethren. Let us be imitators of God as dear children. When you feel disposed to deal hardly with a brother in Christ, first go down upon your knees before God and ask Him to open up to your soul the perverseness and self-will and sinfulness of the last forty or sixty years of your own life that

God in His mercy has borne with in patience and love, but which He has also forgiven. O may we learn to come before God with broken hearts, humbled by a deep sense of His grace toward us! Is it not a wonder that God has not cast us out long ago? The Lord give us grace to measure to one another what He has so liberally measured out to us.

THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS

THE MERCY SEAT.—Exod. xxv. 17-22.



THE lid of the Ark was made of pure gold, with cherubims of gold on its ends, and is called the mercy seat. The wings of the cherubim overshadowed the Ark, and their faces looked to each other toward the mercy seat. The word for mercy seat signifies “to atone, or cover,” and in the New Testament it is rendered “propitiation” (see Rom. iii. 25). God's mercy can only be known in Christ, and on the ground of atonement. If it is to be extended to sinners, it must be in consistency with God's holiness, and if grace is to take its place upon the throne, it must reign in righteousness. But how is this to be? The only way possible is on the ground of atonement. And to this the cross of Christ is the all-sufficient answer. There the apparently irreconcilable attributes of God are all harmonised, and blended in their divine perfection and beauty. There “mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other” (Psa. lxxxv. 10). There “mercy rejoices against judgment” (James ii. 13).

On the great day of atonement—Israel's annual cleansing from sin—Aaron the priest, robed in linen garments, entered within the vail, with the blood of a sin-offering. This was sprinkled on the mercy seat once, and before it, seven times. *Once* was enough for the eye of Jehovah, but seven times—the perfect number—for the eye of the worshipper. We need to be reminded often of the perfectness of the atonement of Christ, but in the estimate of God it is ever the same. The importance of this act cannot be over-estimated. It was not a question of some single act of transgression: that would have been settled at the altar in the court: but the question uppermost on the day of atonement was—“How can a holy God continue to dwell in the midst of a sinful and failing people? How can His throne be established in

righteousness in their midst?" The answer was found in the sprinkled blood. It was there, on the blood-stained mercy seat, where the shekinah rested, and it was concerning that same spot that Jehovah said, "There will I *meet* with thee and *commune* with thee."

How blessed it is for our souls, beloved friends, to grasp the antitype of all this as we have it in the death of Christ. True, we often sing—

"His precious blood is sprinkled there,
Before and on the throne,"

but how far have we individually really learned of the perfect satisfaction of God, and of the deep eternal rest He Himself has found in the death of His own beloved Son? Beloved young saints, this is where you need to begin if you would enjoy deep and settled peace, and know anything of real communion with God. If you do not see a satisfied, yea, a well pleased and resting God, the probability is, that the accuser will roar against you, telling you of your past offences, and your present unworthiness, and drive you from the solace of the secret place, where the wings of the Almighty stretch themselves out to protect you from Satan's power. But, gazing on that precious blood, we see the perfect answer to all we have done, and to all we are. We learn there that the blood of the slain Lamb has given entire satisfaction to God, and covered all our guilt, leaving nothing but its own preciousness on the spot. How boldly then do our souls face the tempter's rage, and how intelligently do we sing—

"I hear the accuser roar, of ills that I have done;
I know them well, and thousands more—*Jehovah*
findeth none."

And not only does the blood *bring* us there, but, blessed be God, it *keeps* us there. If our souls are dwelling in the light of God, and accustoming themselves to say, "Search me, O God," we shall find that there is much within us still, that is contrary to the circle of infinite holiness in which we stand. Then, how are we to abide in its searching light? Just because the blood is there. The blood *cleanseth* us from all sin. That does not mean that it takes sin out of us. To think so, God says, would be self-deception; but while we are walking there, in God's holy presence, the blood speaks *for* us, and, in spite of all that we feel ourselves to be, we are *counted clean* for its sake, and at the blood-stained mercy-seat we commune with God. Covet the enjoyment

of this, ye beloved young pilgrims; it is more to be desired than much fine gold. It will give you strength for the journey home, and there, communing at God's mercy seat and throne of grace, you will renew your strength, and mount up as on eagles' wings.

The cherubims look down upon the blood-stained mercy seat, acquiescing and admiring. Some think they represent angels; others, saints. No doubt the host above do greatly admire the great redemption work of Christ; but, being all of gold, and of the same piece as the mercy seat, we rather think they are symbols of the divine majesty and power of God. At Eden's gate, they stand connected with the sword of Justice, to bar the way; but here, at the mercy seat, they welcome the sinner's approach. There is no sword now, it has been sheathed in the Victim, and they gaze upon the blood. Blessed exchange! We fear them now no more, but rather cry, "I will abide in Thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of Thy wings" (Psa. lxi. 4). "Because Thou hast been my refuge, therefore in the *shadow of Thy wings* will I rejoice" (Psa. lxxiii. 7).

The *rings* and *staves* speak of the pilgrim character. If God's saints are wanderers in the desert, He will be with them all the way. The Ark accompanied them throughout. It stood in Jordan's dried-up bed, until they crossed in safety; it compassed the walls of Jericho. Then, when the wilderness was past, and the conflicts over, it was carried into the temple and deposited on the golden floor, and the staves were then *drawn out*. The pilgrim had reached home, and so shall we, beloved. Till then, we have God with us, and for us.

The FLOOR of the tabernacle was *sand*. Above, and around, the glories of Christ have filled the eye, but below there is nothing but the desert sand. The priest stood within the holy circle, surrounded by the shadows of heavenly things, but, like ourselves, he was literally in the desert. We are reminded daily that this is not our rest, but the holy city, with the golden street, is yonder gleaming in the distance, with its glory and its song. Thither let our pilgrim feet press on. Burning sands and desert thorns may hurt, but an hour with our Lord will make up for it all. The rest and calm of that bright home await us, and a warm welcome by the Lord of the place. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of

the archangel and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we, who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. So shall we ever be *with* the Lord."

J. R.

RESTORATION AND DISCIPLINE.

"By mercy and truth iniquity is purged."—PROV. xvi. 6.



HE subject we propose to speak upon tonight is a deeply solemn and important one, affecting as it does the honour of the Lord, and our relationship toward each other as we journey upward and homeward to God.

The first Scripture to which I invite your attention is in the 6th chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, verse 1: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Possibly this is the most elementary phase of discipline presented to us in the New Testament, and yet there are principles of truth involved which are of the highest moment.

I do not think it regards a man who sins with deliberate intention, but one, who, in a moment of unwatchfulness, has been suddenly tripped up by Satan.

THE FALL OF PETER

occurs to me as a case in point. Out of communion with the Lord, self-confident, he became an easy victim to the enemy's snare, and fell. The look of Christ—tender, yet reproachful; compassionate, yet conveying a sense of His holy disapprobation, breaks Peter's heart, and he weeps bitterly. No sooner does a conception of his sin dawn upon him than the deepest sorrow and grief fill his heart. There is also a volume of meaning in that little clause recorded in 1 Cor. xv. 5. "*And that He was seen of Cephas.*"

Again, how very touching is the interview between the blessed Lord and Peter, described in John xxi. 15, 17. "Peter was grieved because He said unto him **THE THIRD TIME.**" Truly this was a spiritual restoration; and poor Peter's fall was ever afterwards a beacon of warning against spiritual pride and self-confidence. And can we but marvel at the wondrous grace and mercy of God, who not only

RESTORED PETER

to joy and communion, but used him *fifty days* after to the conversion of **THREE** thousand souls. A little later on, when Peter was being taught that God was uniting the Gentiles with the Jews in His purposes of love, his self-will came up again, but it was quickly subdued. The past failure was brought vividly before his mind, and he bowed to the will of the Lord. We are all familiar with the vision he had, recorded in Acts x., and most of us, no doubt, have wondered at the strange and contradictory phrase, "**NOT SO LORD,**" but how blessedly and yet how effectually was he rebuked! How many times did the sheet come down? **THRICE!** Ah! Peter knew what that meant, and immediately prepared himself to obey his Master. And it is not without significance that while Peter thought upon the vision the Spirit said unto him, "**Behold! THREE men seek thee.**" Thus when there was a danger of Peter's will rising too high, did the Lord gently remind him of the **THREE-FOLD** denial of the past, and keep him trustful and humble!

Surely the spiritual have in the Lord's dealings with Peter a most blessed illustration to guide them in the case of an erring saint, as referred to in this Scripture.

THE CHARACTER OF THE RESTORER.

I want you to observe the term, "*Ye which are spiritual.*" To some the word "*spiritual*" appears to be exceedingly ambiguous, and many Christians appear instinctively to conjecture to their mind's eye a man of peculiar demeanour, and of a "*nice,*" pleasing, outward appearance. Now, Bible-spirituality is a solid tangible reality. God has defined it Himself. Read carefully, and meditate upon 1 Cor. xiv. 37: "If any man think himself to be a prophet *or spiritual,* let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you *are the commandments of the Lord.*" True spirituality never sacrifices or undervalues a single morsel of God-revealed truth, and any person's spirituality may be known by the measure of his subjection to the doctrines of Scripture.

Notice also the manner of spirit which is to characterise the man who seeks the restoration of his erring brother: "*In the spirit of meekness.*" How often this is forgotten, and the case made worse by the harsh and unspiritual manner of some. Better

far, that those who act in this way, left the matter alone. Indeed, it is absolutely essential that they should.

DAVID AS A WARNING.

Let us take warning by the way in which David, out of communion with God, would act. "The man that hath done this thing shall surely die" (2 Samuel xii. 5). Here is apparent zeal, but what underlies it? Self will and fleshly determination. It is so easy to act in a wrong spirit, and to go even beyond the requirements of God.

One other word ere we pass on. This is

INDIVIDUAL RESTORATION,

and does not call, either for the action of brethren in the plural, or of the assembly as a whole, "considering *thyself*."

Do you know of a case where any one has been tripped up by Satan, "overtaken in a fault," then do not whisper to this one and that one about it, but go privately to the individual in question and seek his restoration. Carry in your heart the compassion of God! Take with you somewhat of the sympathetic love of Christ. Weep with such an one, pray with him, and do not forget the wholesome proverb which says, "An ungodly man diggeth up evil" (Prov. xvi. 27). If the sin be confessed, bury it, and never give it a resurrection.

The second Scripture to which I ask your attention is James v. 19, 20: "Brethren, *if any of you* do err from the truth, and one convert him (*i.e.* turn him back); let him know, that he, which converteth the sinner (*i.e.* turns back a sinning one) from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." Here it is doctrinal error to which some have succumbed.

Evil and perverse doctrines, manifold in number, and terrible in character, are stalking through the land. The only safeguard against them is communion with the God of the Scriptures. How needful is the prayer—"Hold up my goings in *Thy* paths, that my footsteps slip not" (Psalm xvii. 5). The strongest among us is not secure, save as he clings to God, and to the word of His grace. How many saints possessed of the most brilliant gifts, have been turned aside by Satan! and where are they to-day? Useless in the service of God, profitless to His people, and stumbling blocks to the unconverted.

Mere *reason* is treacherous, and our only path of safety is to accept God's truth as it stands.

CASES IN POINT.

Two brethren were asked to visit one, formerly a most useful Christian, but who had imbibed the pernicious doctrine of non-eternity of punishment, and had become barren and cantankerous. Question after question was put to him, and he reasoned and reasoned at great length, and with a measure of plausible subtlety. At length one of the two said, "Now tell us honestly and in the fear of God, when you imbibed this notion were you in a healthy condition of soul? Were you enjoying fellowship with Christ?" And with what result? His head hitherto erect, now hung down, and he was silent. There was the secret of the whole thing, and what a solemn lesson it conveys! I remember talking with a Christian lady in London concerning the subject of infant immersion. A few years previous to this she was wonderfully bright and useful in the things of God, but now she wished to have her infant daughter baptised, and I marvelled that she could entertain such a thing for a moment. At last, I remarked, "Well, now, supposing you had never perused all the ingeniously written pamphlets from which you quote about this matter, would you in your own reading of the Scriptures have arrived at the conclusion that your child should be immersed?" and she, thoroughly transparent and honest in heart, candidly avowed, "No! I do not think I should." Exactly! and is it not extremely easy for us to get our minds permeated with the notions of clever men, and then to imagine that we see confirmatory evidence in Scripture?

But coming back to the verses here a moment, it is a most precious privilege, as well as a solemn responsibility, to seek to recover those who are thus led into error. It will preserve such from a state of spiritual death* and barrenness, and keep them from a multitude of other sins. Such cannot stand still, and once off the rails of divine truth they invariably drift further and further from the "ways which be in Christ" (1 Cor. iv. 17).

In 2 Timothy ii. 16-19 we read of men who had erred concerning the truth, and many had been

* Some dear brethren regard the death, referred to in this Scripture, as the decay of the body, answering to 1 Cor. xi. 30, and 1 John v. 16.

seduced through them. The Apostle teaches us that "the Lord knoweth them that are His," and consequently *we* are not called upon to determine the question of the *Christianity* of any. It is our responsibility to sever our connection with such, and while we may not strive, still it is our duty to seek the godly restoration of those who have been taken captive by the devil. We should be sheep-recoverers but how seldom do we prayerfully and faithfully attend to this matter.

F. A. B.

(*To be continued.*)

SUMMER WORK AMONG THE VILLAGES.



NCE again we would earnestly invite the co-operation of fellow labourers in the work of carrying the Gospel to "the regions beyond."

It has been our privilege and joy to see, during the past five summers, a band of willing and devoted workers go forth during their holiday time in this good work, and by this means, most of the villages, hamlets, and widely-scattered country houses in Ayrshire, Wigtownshire, Kircudbrightshire, Stirlingshire, and Dumfriesshire have been reached with the Gospel message. By visiting from door to door, distributing Gospel books and tracts, preaching in the open air, and personal dealing with solitary souls, the realities of eternity and the glad tidings of salvation have been brought nigh to thousands, who do not usually hear of these things, and who are inaccessible and unreachably by other means.

The *full* results of all this labour we shall only know in heaven; we have already seen a little precious fruit in the salvation of souls, and where it was possible for us to follow by continuous preaching of the Gospel, and of truths that accompany it, little assemblies of believers have been gathered unto the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

The workers have returned year after year, better in body by inhaling the fresh country air, and happier too in soul, and by learning through close contact with the people the varied difficulties of seeking souls, they have been helped to practicability in the work of the Lord.

It is due to the many who have helped us by prayer, and otherwise, that they should know, that "our labour has not been in vain in the Lord," but that He

has abundantly helped us, and blessed His own Word to souls. Let us join in giving Him the thanks, and by mercies past, let us stir ourselves to lay hold on God for yet greater things.

There are hundreds of villages and thousands of lonely houses where the Gospel's sound is rarely, if ever, heard, and from which souls are being constantly hurried asleep into eternity. It is no exaggeration to say, that in many of the country churches and chapels, there is *no* Gospel preached from one year's end to the other, and by personal conversation with many of the ministers, we have found that they neither preach nor believe in a known and present salvation.

The people are amazed when they hear the truth, and wonder why it was not brought to them before. May God stir up His people to think of their responsibility, and to remember that we are "debtors" to the "heathen at home," as well as those abroad. Regarding work for the coming summer, there has been much exercise of soul, and waiting upon God. Several of the workers have a strong desire to visit again some of the more interesting places, where work is already begun, in the counties already visited, whilst the county of *Cumberland* has been laid upon the hearts of others for visitation. If sufficient workers come forward, *both* might be reached.

The county of *Cumberland* is of easy access to brethren from England and Scotland, and has a population of over 250,000, with some 80 villages. This is a large and needy field, and if the Lord permit, we shall try and reach it, beginning early in July.

We will gladly welcome helpers of the stamp described in Acts xvi. 2. The little Bible carriage will go with us, and brethren who say they "would like to go, but cannot preach," might find sphere for their gift in pulling it along the roads, and circulating the Scriptures among the people.

Will brethren who purpose giving themselves to the Lord as helpers in the work communicate with us as early as they can, and will those who cannot go themselves share the labour by prayer that the Lord of the harvest may send forth His own chosen labourers, and sustain them with grace and power in His work.

Ever yours by grace,

JOHN RITCHIE.

12th May, 1884,

20 PRINCE'S STREET, KILMARNOCK.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to “prove all things,” and “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender

QUESTION NO. CLXX.

What is meant by being “gathered together in My name?” (Matt. xviii. 20).

REPLY.

In Matt. xvi. 18, we have the first mention by the Lord Jesus of the Church. He there calls it “My Church.” Purchased by His own blood it is *His by right*. If it be a body, He is the Head. If it be a building, He is the foundation. If it be a household, He is over it as Lord and administrator. If it be people in covenant relationship with God, He is Mediator and Lawgiver. If it be an assembly or gathering, He is the Centre—He is in the midst—He is the object of attraction. In the passage before us the Church is again the subject, not, as in chap. xvi., viewed as a fortress in the midst of Satan’s world, but viewed in reference to its own internal discipline.

The Church is in verse 17, the final appeal of brethren in all matters of offence or stumbling. The Church, acting on the authority of the Word of the Lord, is backed in its “binding and loosing,” that is, in its receiving and putting away—by the authority and power of heaven. The mind of the world is antagonistic to the mind of heaven; but the mind of Christ is to regulate the action of His Church, hence the union between the Church and heaven of verse 18.

Then after the power for judgment in matters of discipline, follows the power for obtaining all grace in prayer.

The power throughout is HIS NAME. The correct reading is “unto My name.” This is important.

So early as Exod. xx. 24, God had said, “in all places where I record My name, I will come unto thee and I will bless thee.”

Then in Deut. xii., xiv., xvi., xxvi., &c., we have Jerusalem chosen by Jehovah out of all the tribes as the place of His name, and afterwards in 1 Kings viii. 16 to ix. 7, it is in the temple at Jerusalem that Jehovah records His name. His name being there, constituted it the centre to which all Israel was to gather. The terrible sin of Jeroboam consisted in

setting aside this fundamental ordinance of Jehovah and appointing other gathering-places, viz., Dan and Bethel. Israel being turned away from the gathering-place, or place of Jehovah’s name, was necessarily turned away from His law and from His ordinances, and apostacy was the inevitable consequence.

The true Israelite would ever say “the desire of our soul is to Thy name, and to the remembrance of Thee” (Isa. xxvi. 8).

The place of Jehovah’s name was the centre of Israel’s gathering, Deut. xii., it was the place of the revelation of Jehovah’s will, Deut. xxxi. 11, and it was the place in and toward which prayer was to be directed to Jehovah, 2 Chron. vii. 15, 16.

But upon the rejection of the Lord Jesus and His being taken up into heaven, and the consequent descent of the Holy Ghost all this is changed. The one place on earth is meantime set aside. The Holy Ghost gathers unto the name of Jesus—that name which earth has disowned, but in which every knee shall yet bow, and which faith delights in fellowship with God to honour.

And “where two or three,” thus in wondrous grace the Lord vouchsafes the very highest honour to the very smallest number, “are gathered together unto My name, there am I in the midst.”

And if He is in the midst, it is no longer gathering in a name, merely—but UNTO a PERSON. Just as when the tribes went up to the place of Jehovah’s Name, they went up to the place of Jehovah’s presence—to Himself.

This is in exact accordance with Heb. xiii. 13, “Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him.” The outcast Jesus is the object of attraction, therefore it is a place of reproach.

But being gathered unto His name what is implied? Surely, that He is owned as Lord. That His will shall be supreme. That His Spirit shall be unfettered to minister to faith the things of the unseen Centre. That whatever gifts are in operation, the administration of them shall be by the one Lord. Surely the place “where two or three are gathered together unto

His name" shall in a fuller sense than Jerusalem's temple of old, be the place of the revelation of His will, and the place of acceptable worship and prayer.

And what is it but this truth that has separated saints from those gatherings in which, however they may profess to honour Christ and the Bible, the name of a denomination is substituted for the name of Jesus, His ordinances of baptism and the Supper perverted through human tradition, His spirit fettered, and ministry limited to one paid official—the unsaved introduced in too many cases, without a question, to the fellowship of which the blood of the Lamb is the ground, and all this so systematized that to alter it is an impossibility, and no resource left for faith and obedience, but separation from it.

Under such a condition of things what is left but that from which Christendom has departed—to be gathered together unto His name, owning Him in the midst in all His glorious authority, "UNTO His name," as in Matt. xviii. to act IN His name, or by His authority as in 1 Cor. v. 4., Col. iii. 16, 17.

QUESTION No. CLXXI.

Does 1 Cor. xi. 5 authorize women to pray in the assembly provided her head be covered?

REPLY.

We have always felt that there is a difficulty about this passage, and would therefore refer to it cautiously.

We cannot agree with those who hold that it teaches that a woman, alone in secret, ought necessarily to cover her head in prayer, there can be little doubt that it refers to circumstances when men are present.

But there is a difference between a woman *praying* and leading an assembly in prayer. This is to be done by the "men" (1 Tim. ii. 8), and in the same passage "subjection" and "silence" are enjoined upon the woman.

We cannot recognize the public act of leading an assembly in prayer as in harmony with the hidden, private, covered, subject, silent, character of the ministry assigned to her.

Moreover, leading in prayer implies *fellowship on the part of all*. 1 Peter iii. 7 shows the harmony or fellowship that must exist between a husband and a wife in order that their *prayers be not hindered*. How then can

the united prayer of an assembly go up to God with acceptance if some of those present believe that the woman who insists on *leading their prayers* is departing from the sphere which belongs to her? And if those who so believe are *men*, and perhaps elder brethren exercising oversight, how terrible the insubjection of the woman who would persist in attempting to lead the assembly in opposition to their conscientious convictions. Instead of such prayer being to edification, it can have no effect but to grieve the Spirit and destroy fellowship.

QUESTION No. CLXXII.

What is the meaning of 1 Peter iv. 1, "For he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin?"

REPLY.

The starting point in the verse is Christ having suffered for us in the flesh, and this is a taking up again of the 18th verse of the previous chapter.

The practical exhortation is "arm yourself with the same mind," *i.e.*, the mind of one who has suffered all the penalty of sin in the person of his Substitute. It exactly corresponds with the teaching of Rom. vi. 9-11. There also the starting point is Christ having died to sin. The practical exhortation is: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to have died indeed unto sin."

Again in Rom. vi. 7 it is "He that hath died is free from sin" answering to the expression in Peter, "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." The execution of the murderer effects two results—first, it ends the demands of the law; secondly, it secures that he shall commit murder no more. So Christ's death for us reckoned as ours, counted to have been our execution for our sins, not only sets us free from the law and its curse, but also gives us rest from the tyranny of sin as a master who held us in slavish bondage. "We have died in Christ to the law" (Rom. vii. 4). "We have died in Christ to sin" (Rom. vi. 10-11).

Then follows in Rom. vi. 12, "Let not sin therefore reign," corresponding exactly to the following verse in Peter, "That he no longer should live . . . to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."

The teaching of Colossians iii. 3-5 is of the very same character.

LEOMINSTER CONFERENCE, 22d May, 1884.

ADDRESS BY MR. HENRY HEATH.

Scripture read:—Rev. xxii. 7, 12, 20, "Behold I come quickly, blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this Book."

"And behold I come quickly, and My reward is with Me to give every man according as his work shall be."

"He which testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly; amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus."



HIS is no new Scripture. It is the prerogative of the Spirit of God to cause that which, as to knowledge, might be called *old*, to be in experience *new*, and that which we years ago learned and have fed upon, it is His office and His delight to cause it to drop on our souls as the manna dropped moist and fresh with the dew of heaven. We are greater debtors to the Holy Ghost than we know or think of, and we have been more guilty than we know of in grieving that blessed Spirit. The Lord grant us, then, a more clear perception and a fuller acknowledgement of His person, His ability, His might, His tenderness, and His fellowship with the Father and the Son, and the secret of the power of our fellowship with them.

That wonderful word *fellowship*—perhaps it won't appear conceit in me to imagine that some young Christian may be wondering what that word fellowship means. The word itself is a great word, and it is a very small word. It implies that the parties who are enjoying this fellowship have something in common.

Two persons have something in common. One says, "I have this," and the other says, "I have it with you, the one thing is common to us both." That is *fellowship*.

In John xvii. we have fellowship as to *life*. "For as the father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (John v. 26), and by the might of His Spirit that which was ever true in Him is true in us—*life*. "This is life eternal" (John xvii. 3.). We are made partakers of the life that the Father hath in Himself, and hath given to the Son to have in Himself. We have heard the voice of the Son of God, and we *live*. This is the fellowship of life. Sin may dim our spiritual sight, cool the affection of our soul, deaden the conscience by defiling it, and it may rob us of communion, of peace, of health, of wealth, of

power and heart to serve; but it cannot destroy the *life*, for we have it in fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

And next is fellowship in *love*, and that fellowship is centered in the Son. All the affections of the Father centre in, repose in, delight in, and are satisfied with the Son. We have fellowship with the Father in affection for Christ. Where does our heart centre? What is it gives rest to our renewed man? What is it that we, after the inward man, feast and delight on? On Him who was the bruised corn to give us life, and is now the finest of the wheat to feed the life and nourish it. It is Christ. We have the fellowship of *love* with the Father, Son, and Spirit—the work of Three in One.

Then, again, shall I say we have fellowship of *will*? One will between the Father, Christ, the Spirit, and ourselves? Is it true? That would search me like a candle—search the inward parts of my belly, as the Scripture says, with the candle of the Lord. Is there but one will in heaven and on earth as far as I am concerned?

Is the Father's will that of the Son—the Son that of the Spirit, and mine in harmony with that will—fellowship in will? It should be so, and if I am not mistaken, I could trace all that I have known of bitterness and anguish to one bitter root—self-will—being out of fellowship with the will of the Father. It was Christ's meat to do the Father's will. It is the Spirit's delight to fulfil the will of the Father and of the Son, and if you and I had never known self-will, we should never have known the bitterness we have often had to lament. Oh that it may be true, that as there is one life and one affection, so also there may be oneness of will, and may the power of this be brought to bear on our souls. Where can we read the will of the Father? Where can we find the will of the Son expressed? Where can we read the mind of the Spirit? In the Word. And if you and I are found to be diligent readers, subject readers, not sitting in judgment upon what we read, but bringing ourselves under its judgment;—if we are believing, loving, subject, readers of the Word, we shall learn the will of the Father, and there will be this fellowship of will.

And then there is fellowship of *purpose*. What is the purpose of the Father? What is the purpose of the Spirit? What is the will of the Father and the

work of the Spirit? Is it not to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ? That was Paul's purpose, "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death" (Phil. i. 20). The exaltation of Christ is the one purpose of God. It is blessed to think of this, and it is the secret into which the Church has been admitted.

Our statesmen are well-nigh staggered. Men in commercial life are confounded. Fear is on every side. This is a wonderful age in which we live. An age in which there seems to be a loosening to everything, and confidence in nothing—a letting slip—a loosening of the precious things we have held.

Purposes, plans, and objects gripped in times past are being let slip. This is true in the outside world, the political world, the commercial world, and the professing religious world. We see men letting slip that for which their fathers suffered almost to martyrdom—children throwing overboard principles for which their fathers sacrificed everything but life itself. If there were ever days of need for steadfastness, these are the days. Mensay, "what will the end of all this be?" We cannot tell. We cannot dream of what it will all come to, but we know that it is God's eternal purpose to head up everything in Christ. That is the polestar that fixes our eye as we are tossed upon the sea of this present time. God is about to head up everything in Christ, and that fixes our eyes, and with that purpose we have fellowship.

There is also one *hope* between Christ and ourselves. We have fellowship in hope. "The Spirit and the Bride say, come." The Bridegroom thrice says, "I come." Who is supposed to know the mind of the Bridegroom like the Bride? She knows, for she has walked with Him. She has talked with Him. He has told out to her His breast of love—the love that He bare to her before He told her of it—the love that led Him to purchase her with blood, with the settled purpose in due time to take her to Himself. She knows His purpose. She knows His desire. She knows His hope—His expectation. *It is the union.* Christ loved us before we had a being. God gave us to Christ before He gave Eve to Adam, and He gave Eve to Adam as the shadow of the deeper and more glorious purpose of His heart. "Chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world." Eve was created

in Adam, taken out of Adam and presented to Adam. We also were in Christ from eternity. We have been baptized into the body of Christ. We are in Christ, and presently He is coming to take us to Himself. The Spirit of God has told us this. I have said before, in this room, I think, and I have no reason for altering my judgment, that it is not only true, that Christ knows all that passes in my soul—what the current of my affections is—what the object of my hope is—what my thoughts are; but it is my privilege to know the very thoughts, feelings, and hopes of the Lord Jesus upon the throne. Why? Because the Spirit dwells in the Bride for the purpose of communicating, through the medium of the Word, the mind of Christ.

Here He says thrice, "I come." And why? Because, perhaps, we need it; but especially to show that it is the thing of things upon His own heart. His heart is so full of it, He does not merely say "I am coming," but, "I am coming *quickly*." "Surely I come quickly, Amen." It is a verity. We need faith to say "He *is* coming quickly." A very little while and the Coming One shall come, and will not tarry.

The reasons are manifold; why this is our hope. We heard just now of the saints at Corinth. We have been considering these three days of conference, the schism existing when there was no outward division—when all met in one place, and yet schism. Two or three had their supper in that corner, and three or four had their meal in another, and down yonder were a few more who had scarce anything to eat at all, and that was called the Lord's Supper. They had been accustomed to listen to great teachers—philosophers—in their natural state, and had preferences, and they had brought that mind into the Church, so when Paul stood up, they would have liked Apollos to speak, and when Apollos stood up they would say Paul was the man—and others said, "Paul is very well and Apollos is very well, but Cephas for us; he is our man." And so there were little parties in the one assembly. What will cure all that?

When the Centre of attraction appears in the air, and we get up out of this abominable flesh, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we are like Him. Oh, what a blessed hope this is! Then again, our brother has been showing us our individual responsibility to be careful, circumspect, and to clear our-

selves. When shall we reach the point to which we are pressing? When shall we have no need to be warned as to these things? Not until the last transforming touch of Almighty Power changes us from the image of the earthly man into that of the heavenly. We were pleased last night to hear a child of Abraham confessing the Lord Jesus Christ. And I said, "He has been taken out of his nationality, he has been baptized with gentile believers into the body of Christ, admitted into the flock which will be folded above in the glory—an upper, higher, and more blessed scene than that which is in store for the nation Israel in days of fruitfulness upon this earth. And when will those days come? When this thrice repeated promise is fulfilled, "I come quickly."

Individual perfection, the perfection of the Body, Israel's blessedness, the blessing of the nations, and after the space of a thousand years, the introduction of that which will never change, never fade, never be defiled, heaven and earth no more contrasted—both bearing the same divine stamp of holiness and of glory, and Christ will be the radiating beam of all that brightness. Then shall we not make one united cry in response to this three-fold declaration, "I come quickly," confirmed by the Amen? Shall we not as one man say, "Even so, come Lord Jesus?"—*Communicated by J. S. A.*

NUMBERS VII.

HE first seven chapters of the Book of Numbers are a little section complete, to some extent, separately. In chapter i., the Lord having brought His people into the Wilderness, counts them; and in ii. groups them around Himself; in iii. and iv. arranges their service; Levitical service. Next, in chapter v., He cleanses the camp. Then in vi., as we were considering some weeks since, He shows us the position of the Nazarite answering to the saint of the New Testament; and lastly, in chapter vii., He receives their offerings. For many years it has been impressed upon my mind that, as God never can improve upon His ways, this may possibly be like His way with us by and by, when He takes us up into the glory. First, that He will, as it were, count us, to see that none are missing; second, will group us round Him-

self; third, will look at our service; fourth, will judge everything of evil which we have allowed, but He could not; fifth, will shew us His judgment of separation unto Him; and lastly, will receive our worship as we bow down before Him. It seems to me that these seven chapters are very striking, specially if we add the first two or three verses of chapter viii., which are closely connected.

Now, the subject of this Numbers vii. must, in God's account, be a very important one, seeing that there are 89 long verses, making it almost the longest chapter in the Old Testament. Which being so, what think you is it about? "Oh," you say, "surely it contains long prayers." Not so; on the contrary, nearly all the prayers in the Bible are very short. What then? Singularly, about *giving*. A very homely subject, but that is what it is about;—giving. And strange, too, it is, that the longest passage in the New Testament is about the very same thing; 2 Cor. viii. and ix., are properly one, and are about giving. The princes of the tribe make their offerings to God, and it is narrated what they gave. Each, a silver charger, and the weight of it; each, a silver bowl, full of fine flour mingled with oil; each, a gold spoon, and the weight of it; each, one young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year for a Burnt-offering; each, one kid of the goats for a Sin-offering; each, for a sacrifice of Peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs. In every one of the cases that was the offering. It is very remarkable that in each of the twelve cases, of all the tribes of Israel, they offer precisely a similar offering. But it has struck me, that though they might each offer outwardly an identical offering, one might do it very heartily, and another might do it very languidly and mechanically, while others might approach either extreme in greater or less degree. Now, is not this reasonable? And thus, though they offered an identical offering, like the twenty-four elders of the Book of the Revelation (so far as being heads of tribes, not as the worship was concerned), yet it seems almost impossible to conclude but that one did it because of love to His God, another because others did it, while another was swayed by the two motives together. So it strikes me, is it with us at this day. When we listen to a brother in prayer, we virtually offer the same prayer or praise; when we sing a hymn, we virtually praise God together with the same words,

we sing the same beautiful sentiments ; when we give our sixpence or our shilling, we give as much, probably, one as another, that is, as much as we can afford. Outwardly, it appears all alike, but the Searcher of hearts, He with whom we have to do, knows precisely how much of our hearts goes with the prayer, with the hymn we sing, or with the sixpence or shilling we give. How much is mechanical, and how much of it is worship, the Searcher of hearts knows full well. He ponders the path we take ; He weighs our spirits ; “Thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.”

Now read the first three verses of chapter viii. in connection with this, and before I have done I will endeavour to show you that properly there is a connection with this chapter. “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, when thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick. And Aaron did so ; he lighted the lamps thereof over against the candlestick, as the Lord commanded Moses.” Let us remember that the exact measure of our heartiness, or of our spiritual lassitude, or half-heartedness, is the light ; the light from the sanctuary gleams full upon it, and though outwardly all may appear alike, yet God, who knows our hearts, knows exactly how deep down from our hearts the worship does come, and how far not. How far with spiritual joy or sorrow we uttered the words of that hymn, or how far with spiritual languor and lassitude of soul we allow ourselves to breath the most sacred words. When we drop our sixpence or our shilling into the box, God’s light—*light* gleams full upon it. To take a glaring case, which all, I suppose, will admit. Are we not all prone to squeeze into a corner our intercession (I speak now of private prayer) for our friends, our relations, our children, parents, dependants, and others, whom we feel we ought to pray for ? We do it because we feel we ought, but hurry over them in as contracted a corner as we can ; and nineteen twentieths of our prayer is taken up with ourselves, while only a twentieth is spent in intercession for others. Ah, brethren, we are poor and failing things, every one of us. But this, I may say, what little I know, and I do not know much, of intercessory prayers for others, I find that it is most healthful to our own spirits ; it opens our hearts, enlarges our spirits, and gives us, as it were,

to love them, and put our arms around them as we pray. Now these are in brief the sum of the leading points, which we can see to be taught in this chapter, and may they be impressed upon our hearts. That in all we do in the way of worship—and remember, *giving* is a distinct part of divine worship—light, divine light, though we may not have faith to see it, is streaming thereon, and God will bring all into judgment. I beg you, before we pass on, not to forget, because my remarks have been rapid, this primary lesson of the chapter.

But there are two others upon which I would enlarge a while. If we look at the first verses of chapter vii., we shall see what these Princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers, offered. “And they brought their offering before the Lord, six covered wagons, and twelve oxen ; a wagon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox.” Then if we look down the next verses we shall see how they were distributed, and how used. The Lord says, “Take it of them, that they may be to do the service of the Tabernacle of the congregation ; and thou shalt give them unto the Levites, to every man according to his service. And Moses took the wagons and the oxen, and gave them unto the Levites. Two wagons and four oxen he gave unto the sons of Gershon, according to their service ; and four wagons and eight oxen he gave unto the sons of Merari, according unto their service, under the hand of Ithamar, the son of Aaron the priest. But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none.” But how was it that the Kohathites did not get any of the oxen or the wagons ? There were six wagons and twelve oxen, why should Merari get two thirds, Gershon the other third, and Kohath none at all ? That Merari should get four wagons and eight oxen, and Gershon only two wagons and four oxen, was disproportionate ; and still more so, does it seem, that Kohath should get none at all. If we turn to a previous chapter of the Book, we find that the Kohathites were to carry the Ark and the sacred vessels upon their shoulders, and not any otherwise ; we see it in chapter iii. 31, and in iv. 15. Kohath was to carry the Ark, and was to carry the sacred vessels upon their shoulders, therefore they did not need any oxen or any wagons. But Merari was to carry the boards, and therefore needed more oxen and more wagons than Gershon, who carried the curtains. Now do I make it plain as to the distinc-

tion? There is a reason for everything in God's Word, for God is a God of perfect order, Now comes the point. Do you remember a time when this order was disobeyed? Turn to 1 Chron. xiii. 7, "And they carried the Ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drave the cart." In a cart? The Ark? Where did they learn that from? Why, from the Philistines. They put the Ark into a cart when they sent it up from their cities. God bore with the ignorance of the Philistines, but His own people ought to have known better, and David better still. Then in verse 9 we are told that the oxen stumbled, "and Uzza put forth his hand to hold the Ark; and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzza, and He smote him, because he put his hand to the Ark: and there he died before God." Then if we look at chapter xv. 14 we find that the order is altered, and David owns his fault. "And he said unto them, ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the Ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it." He had had to stop in the first instance, he could not go on with the oxen. "For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us;" now, notice why, "for that we sought Him not after the due order." And then when they carried the Ark in the right way, on the shoulders of the Levites, see how kind God was; verse 26, "And it came to pass, God helped the Levites that bare the Ark of the covenant of the Lord." When they put the Ark upon a cart God smote them, but when they carried it upon the shoulders of the Levites, God helped them. Now for the antitype. Let us seek God, but let us take great care to seek Him after the due order. Oh, would to God (I cry it from the depths of my spirit), would to God that all His dear children knew the blessedness, not only of coming to Jesus as a Saviour (alas, so many stop there), but of gathering round Him as Lord. Is the Lord dead? Is He buried and done with, or has He pledged His word that "where two or three are gathered to My name, there am I in the midst of them?" And the first epistle to the Corinthians, the whole of it, is one long argument to show us how to seek God after the due order. Right enough to gather to hear teaching, but at their principle service upon the Sunday the people of God

should gather round the Lord, and then there is the Lord's order, and there is the light of the sanctuary shining upon us. God perfectly well knows those who fear Him, and would have us gather to Him like as we shall up there, so down here, and He spreads a table before us. It is His way, and I dare not act otherwise, let the Philistines do as they like, or the Christians who copy them. It is no part of mine to judge them, mine is to be obedient myself, and to counsel you to be so too. "And God helped the Levites," and that is a word of great comfort. Here is God's word, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the *commandments of the Lord*" (1 Cor. xiv. 37). This is God's order; I dare not reverse it. My years here must now be few, but, by God's grace, to the end will I hold tight to gathering round the Lord at the chief service on Sunday morning, with the Lord alone presiding.

Look at one more lesson. We read in the last verse, "And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him, then he heard the voice of One speaking unto him from off the Mercy-seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims." Now as far as I remember, this is the only place in the Old Testament where God Himself records the fulfilment of His own Word. You all know the beautiful promise of His in Exodus xxv. 22, "And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the Mercy-seat, from between the cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony." I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee, and here it is distinctly said God did actually so. Of course He always does, but here it is recorded once for us, in this remarkable Numbers vii., that He communed with him from between the two cherubims, from off the Mercy-seat. Another point: now when God spake to Moses from off the Mercy-seat, what think you was the subject? When the great and infinite God spake in the most solemn manner from between the cherubims, what think you was it of which He spake? "Of course, of mercy," you say. Not first. When God began to speak from off the the Mercy-seat the first word He uttered was *light*—light! Now read the last verse of Numbers vii. with the first of chapter viii. and see. "He heard the voice of One speaking unto him from off the Mercy-seat that was upon the Ark of testimony,

from between the two cherubims : and He spake unto him. And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, when thou lightest the lamps the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick." The first word God spake off the Mercy-seat was, "I am a God of perfect infinite light." Not mercy first; "grace reigns through righteousness." The first word that sounded from the lips of a holy God was, "I am light." Ah, Christians may trifle now, but not then. God is light! One word more. You remember that in Rev. iv. and v. again God is seen between four cherubims. Again God is seen—*seen*, not merely heard but seen. And we are to be there, and then as we praise that God and sing, our song shall be, "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." In other words, the first thought that is impressed upon ransomed souls is, God is light. God not only cannot trifle with our sins, but lifts us up to measure ourselves in His own light. May we do it now.—*Notes of addresses by W. Lincoln, communicated by J.S.H.*

THE CANAAN CONFLICT.



HE history of Israel, as seen in Egypt, the wilderness, and Canaan, has its threefold expression now in the *world*, the *flesh*, and the *devil*—that trinity of evil which opposes the manifestation, growth, and power of the Christian life, and against which the cross of Christ is our only resource. It *separates* from the world (Gal. vi. 14); it *crucifies* the flesh (Gal. ii. 20), and it has *broken the power* of Satan (Gen. iii. 15; Heb. ii. 14). The last of these three, or the Christian conflict, as illustrated in the book of Joshua and taught in the epistle to the Ephesians, is the subject before us now.

It is a maxim in human warfare, that to know the strength and tactics of an enemy is half the victory; but whether that be true or not, it may be safely assumed, that for a Christian to underestimate the foe is certain defeat. Hence it is of the utmost importance to know the character of the enemy as well as the nature of the conflict throughout which we are exhorted to stand. Eph. ii. 5, 6 places the child of God on the highest possible vantage ground, and hence the exhortation to *stand* (vi. 13, &c.), for in that

sense he cannot get higher. The "heavenly places" (ii. 6) to which all believers are raised by virtue of union with the risen Christ, become the battlefield—the "high places" of chapter vi. 12, for the two expressions are originally the same. This sixth chapter also depicts, in the plainest language, the tremendous power of Satan (verses 11, 12), and the full recognition of this should only lead to more certain victory by rousing the saints to buckle on the whole armour of God.

Alas, that there should be a tendency in these days, on the part of some professing children of God, to speak lightly and even flippantly of the great adversary, as regards his power, personality, and especially what we must call his *dignity*. The first has already been referred to, and his personality—sometimes treated as a myth—is also clearly indicated throughout the Word of God, notably in the Lord's temptation in the wilderness. It should be observed that the plural form, "devils," occurring so frequently in this connection should, in every instance, be rendered "demons." There are many *daimonia*, but only one *diabolos*. An instructive reference is made to the personality of Satan in 1 Tim. iii. 6, 7, where pride, or self-exaltation, is set forth as the condemnation of the devil (doubtless indicating the cause of his original expulsion), and reproach, no doubt, through worldly ways and methods of acting, the "snare of the devil," whereby the testimony of a Christian is rendered worthless and becomes even a stumbling-block to them that are without.

But one of the most serious indications of the present day is the custom which has become conspicuous, in some quarters, of practically ignoring the dignity of Satan. Again and again, in the Word of God, his threefold sway is indicated by the title given to him, in some cases, by the Lord Himself, "Prince of the power of the *air*" (Eph. ii. 2). "Prince of this *world*" (John xiv. 30). "Prince of the *devils*," or *demons* (Matt. xii. 24). See also 2 Cor. iv. 4 where, as "the God of this world," he has power to blind men's minds. The most emphatic condemnation of the loose expressions adopted by some is found in Jude 9, where we read that even Michael the archangel, in contending with him over the body of Moses, "*durst not bring a railing accusation*," and this is all the more striking, as the illustration is used for the express purpose of showing the spirit of the age

in speaking evil of *dignities*. It were well that those who manifest zeal, not always according to knowledge, pondered the solemn truths of Jude's epistle or 2 Peter ii. 10, 11, a little more in this light. The prospect of victory is not brightened by despising or ridiculing our antagonist, and the child of God who desires to overcome should lay this to heart.

Having thus briefly referred to the character of the enemy, we will now turn to the source of strength in which alone the warfare can be triumphantly waged, and to the means at our disposal wherewith to meet him; "for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God" (2 Cor. x. 4.) No sooner had sin entered through Satan's device, and alienated man's heart from God, than the cross of Christ was foreshadowed as the divinely appointed means of "bruising his head" (Gen. iii. 15), and the actual accomplishment of that grand result is expressly stated in Heb. ii. 14, "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the Devil." It is well to notice the exact force of the word rendered "destroy," in this connection. It means to make of none effect. For a similar use of the same word, compare Rom. vi. 6 and 1 Cor. xv. 26. A word meaning to loose, or undo, is used in 1 John iii. 8, which might be rendered "undo the deeds of the devil," with which compare John ii. 19 and Rev. v. 2. It is necessary to bear in mind these distinctions, because, although the cross is the judicial death-blow to Satan's *authority* over those who have taken their stand there (see Luke xxii. 53; Acts xxvi. 18; Col. i. 13, where "*power*" should be "*authority*"), they are not released from the necessity of exercising faith in resisting him (James iv. 7), just as the condemnation of the flesh by the same means does not annul the command to "mortify the deeds of the body." Satan's object is to drive or decoy the saints from the truth of their standing in Christ and all that attaches to it, as being beyond his authority, and the maintenance of that position in its power is what we are called to. The truth itself is the armour in which alone the Christian can meet his assaults. But mere holding the truth will not avail—that may be done in unrighteousness (Rom. i. 18). It must be applied to the heart and conscience. It is one thing to believe in the sufficiency of the armour, and quite another to *put it on*. "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God,"—the sevenfold panoply of

His providing, every portion of which is full of deep and important instruction.

Turning now to Joshua v. we find that Israel's preparation for taking possession of the earth by inheritance was, in all respects, a figure of that to which every believer is now called. The divine principle of action, whether shown by type, as in the Old Testament, or by direct testimony, as in the New, is that God first prepares and fits His people for the position or work He afterwards calls them to. For example, compare Mark iii. 14 and vi. 7. Keeping this in view, the three prominent points in Israel's history, the Passover, Red Sea, and Jordan, should be linked with the stage following rather than with what has gone before. Thus the first, in addition to showing the judgment of the sinner substitutionally, provided strength for the journey; the second expressed the judgment of sin, Egyptians only being left therein, whereas the third speaks of the judgment of *self*. Twelve stones left in the bed of the river represent Israel themselves, in figure, left there (Joshua iv. 9), while another twelve taken from the river and set up in the land (verse 3) point to life in resurrection—the "newness of life" in Rom. vi. 4—the double figure illustrating Gal. ii. 20. It is thus in the strength of the risen life in Christ that the Christian is to go forward to victory, showing at once the importance and value of the whole armour of God.

The first preparatory act, circumcision (Joshua v. 2), the figurative cutting off or setting aside of the flesh, therefore obtains additional significance. The terms of this command afford an interesting illustration of the principle that Israel, as a type, should be taken *nationally*. Joshua was commanded to circumcise them a second time, but on reading further we find that those actually so had never been circumcised before, although their fathers who fell in the wilderness had been. Thus as individuals they had to undergo the rite, although nationally they were looked upon as a circumcised people, and the rite spoken of as done a second time.

Circumcision then implies *death to the flesh* (see Col. ii. 11, omitting "*of the sins*" (R.V.), also 1 Peter iv. 1 and Phil. iii. 3. It has been judged, condemned, and set aside as utterly incapable of bringing glory to God. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. viii. 8). "The flesh profiteth nothing" (John vi. 63). Not only do the Red Sea and Jor-

dan lie between them and the scene of their former bondage, but they start, so to speak, afresh, bearing the mark of *separation to God*.

We may gather from this that the energy of the flesh in the Christian conflict can only result in weakness and failure. It was so in Israel's case when they reached the borders of the land the first time. Measuring themselves alone with the inhabitants, they joined the faithless spies in ignoring the presence of Jehovah, hence their cry—"We were in our own sight as grasshoppers and so we were in theirs" (Num. xiii. 33). Acknowledgment of real weakness is only right, but their eyes were occupied with *themselves*, a never-failing source of murmuring and unbelieving regrets. How different was the conduct of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx. 7). Casting himself upon God's faithfulness to Abraham, His friend, he says (verse 12) "We have no might . . . neither know we what to do; *but our eyes are upon Thee*." Here is the true weakness and what it leads to—no might, no knowledge, eyes occupied with Himself; and when such is the case with us, can the issue be doubtful? How many are wandering in Romans vii., like Israel in the wilderness? Contrasting the *I* of their own strength with the opposing energy of the flesh, they have yet to learn that that *I* has been crucified, and another *I* lives in its stead, through union with the living Christ. Henceforth our foes must be measured with Him, not with self, and "thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" will ring out in the hour of fiercest conflict.

It should be noticed, further, that the rite of circumcision (the typical cutting-off, or restraining of the flesh), was administered to those who were *already* the people of God. The importance of this order cannot be over-estimated in a day when men are trying to restrain fleshly lusts by pledges and badges *prior* to their becoming "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," in which condition alone can they have any real power over the flesh. We would ask, in whose strength does an unconverted man take, and attempt to keep, a pledge? Even if he should succeed, say, in curbing a depraved appetite, *to whom will the glory belong*, seeing that the power of God has no place in it, and that "without faith it is impossible to please Him?" (Heb. xi. 6). When the human system is out of order, it often reveals its condition

by local manifestations, more or less acute; yet the skilled physician will pass over these and attack the real source of disorder, with the result of banishing at the same time the local symptoms. On the other hand we find professing Christians occupied in battling the symptoms, while they practically ignore, or give only a secondary place to the only genuine and effective, because God-given remedy—the Gospel of Christ—which goes to the root of the matter, bringing with it *divine power* to keep the flesh in subjection, and glorify God in thus magnifying His grace. It is still true that "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from *all sin*." We cannot find, from the Word of God, that even a Christian has any authority to pledge himself at all. What he undertakes to do for God's glory can only be done in God's strength. Of course we are not alluding to temptations. On that head a believer should unquestionably let alone whatever is likely to stumble him, or cause a weak one to offend, but don't let us lose the real power over the flesh by supposing it can be trusted even with the keeping of a pledge. With regard to wearing badges, we cannot understand why one sin should be selected for this distinction, to the exclusion of many others in the list, (Gal. v. 19, 20, 21) *equally dishonouring to God*. It is surely needless to remind God's children of the absurdity of an attempt to *literally revive* the ceremonial observances of Old Testament times.

The first condition in the conflict, then, is the practical mortifying of the flesh—"the circumcision which is of the heart, in the Spirit and not in the letter, whose *praise is not of men but of God*" (Rom. ii. 29). To this end "the sharp knife" of the Word must be unsparingly applied to heart, ear, and lips (Acts vii. 51; Eph. iv. 29, 31).

The next step was keeping the Passover (Joshua v. 10). This memorial of security and deliverance occupied a very prominent place with them, recalling at once their helplessness and need, and the grace that so fully met both the one and the other. Compare Psa. lxxxi. 10. In like manner if we would be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might," it must be in the full consciousness of where His grace found us and what it has done for us at the first—the deep and ever-abiding sense of how much we cost Him. We shall not forget it throughout eternity—He would have us remember it now. How this should enhance

the preciousness of His dying command—"This do in remembrance of Me," whereby He would keep the memorial of His mighty love ever fresh in the hearts of His people. "Let us draw near with a true heart."

We read further (Joshua v. 11), "they did eat of the old corn of the land." Here the place of conflict becomes the place of nourishment and strength. The transition from wilderness to Canaan provision is beautifully shown in verse 12—"the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn," implying that they had both on the previous day. In the one case the bread *came down*; in the other they were brought into the place where their sustenance was native. So the believer, raised and seated in Christ Jesus in the heavenlies—the place of conflict—feeds upon the Christ who is native there. The source of strength is the same, the condition only being different. In Egypt He takes, in a sense, our condition and place—in Canaan He gives us His; while the wilderness teaches us to make no provision for the flesh.

This is further shown in the last scene of Joshua v. The Lord Himself must be leader, and hence "a man, with his sword drawn in his hand," displaces Joshua as captain of the host. The strength and resources are Christ's, the glory must be His also. This is solemnly illustrated in connection with the overthrow of Jericho. None were to be the richer—all must go "into the treasury of the Lord" (vi. 19). It is easy to see that an unconverted man stands convicted of appropriating to himself what belongs to God, seeing he has utterly failed in the very first principle for which God gave him being, namely, His own glory. But is there not the gravest danger lest a true believer should be guilty of the same thing? The case of Achan, one of the nation, tells with terrible emphasis, that God will not suffer that which is His to be taken by another; and in this respect it is for us to remember that the hour of conscious victory and success is the hour of greatest danger. Nothing short of the whole armour, the divine equipment, can keep us safe and teach us to whom we are indebted for every success. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors *through Him that loved us.*" Raised and seated in Christ now; soon, as overcomers, we shall sit down *with Him*, in joyous fulfilment of His own blessed "I will" (John xvii. 24). G. S.

THE FLESH OR FIRSTBORN.

PART III.—ESAU.



HERE are many points in the life of Esau which speak so loudly in his favour, that the "babe in Christ," whose spiritual perception is not the keenest, would scarcely believe that he really is a type of "the flesh." But that there be no mistake on this point, let us turn to the 9th of Rom., and read from the 7th verse, "Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children, but in Isaac shall thy seed be called, that is they which are *the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God*, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed, for this is the word of promise. At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son, and not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand not of works, but of Him that calleth) it was said unto her *the elder shall serve the younger.*" Thus we are led of the Holy Ghost to understand that even as Ishmael was rejected as being a child of the flesh, *so was Esau.* We may not stop here to inquire the *reason* of this, for God answers to none for His actions when called impiously into question by the creature. But subject souls may learn of Him and see His love, where the rebellious and proud are left with mysteries which confound "the wisdom of the wise."

It may readily be admitted that if we lose sight of God's standard, and place Esau side by side with Jacob, the spiritual seed, the difference between them will not be so apparent. His (Esau's) life and conduct might compare favourably with that of his brother's, and, indeed, on some occasions his character seems to have borne that stamp of candour which was so sadly lacking in Jacob.

But before looking at his life, whether as seen by God or man, let us go back to where the Holy Spirit introduces him to us in Gen. xxv. 22-23. The unborn babe is noticed in connection with his brother, "when as yet neither had done good or evil;" but apart from the *actual performance* of good or evil, there were two distinct *natures* which offered unconscious opposition to one another, and which when

born and developed, would be manifested increasingly as opposed to each other. Esau typifies the flesh, and Jacob the spirit, and both these existed together, causing perplexity and sorrow to Rebecca.

How careful we should be to gather up with purity and reverence the teaching of an infinitely wise and loving Father and God. If He has so loved us as to *create* living and visible realities, that we might learn in them not only His wisdom, but our own *complex* condition as believers, let us fall at His feet and adoringly "receive with meekness the engrafted Word."

There are many whose souls are saved, many who shall sing in glory for ever, who are a perfect puzzle to themselves. Once they were "happy on the way to hell," floating down the stream in company with the whole world: they laughed, they danced, their consciences *slept*, their souls were *dead*; but—

"When free grace awoke them by light from on high,
Then legal fear shook them, they trembled to die."

"What must I do to be saved" was wrung from their Christless and perishing souls. The answer "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" was received as joyful news. They did believe, they were saved and could sing—

"My happy soul is free, for the Lord has pardoned me
Hallelujah to Jesus' name."

The burden of sin was rolled away, "how could they keep from singing?" "Translation out of the kingdom of darkness into His marvellous light" was a blessed reality to them, and joy filled their hearts. The delivered soul was so filled with love to the Lord for salvation from hell, that self was forgotten, and "the Lamb of God" upon Calvary was the only object that satisfied. What a happy experience was this!

But with a great many how quickly did this condition of soul give place to another of a very different kind. From the want of adequate instruction in the Word of God, and a right conception of what real conversion is, thousands of poor souls are plunged into an experience which their more privileged and clearly taught fellow saints are, at least in measure, spared. If ever a kindly word is needed by young believers, it is when they are just beginning to find out that although converted, they have got deceitful and wicked hearts. Many have thought that con-

version meant a radical change in their evil nature, and that, if not all at once, yet gradually and steadily they would become *entirely* free from sin, and enjoy perfect calm and peace in their souls. Who amongst us have not had *such* thoughts in the first few days or weeks of our converted lives?

But quickly the *airy castles* which we had builded were cast to the ground, and the *real facts* began to unfold themselves—evil thoughts as well as evil actions could now be seen in a light which heretofore had been impossible. The blinded eye and the "darkened understanding" had never seen nor comprehended "the exceeding sinfulness of sin." The slumbering conscience in many things had not accused, and there was neither power nor inclination in the soul which was "dead in sins" to offer resistance. But all this is over, "the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth," The soul which was dead has received "the gift of God, which is eternal life." "Being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. i. 23); a new life has been implanted in the soul, and the saved one has "Christ in the heart, the hope of glory."

But the Spirit which led to Calvary's Cross, where alone sin can be seen in its true light, now begins to show how *terribly sinful* the heart is, and the new or Divine nature which God has implanted in the soul offers real resistance to the old sinful desires within. Thus a war begins, a "struggling together" of two distinct and opposite principles. An Esau and a Jacob in deadly conflict within. But glory be to God, He has said, "the one shall be stronger than the other, and *the elder shall serve the younger*." It is this conflict which is so often used of the Devil to upset the new-born soul. He whispers, "You are not converted at all. Why, you are a greater sinner than before you professed conversion. There are wicked thoughts passing through your mind now which you knew nothing of before. If you were really saved, you would have no sin in you; and you would have peace in your heart." These and thousands more are the darts of the wicked one which are hurled at the delivered soul.

Satan's object is to get the Christian to doubt God's Word, to doubt His mercy, and then to fill the mind with hard thoughts about God. But let us not forget that all the manifested evils, which are now such a

terrible reality, existed within us before, but we had neither eyes nor light to see them. Did the light and "love of God," which are now "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" put those evils there? No, certainly not! We may feel sadly disappointed with ourselves, but remember God knew how bad we were before He saved us, and our sin was dealt with on the Cross, not according as we saw it or now see it, but according to His own estimation of "its exceeding sinfulness." What a joy this should be to our hearts! Peace with God *does not* mean peace *with* or *in* myself.

In Rom. vii. we have the testimony of the Apostle Paul concerning a conflict which raged within him—"a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity." Here is life and the results of it, but where is the joy when he exclaims, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But bitter and joyless as was this experience, it served its Divinely appointed purpose. He learned through it what he was. "For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." A great lesson this, and one which we do well to profit by. I am aware that some have endeavoured to interpret the 7th chapter of Romans as the experience of an awakened but unconverted soul. This teaching has as a rule emanated from those who believe (or try to believe) that conversion puts a man in a position to eradicate his evil nature, and that "if grace is made a proper use of," it will eventually turn out all that is vile from within. Happily, whilst many are hoping for and struggling after such a condition, few have the boldness to assert that they have attained to it. Where there is reality and light no such experience will be professed. He, and only he whose conscience is asleep, or whose soul is dead, can say with impious presumption, "I thank God I am saved and sanctified, there is no sin in me, and I have not committed sin for six months." No greater proof of the wretched, benighted condition of that soul could be adduced than such words.

Grace does not operate to the *expelling* of the evil nature, but to the *conquering* of it. Not to the hiding of it from our eyes, but to the exposing of it. Thus the Christian is kept in *entire and constant* dependence upon God for victory over himself and sin. When the heavy hands of self-judgment and self-denial are lifted from off "the flesh," which perhaps for fifty years had lain conquered and subdued, that remorse-

less enemy of God will rise up and give battle again. Rom. vii., from its position in the epistle, is of itself proof that the experience described therein, is not that of an unsaved one, but of a saint. Chapter iv. gives justification; chapter v., the two heads: Adam and Christ; chapter vi., the old man crucified judicially, and buried doctrinally—not experimentally; chapter vii., the saint must learn to cease expecting any good thing from self, and rise above it to all the victory which is afforded him in the risen Christ. There is an experience beyond the 7th chapter, but the man who enjoys it does not claim for himself "a perfection in the flesh."

It might be well at this point to warn any unconverted readers against taking comfort from the foregoing remarks. Some might confound the natural accusations of conscience with this divine life. But the difference is manifest. Whilst conscience (if not "past feeling") may and does in many things indicate the right course, it is incapable of supplying the *power* for the performance of the right, or the suppression of the wrong. It is not so, however, with the quickened and living soul. "Sin shall not have dominion over you," is the blessed word for such.

The Esau nature, the "flesh," cannot be changed, it cannot be made to love God, the "carnal mind is enmity against God." It is a truth, *undeniable*, that every saint that ever lived, carried about *in* him a corrupt and God-hating nature, which at every turn sought to oppose the work of God in his soul. Believers are really made up of two distinct natures, and if this truth is not seen and received by them, sorrow and perplexity will be their portion. Many troubled ones after "leaving their first love" have hesitated to say that they were saved, because of the motions of indwelling sin; and here the Wesleyan believer cries aloud, "I'm not saved now; I once was, but I've lost it." What has he lost? Nothing at all, save *confidence in the Word of God*. Christ has not lost him—his experience is like that of Rebecca, he does not understand his own condition, nor the ways of God. But the questions of practical import for each believer are, How do I stand related to these two natures which dwell within me? Am I responsible for the suppression of "the elder," "the flesh," and for the development and growth of the "new man," "the younger." Let Scripture answer. "Put ye on

the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lust thereof" (Rom. xiii. 14). "We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh" (Rom. viii. 12). We owe nothing to Esau, therefore no provision is to be made for him—no place is to be given him. Isaac gave him a place because he ate of his venison. How solemn when a child of God shows a preference for the things of nature. When the tongue loses its taste for spiritual things, nature's savoury food is relished, and the will of God forgotten. God's will as to the nourishment and maintenance of the "new man" is plain.

"Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter iii. 18). "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter ii. 2). "Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. iv. 24). Thus we see that whilst the one nature is to have no provision made for it, the other is to be fed with the Word of God, and liberty given it for the bringing forth of its holy fruits. In fact, we are commanded to "yield our members as servants to righteousness unto holiness" (Rom. vi. 19), the end of which "is life and peace."

We have thus looked at Esau as shadowing forth an evil nature within the believer, and our next consideration will be his conduct and influence, as seen and felt by the people of God.

W. J. E.

RESTORATION AND DISCIPLINE.

"By mercy and truth iniquity is purged."—PROV. xvi. 6.

(Continued from page 92.)

DISCIPLINE OF AN ELDER.

LOOK now at 1 Timothy v. 19, 20, "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin (or those who are sinning) rebuke (convict) before all, that others also may fear." This is an aspect of truth which concerns one who is prominent in the work of God—an elder, or overseer. It is not that he *has sinned*, and has become contrite and humble, but he *is sinning—continuing in the error*. And because of the position he occupies there is imminent danger of others being led astray. A competent man, such as Timothy, a man jealous for the truth, is called upon to convict him,

before all, of the thing wherein he is wrong. This Scripture has often been made the authority for the public rebuke of sisters and saints without discrimination, but I suggest that such a course is not warranted by it. *It is public in its character, because of the public position an elder occupies.*

A very clear illustration of this is to be found in Galatians ii. Peter, a man standing in the front of believers as a guide, and attached to whom is great responsibility in consequence, is found acting contrary to the thoughts of God, and dissembling in regard to his conduct. Barnabas and others are being led away by his evil example, and are found following in the false track, and, therefore, Paul "withstood Peter to the face, *because he was to be blamed*," and this was done "before them all" (Gal. ii. 14). It does not transpire that Paul dealt thus either with Barnabas or with the others—it was confined to the leader, and doubtless it produced a sense of fear among the rest. Thus was the truth vindicated, and the Lord's name cleared from dishonour. A similar principle underlies James iii. 1. "My brethren, be not many masters (teachers), knowing that we will receive the greater condemnation" (severer sentence).

The next Scripture I desire you to refer to is a very important one indeed, teaching as it does an

INTERNAL DISCIPLINE,

which is very seldom attended to.

Some Christians seem to imagine that the only thing to do with disorderly ones is to put them out of fellowship, but this is a terrible mistake. If your finger was out of joint you would not rush to the surgeon and request him to relieve you of your hand or arm, and yet this is exactly the principle in matters of discipline upon which some believers act.

How frequently do we witness a godly application of the Scriptures, displaced by an ignorant and self-sufficient spirit!

The Scripture to which I allude is 2 Thess. iii. In verse 6 we read: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." Observe, the standard of our practice should be the instruction of the Apostles, agreeing with the Apostles' doctrine of Acts ii. 42, and the words of the Apostles of 2 Peter iii. 2.

Now, how often we find saints in a church of God who deviate from this course, and associate themselves with that which is not of God; others, again, act unscripturally in their habits of life, and how necessary it is for us to see that while their acting thus does not call for excommunication, yet it does necessitate a phase of discipline which shall make them feel that in their self-choosing ways you can have no fellowship. It is perfectly clear from verses 11 and 12 that withdrawing from such does not imply putting them away. The moment any are put away they cease to be within the province of the rule of the assembly. "Them that are without God judgeth" (1 Cor. v. 13). Here the Apostle, still regarding them as inside, gives them commandment to walk orderly. And yet, if in spite of this they still pursue their own ways, he calls upon the brethren in verses 14 and 15 neither to recognise their ungodly course, or to associate with them in it.

Such are to be made to feel by the isolated position in which they are placed that those who desire to obey the Lord fully, can have neither part nor lot with them in their behaviour. Admonition of such is continuous as long as the disorderly ways are pursued.

Consider a moment how Paul regarded Mark. *He refused to be associated with him in service*, in consequence of Mark's behaviour. I do not think we would be right in saying that Paul would have refrained from "breaking bread" with him, but we are justified in the belief that he would have declined to preach the Gospel with Mark's active co-operation. Of course Paul's attitude toward him in this particular, only lasted while Mark's unruly and disobedient conduct lasted, for in Col. iv. 10 the Apostle instructs the churches to receive him (possibly in regard to ministry), and in 2 Tim. iv. 11 he writes Timothy "take Mark and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry."

EXCOMMUNICATION.

We will now consider the two passages concerning excommunication given us in the New Testament, and we must do so separately, as they differ very materially in character.

Case I is in Matt. xviii. 15-18, and at the outset we may say *this is purely a personal matter, and if confessed could be settled between the two persons immediately concerned.* It is not *the sin itself* which calls for excommunication, but *the sin and the extraordinary lawless-*

ness of spirit COMBINED. That is to say God has made the individual trespass an occasion to reveal to all the saints the true state of the man, which unfits for church fellowship.

It is very necessary, however, to pay the strictest attention to the words of the blessed Lord, and to obey them stage by stage. Thus, and thus alone will His mind be carried out, and Heaven ratify the position assumed by the Church.

May the Lord deliver us from attempting to do His will in matters of this sort through personal feeling or spite, but give us to have His glory as our only aim.

Case II is in 1 Cor. v., and unlike Matt. xviii. the sin itself calls for excommunication. *Not being a personal matter no individual could settle it.* It demands the action of the whole assembly, led by a godly and patient oversight, and in perfect conformity to the Word of the Lord. And should not such occasions be of the most humbling and heart-searching character?

Surely God would speak loudly to the whole assembly in respect of such a solemn matter. We must not forget, however, that the only object of discipline is true and penitent humbling of the fallen one. And as a means to bring this about God prohibits any fellowship of whatever kind with such an individual. How often is this forgotten, and restoration hindered by the foolish and mistaken conduct of some believers.

AN ILLUSTRATION.

To illustrate the force of this, let us consider a case like the following:—A father comes home to his children and finds one of them guilty of gross disobedience. He chastens that one, according to the nature of the offence, and then sends him up to the attic of the house—removes him from the companionship of the others, and hopes that in solitary circumstances the child may awake to a sense of his disobedience, and become penitent for his sin. Presently the father's back is turned, and the children down stairs rush to the attic and begin to frolic with their wicked brother, and with what result? The father's object in the discipline is hindered by their foolish conduct! Thus it is when saints of God mingle with those concerning whom the Lord has said: "Not to keep company," and "with such an one no not to eat" (1 Cor. v. 11).

A perusal of the 2nd chapter of 2 Cor. would show

that when there is unfeigned grief and sorrow for the sin, such an one should be received back. The evil, when unjudged caused the Corinthian saints to be puffed up, and led Satan to triumph. On the other hand, let it be distinctly remembered, Satan may gain an advantage if one be kept out who is again entitled to fellowship, when the discipline has effected its purpose, and when grief and penitence truly exist in consequence of the sin committed.

A PRESENT DAY CAUTION.

The last thing I desire to remind you of is also of pressing importance, and is fast becoming more and more necessary.

Please turn to Titus iii. 10. "A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject." (Compare with this Rom. xvi. 17, 18, and 2 John 9, 10, 11.)

God does not require us to wither our souls by perpetual converse with men of distinct heretical notions. Such are to be rejected—avoided, according to the principle of this Scripture.

The other day I came across a card entitled "Paul's warning about Schismatics," and Romans xvi. 17 was used in regard to it. In it all divisions were condemned. The writer took care, however, to omit the qualifying clause "contrary to the doctrine," and hence what he wrote appeared plausible enough.

But where there are men who are factious and self-choosing in doctrine, who cause divisions in consequence of their own perverse notions, *such are to be entirely discarded.*

Heb. xiii. 9 is a very wholesome caution, and we shall all do well to attend to it. "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, *which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.*"

IN CONCLUSION,

remember Romans xvi. 20, "and the God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet *shortly,*" the subtle instigator of all need for discipline. Till then may we carry out without partiality the will of the Lord, and not forget that, however clear our views regarding these truths may be, we cannot do without the *present help of God* in all matters which may scripturally call for our attention.

F. A. B.

Notes of Addresses given at the Glasgow Fast-day Meetings, April 2nd to 4th.

(Continued from page 69.)



THE following passage was read by Mr. John Munro:—Jer. i. 6-10—"Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child . . . thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak." This, I am sure, in the history of the spiritual experience of Jeremiah, was a most wholesome confession. He was quite willing to take the low place, to be but a child, and God met him in his deep need, fitted and sent him forth, and he was led to do great and marvellous things for God. May we be all led to take the low place before Him to-day. I do not know anything so characteristic of spiritual power as humility before God. I fear that this grace is not much seen amongst us.

Brethren, let us go right into the presence of our God with all the remembrance of our failure and sin, and in brokenness of heart confess it all to Him.

You may also remember the solemn experience that Isaiah was made to know; when he saw Christ's glory he said, "Woe is me, for I am undone." Immediately one of the seraphim flew unto him, having a live coal in his hand taken from the altar, and laid it upon his mouth, and said, "Lo, this has touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged;" then the voice was heard saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then he said, "Here am I, send me."

You may also remember when Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day, and when he saw that he prevailed not against him he touched the hollow of his thigh, and when Jacob's thigh was out of joint, then he prevailed.

From that time he was known as Israel, for as a prince he had power with God and with men and prevailed. May the Spirit of God teach us that power with Him precedes power with men. If we desire to be used by God in moving others, then we must first be moved by God. Do we long and intensely desire to be instruments for blessing to others? If so, we must be broken down before God on account of the low spiritual condition of such.

Those who are led to pray to God in faith very soon have cause to praise Him for answering their prayers. There is not much between our groanings in spirit before Him and our song of victory, having prevailed with God. It is most blessed to know that His power and grace alone can enable us, in the midst of opposition and temptation, to go on with Him day by day to His glory.

May we, as individuals and assemblies of God, be led as Jeremiah to own our complete helplessness, taking the place of weak ignorant children, who can do nothing for God unless He give us power and grace to do it.

It is much better to have real and fervent desires before God, although we can but imperfectly express them in the presence of our brethren, than to be able in our prayers to express them well and in appropriate language but not really from the heart. Brother, do you remember when you began to pray in broken sentences, when the tears came to your relief?—the groans that could not be translated into language, but God understood it all. Oh, how your soul was refreshed as you told out before the Lord your desires in child-like simplicity! There should ever be perfect harmony between the desires of our hearts and the utterances of our lips.

Mr. Fraser.—Ps. cxxxiii.—“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity,” &c. You have been hearing a great deal about unity, and these are a few verses which came up before me again and again to-day. This is a precious little Psalm. It is indeed a pleasant sight when brethren dwell together in unity. I remember once being in a family, and the children were kind to one another, and it made the father’s heart glad that I was there to see the children so kind to each other.

It rejoices our Father’s heart when we love one another. It is like the precious ointment referred to in this Psalm. We read what this precious ointment was composed of in Exodus xxx. 34. It had a sweet perfume indeed. It is also compared to the dew of Hermon. The one represents the sweet odour of this unity going up to God, and the other its fruitfulness to the world around.

The opposite of it is very sad. Just read a verse in the Epistle of James that shows this (iii. 16), “Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.” How different from the cxxxiii.

Psalm. In the course of my daily reading of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, I thought that it illustrates the truth we have in this verse. Turn to the First Epistle to the Corinthians, i. chapter 11th verse—“It has been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.” (iii. 3), “For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” When we read this letter of sixteen chapters what do we find? Fault after fault throughout it, sad, sad faults, showing the carnal condition of this favoured church.

Read a verse in the Second Epistle, ii. chapter 4th verse, to show the state of the apostle’s soul when he wrote it. “For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears, not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.” There is the state of soul the apostle was in when he wrote this Epistle. Beloved children of God, do we know anything of that which we have been reading about? When something goes wrong here and there among the people of God, are we found in secret weeping before God about it?

Jacob’s service as a shepherd illustrates this; he said, “In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from mine eyes” (Gen. xxxi. 40) Have we ever spent an hour before God in prayer over a child of God that may have gone astray? As the Apostle wrote that letter the tears trickled one by one upon his parchment roll. As a brother said this afternoon, “if we prevail with God in secret, we will prevail with men in our testimony for God in the world.”

This Epistle that Paul wrote to the Corinthians had an effect for good upon them. As far as I know, I never knew an assembly in the same condition as the one in Corinth. Although it was in such a bad condition, the apostle never told one of them to leave it. He did not say “I’ll have no more to do with you.” The ground of gathering and the condition of those gathered are two different things. I don’t excuse sin, if we are wrong let us go to the Lord and own it all in brokenness of spirit, and He will come in and bless. If we are gathered to the name of the Lord according to His Word, there let us abide with God. It only drew the Apostle nearer to them when

he saw their faults. That is what will be as a sweet odour to our Lord. I am reminded of a verse in Romans xiv. 15—"Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died." Don't do anything to stumble that brother, for Christ died for him—he has been bought with the precious blood of Christ

Turn now to the 2nd Epistle, chap ii., and we will see the effect that his first letter had upon them—seven things of perfect effect for God. Was Paul rewarded for his prayers and tears? Did he lose them? What was the value that God set upon them? The result shows that God heard His servant's prayer and saw his tears, and granted blessing. Was it a sharp letter? There was as much love as sharpness. You know that it says in Ephes. iv. 15, "speaking the truth in love;" if I have not got the love I had better let the truth stand, and

wait till I get the love. That is the way the apostle wrote to them. Did he lose anything by his faithfulness to them? Ah! no. He was paid well for it here, and when Jesus comes he will be eternally rewarded. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy" (Ps. cxxvi. 5).

There are many of the Lord's servants here who have come from various assemblies throughout the country. Let us learn from these verses we have been considering that the ministry that is needed in all our assemblies must begin in secret with God. If we prevail there with God, no matter how much anguish and sorrow of heart we may experience, as we are broken down before God about it, our hearts will be made glad afterward. Paul's spirit was made glad, and it bound them closer together in the bonds of love.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender

QUESTION NO. CLXXIII.

What is the meaning of the three things mentioned in 1 Thess. iv. 16, the "shout," "voice of the Archangel," "trump of God?"

REPLY.

When Jesus came the first time He divested Himself of all His glories. Humiliation characterized all the circumstances of His lowly entrance into this world.

When He comes again, all will be reversed. All the surroundings of His second coming will be characterized by such glory as befits His exaltation to "the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."

In Luke ix. 26, reference is made to three different glories in which He will appear.

1. "His own glory." This refers to His being "the Son of Man." He is the glorified Man, and, as such, He will come again with the "shout" of a human voice. It is the word of *command* from the lips of Him to whom is given "all authority in heaven and on earth."

2. "In His Father's (glory)." He comes again, not only as the glorified Man, but also invested with

the glory of God His Father. Connected with this is the "trump of God." The law was given from Sinai in very terrible divine majesty. The mighty trump of God was sounded there—louder, and louder it sounded—so exceeding loud that the people trembled, and even Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." "His voice then shook the earth" (see Ex. xix. 16-19, and Heb. xii. 18-26).

Again, that "trump of God" shall be heard. Not in connection with death and condemnation as before, but with the mighty triumphant resurrection power of the Lord of glory.

Then 3rd, there is "(the glory) of the holy angels."

Jesus is exalted high above all principalities and powers—"angels, and authorities, and powers are made *subject* unto Him" (1 Pet. iii. 22). They form His glorious retinue. Partaker of the divine glory of the Godhead—Head of the new creation as the second Man, He is also "Head of all principality and power" (Col. ii. 10), therefore, when He comes again, it is not only with the "shout" of the Man and the "trump of God," but also with "the voice of the Archangel."

Right up into the very thick of all this glory shall His loved and redeemed people be caught.

PRAYER ON BEHALF OF THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL.



PRAYER to the living God is in itself a wonderful thing, and occupies a most important place in divine revelation. Were one to carefully trace the subject of prayer along the sacred page, he would be astonished to find how much the Spirit of God has said about it. But, in order to our prayers being answered, there are two great principles which should never be lost sight of. One is, that we pray in the Spirit, "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph. vi. 18), "praying in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20); also, that our prayers be according to the Word. There is such a thing as extravagant prayers, presenting petitions which God in His Word gives us no right to expect that He will answer. The Lord said to His disciples, "If ye abide in Me, and *My words abide in you*, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John xv. 7). Again, "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to *His will*, He heareth us" (1 John v. 14). With these two important truths before our hearts, let us look at some things which the Lord has revealed concerning prayer for the spread of the Gospel, that, so being guided by His Spirit through His Word, we who are not called to go out and preach the Gospel may not only have fellowship with those who are called to this work, but also be led into fellowship with our God in the great work of gathering in the lost. And, in order to make this short paper as helpful as possible, I shall give what little I know, under different heads.

First of all, we have *prayer for labourers*. "Then saith He (Jesus) unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; *pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest*" (Matt. ix. 37, 38). Now, when we pray in our closets or in our prayer-meetings for the Gospel to make progress, let us never forget this, to cry to the Lord that He Himself would send out labourers. There is no lack of preaching and preachers, but there does seem to be a great lack of divinely-sent men. "There was a man *sent from God*, whose name was John" (John ii. 6); and before the Lord chose His twelve apostles

He spent a whole night in prayer to God (Luke vi. 12, 13). This teaches us how important it is that preachers be divinely chosen. Since it may be truly said now, "The harvest truly is plenteous but the labourers are few;" let us not forget the remedy for this, but go to the Lord Himself and plead with Him to supply the want.

Secondly, we might pray for *direction* or divine leading to be given to Gospel preachers. "Now God Himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, *direct our way unto you*" (1 Thess. iii. 11). Such was the prayer of Paul, and if we turn to the book of the Acts we find the wonderful leading of the Lord on various occasions. In the 8th chapter is recorded the minute way in which Philip was led; in chapter ten we have Peter led to Cornelius' house; and in chapter sixteen we have the following remarkable passage: "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and *were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia*, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia, *but the Spirit suffered them not*" (verses 6 and 7).

Then we are told how Paul was led through a vision to go to Macedonia, where, just as in Philip's and Peter's case, God had a *people prepared* for the good news of salvation. Several years after this we find Paul in Asia, and great blessing attending his labours, but God's purpose was for him to go to Macedonia first; and while we cannot expect the *supernatural*, as in these cases referred to, yet God as really has a purpose now as then, and in proportion to a man's spirituality and meekness, will he be kept in the counsel of God as to where he should labour. Perhaps one great reason why so little blessing follows gospel effort is, that "the right man is not in the right place" according to the purpose of God. And in our prayers let us not forget this request, that the Lord may guide as to pitching of tents and sending preachers.

Then, in the third place we might pray that the Lord would open doors for the Gospel (see 1 Cor. xvi. 9; Rev. iii. 8). A few days ago a brother gave us a most interesting account of a small town where both saints and sinners are thirsting for the truth; but, he added, there is one great obstacle, "they have no place to meet in;" and this want is felt in many places. Let all fellow-saints remember this also in prayer.

Again, we might pray that the Lord would subdue opposition, and save His servants from "*adversaries.*" "Finally, brethren, pray for us . . . that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men" (2 Thess. iii. 1, 2). Again, "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries" (1 Cor. xvi. 9). There is also the opposition of the Jannes and Jambres kind, who withstood Moses by *imitating* the power of God. Let us pray that soul-winners may be preserved from the power of the devil, whether he assail them as "a roaring lion" or as "an angel of light."

Then we have *utterance* to pray for. Paul sought the prayers of the saints at Ephesus; "That *utterance may be given unto me*, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds, that therein I may speak boldly, *as I ought to speak*" (Eph. vi. 19, 20). O that there were more of this humility and dependence on the Lord! Paul's education, knowledge, and gifts were very great, yet he felt as helpless as a little child; he could say to the Church at Corinth, "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling," and, as a consequence, his preaching was "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. ii. 3, 4). How very little of this godly trembling there is now-a-days among preachers. Will you, dear reader, cry to the Lord for much of this godly fear and self-abnegation to be bestowed on gospel preachers, that so they may speak out this wonderful mystery "*as they ought to speak*?"

Then, in the sixth and last place, we can pray to the Lord to *open hearts* to receive His blessed Gospel. Without this all is vain. We read of Lydia "that the Lord *opened her heart*, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul" (Acts xvi. 14). She evidently was an honest inquirer after salvation, but it needed the power of God to open her heart to receive Jesus, just as much as in the case of the jailor whose conversion follows. Are we not in danger in these days of going to work in the Gospel, as if we could convert sinners without God? Is there not a great danger of not waiting on the Lord as to where halls should be opened or tents pitched, and who should preach in them? And is there not a great lack of prayer in connection with our preaching? The truth is, that from beginning to end, from the first arrangement of our Gospel

efforts down to the smallest detail in working them out, there is a want of looking to God Himself for direction and blessing. If there is to be full blessing, the Lord must be at the helm directing who is to preach, where and what they are to preach, and how they are to be maintained, and everything about it. This is no fancy of the writer's own imagination, but a matured conviction, which, if it were more acted on, would not only ensure *more* fruit, but the results would be far more *genuine*. The writer has been alone in the desert with the Lord, and he wishes to give fellow-saints the benefit of some things he has learned while there; and one is that, with all our increase of knowledge, there has been of late a back-sliding in heart from the living God, and if these lines should be the means of leading any of the dear servants of Christ, or of those who are interested in His work, to have more to do with Himself, to Him be all the glory.

Just a word in closing. We are not necessary to our God in the carrying out of His eternal purposes. He can do without us, and not one iota of them will fail whether we are alive to our responsibility or not; but our Father and God has been pleased to take us, His children, into fellowship with Himself in the great work of gathering in those whom He has purposed to save; and not only is He pleased to use us as instruments in His hand, but He delights to have our hearts engaged in the great conflict now going on between the powers of light and darkness, and who can tell what a mighty agency prayer has been, and is still, in this conflict? Let us, then, seek to draw near to God about this, and, if we are not called to go out and preach, we may, while alone with God, hold up the hands of the heralds of the Gospel, and so bring down blessings on them and on their labours throughout the whole earth.

G. A.

The circumstances of every hour furnish us with errands to the Throne of Grace; and we ought, in the secrets of our hearts, to be communing with God our Father all the day long: hearing His voice, asking His guidance, or making confession, if in any of these things we fail. As we advance in acquaintance with God and ourselves we shall have more and more of the spirit of little children—distrusting ourselves, and putting all our trust in Him.

THE GLORY OF GOD IN PREACHING THE GOSPEL.



we are to continue to glorify God in the preaching of the Gospel, there must also be a continuing in the truth concerning His character, manifested in the Cross, as a sin-hating God. This must be preached as well as the love of God; for we must remember that "grace reigns *through righteousness* unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. v. 21). It is true that God is Love; but it is also true that God is Light. For want of due attention being given to *both* these truths, a spurious Gospel is being preached and received; the result of which is indulgence in sin, and a lack of reverence for God. Now I have just a few thoughts, specially for those of us who are through grace in the responsible yet blessed position of preaching Christ, in however humble a way, to the perishing.

1. *The preacher must himself be converted to God before he can tell others what great things the Lord hath done for his soul.* To this the Scriptures testify; for "how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom. x. 15.) Are we all satisfied on this point—that God never sent an unconverted man to preach His Gospel? The Lord Jesus said to Nicodemus: "We speak that we *do know*, and testify that we *have seen*" (Jno. iii. 11). John the Baptist said: "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven . . . and what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth . . . for he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God" (Jno. iii. 27, 32, 34). To this agree the words of the Apostle: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14).

2. *Not only must the preacher be converted, but he ought to be confirming the Gospel by a godly walk.* It has been said that preachers are like mile-stones—pointing the way to travellers. This may be true; but they are more. They are living mile-stones, not only pointing the way, but walking in it. It is true that John the Baptist said: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness" (Jno. i. 23); but it is also true that the Lord Jesus said of that same John: "He was a burning and a shining light" (Jno. v. 35). What liberty it inspires in the heart and conscience of the preacher

when he can say, "Our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile; but as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness . . . Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe"—(1 Thes. ii. 3, 4, 5, 10).

3. Another needful thing in preaching is to be *able to quote the Scriptures correctly*; for, in so doing, two things will be accomplished; (1) The unsaved will have no cause to sneer at our ignorance; and (2) the sinner (who is quickened by the Spirit through the word spoken) will be led, with a God-given intelligence, to trust Christ. Moreover, the word of truth must be "rightly divided." When Scriptures belonging to the Lord's people are applied to the unsaved, the effect can only be damaging. Let Scripture be correctly applied as well as correctly quoted. In Luke iv. the Lord Jesus three times says to Satan:—"It is written"—a precious illustration of Psa. xvii. 4, "By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." Satan there quotes Scripture; but not correctly (compare Psa. xci. 11, 12, with Luke iv. 10, 11). It is one of the devil's designs to get us to quote Scripture incorrectly, and also to apply it to the wrong person, that he may damage the work of the Lord. To be wise on this point it needs that the servant of God be "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. ii. 15).

4. *The preacher should deliver God's message.* "I have a message from God unto thee" (Judges iii. 20). The message may be long, or may be short, just as the Lord may give it. But speaking "on time" should be avoided. For guidance on this point let us hear what the Lord Jesus says: "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath One that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day; for I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak; and I know that His commandment is life everlasting. Whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak" (Jno. xii. 48—50).

5. *The preacher's attitudes and illustrations* should be in harmony with the Word of God. We read that Jesus *stood* and cried, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink" (Jno. vii. 37). This occurred in His *public ministry*. But, in the *conversation* with the woman, we read that "Jesus being wearied with His journey, *sat* thus on the well" (Jno. iv. 6). But whether standing or sitting, one needs to be guided by that wisdom that cometh from above, if we would preach not ourselves but Jesus Christ the Lord (2 Cor. iv. 5). We should endeavour to get the eye of the unsaved from being taken up with us, so that they may hear the Word through which faith comes. In these days story-telling is becoming very prevalent instead of preaching the Word. It is true that the Lord used parables in addressing the people, and no doubt illustrations are helpful if in keeping with the Gospel. But what we have to guard against is the practice of story-telling merely to fill up time and to play upon the feelings of the people. We should ever remember that "*the Word* is sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb. iv. 12); and that "*the Gospel* is the *power of God* unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16). In Acts viii. 4, we read "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching *the Word*." Among Paul's last words we find him exhorting Timothy to "*preach the Word*" (2 Tim. iv. 2). Let us avoid manufacturing intellectual converts—that is urging people to believe on Christ, who have never discovered by the power of the Spirit through the truth, that they are on the way to Hell. There are many who have assented to the truth with their mind who have never embraced Christ with the heart. It is to be feared that there is much of that kind of Gospel preached—a Gospel that strengthens the hands of the wicked that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising life (Ezek. xiii. 22).

6. *The preacher's whole theme ought to be Christ crucified, buried, and risen again.* "I, if I be lifted up from the earth," said Christ, "will draw all men unto Me" (Jno. xii. 32). The Cross reveals what *man* is, both by nature and practice; while that same Cross manifests the love of God to a guilty world. It was this precious truth—the glorious Gospel of Christ—which Paul carried to Corinth, a city steeped in the wisdom of the natural man. He carried the same Gospel to Ephesus, where idolatry was raging (Eph. ii. 12, 13).

Paul knew that everything was powerless but the Gospel. If his hearers rejected this, he had nothing else. He would not supply the Gospel with crutches, such as a Blue-Ribbon or Gospel Temperance army. When writing to a place where some, preaching *another Gospel*, had beguiled the believers from the simplicity that is in Christ, Paul said, Let such be accursed (Gal. i. 8). He did not attempt to introduce some "new thing." He simply brought the Cross again before them, saying: "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" (Gal. vi. 14). The Cross pours contempt upon man's wisdom, while it sets forth the wisdom of God.

9. *The preacher's aim should be the glory of God.* "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31). "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" (Jno. iv. 34); and again, "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (Jno. xvii. 4). May God enable us who are privileged to preach the Gospel, either publicly or privately, to be deeply impressed with the responsibility that rests upon us. May we be able through grace to enter into the spirit of the Apostle when he says: "For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel; for if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the Gospel is committed unto me" (1 Cor. ix. 16, 17). May the love of Christ constrain us thus to do in that sphere wherein He has been pleased to set us, that we may "hold forth the Word of life" "as of the ability God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ our Lord." W. M.

Those who walk with God hear His voice, and He employs them.

If each child of God, each member of Christ, had due conscience of his own accountability, we should soon see better things in the Church of God. If we be careless in the Lord's service, He will surely require it of us.

THE PARABLES OF LUKE.

(xvi. and xvii. 1-10).

YOU will remember that last Sunday I was speaking of the most precious things in the future that is ours—upon the feast of Tabernacles, the crowning feast of the seven great feasts.* And I sought to show you that the great thought therein is of the time when we shall be put right down bodily under the eye of God, and when the Lord will dwell for ever in the midst of His Church. I remind you of that, because part of our subject to-day is a very different one. I do not choose my subjects, in one sense; I proceed in order, and, in due course, come this morning to Luke xvi. I might also say that the exposition of the chapter that I am about to give I gave about twenty years ago, and had it printed afterwards, so that it is no new thought with me, but a view that I have held for many years.

I would next remind you that the entire series, beginning at chapter xiv. and ending xvii. 10, is one string of parables by the Lord to different classes—one complete section of the Gospel. The first three parables are spoken directly to the Pharisees, the second three to the crowds, the third three to show the way to sinners—about the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost child. Now we come to the three spoken to professed disciples. Never forget the beginning of the chapter, “And He said also unto *His disciples*,” or, as it is in the original, “*But He said also unto His disciples*. Now He turns the tables. In chapter xv. He was giving glorious vistas of heaven, and of God welcoming the returning prodigal, kissing him in his rags, covering him with the best robe, and spreading a feast before him. Now in chapter xvi. we have, “*But He said also to His disciples*,” and rest assured a change is coming; and in this glance by our Lord at His professed disciples we find these three parables, two of them to those who turn out unreal and disobedient, and the third a very encouraging one to the true disciples. The first ten verses of chapter xvii. ought to be joined to chapter xvi.

I will be only brief on these two parables, though they are intensely solemn. I would remind you that in the three parables before, the Lord, in allusion, I

think, to the gradual disappearance of the objectors, first speaks of a hundred sheep, secondly of ten coins, and thirdly of two sons—a hundred, ten, two, as if they retired (His objectors) as He went on unfolding the truth of God. Like as they did also in John viii. But now, they having retired, His disciples remain; so now He speaks in solemn tones to them, two parables of judgment, and a third of encouragement. He alludes, evidently, still to the Pharisees, the false teachers of His day.

“There was a certain rich man.” The rich man certainly represents God. Rich in mercy, rich in grace, rich in love, rich in everything. But here He glances at the Pharisees. They had objected to His receiving sinners, and He had pictured a poor sinner as wasting his substance in riotous living. But now He turns the tables and shows that *they* are wasters too, not of their own substance, but of God’s. “There was a certain rich man which had a steward, and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.” They had not brought out, taught, and unfolded the character of God, as Moses and the prophets, whose writings they essayed to expound, exhibit it; they had not brought out the character of God therefrom. Therefore they were superseded by the advent of Christ. They sat in Moses’ seat, and all they said according to Moses, the Lord told the people they were to do, but they themselves were superseded. “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few.” Crowds of Scribes, crowds of Pharisees, crowds of Sadducees, and He looked at His little band—“the labourers are few.”

Here, then, is their first sin. Three sins of the Pharisees are adverted to here; the first is, that they were unfaithful. And nothing is more naughty in a servant than this, “for it is required of a steward that he be found *faithful*.” “Then the steward said within himself, “What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship; I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed.” The Pharisees did not dare search into God’s Word itself, and have their heart probed by the Word, which would bring them to beggary, and through beggary to God; in other words, they would not take the place of the lost sinner. This was their first sin. Their second sin—

* See “notes” in November number of *Northern Witness*.

they now lower the divine standard. Though they will not turn to God they turn to men: "So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said an hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty." Lowering the divine standard. Some illustration of this is given in the next verses. The Lord praises the unjust steward, because he has done shrewdly; he had looked to the future instead of being engrossed with the present, only it was the future of *this* world. Now comes the first hint of judgment. They are the children of this world, and shrewd enough after this world. "And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when it fails, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." We shall see how that the Pharisees enrich themselves, but now He seems to enjoin all who are rich, or inclined to enrich themselves, what they are to do with it. The mammon of unrighteousness is money. "That when *it* fails" (for so it should read) "they may receive you into everlasting habitations." Scatter what money you have got. In 1 Timothy vi. we are shown that the hoarding of money is the exact opposite of the living out of the eternal life, and two classes are there warned, those who had riches to scatter them, those who would be rich to flee these things. So we have here to the one class to scatter it, not that we may be received to a freehold here, but to an everlasting habitation there. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much." Even in the very Word of God itself. "If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" If you are not faithful as regards your earthly property, which is not your own. For we are all stewards of what we possess, whether it be a shilling in our pocket or a thousand pounds. That shilling in your pocket is God's, and if you spend it on yourself be sure you settle with God about it. You say you want a dinner, and you buy it; well, right enough, only settle it with God. Eternal life is your own, but living on this world, resting on this world, is deaden-

ing to the divine life, as all must feel. The Pharisees, who were covetous and lovers of money, derided Him. They might well feel awkward, for He was levelling the parable at them, who were lowering God's standard and enriching themselves, and not only enriching themselves, but here comes their next sin. "And He said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (verse 15). They used their office of teacher to enrich themselves, and to get on and up in this world. And He said this to His disciples as if it were a word of warning to *them*. And I pause to ask a question. Do you think that this word of warning to His disciples is, in view of the religious profession of the present day, unneeded? Now I remind you again of the opening words of the chapter, "But He said also to His disciples," and He warns them, by the ways of the Pharisees, that they are not, in seeking to serve God, to be after money or position in this world. Surely this is plain enough from the chapter. Yet it is a solemn thing; you will see that the devil in the snares which he would present to us, never, or hardly ever, comes with pure error; there is always a grain of truth in what the devil presents to men, only it is distorted truth. The Lord Himself ordained that those who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel; that they must of necessity occupy places of prominence; that teachers are leaders. He must have known all this, and yet He says this to His disciples and points to the Pharisees. One word more on this. "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fail. Whosoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery." He puts his finger upon one single word of which they had mitigated the force. And don't you think that it will be easy, in the day of the judgment of the Lord, for Him to put His finger upon many passages, say in Corinthians, and plain commands that His people won't hear?

Now, let us pass to the next parable (verse 19). "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day." Now he has got to be very rich; for it is the same person. The parable is often given to poor

sinners, but it is a warning to professed Christians. "He said also unto His *disciples*." Then it says in verse 22: "The rich man also died, and was buried." One can almost see the pomp of the funeral, and the marks of the deep respect in which He was held. It is done with! And now God is going to speak: "And in hell He lift up His eyes, being in torments." What good then of being high up in this world? He had lowered God's standard, otherwise he had not been so well liked; but of what good were his riches now? "And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue." That tongue that said, "Take thy bill and write fifty," that member God particularly set on fire. Again, "I pray thee, therefore, father, thou wouldst send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." The reply is, "they have Moses and the prophets. You toned down the teaching of Moses and the prophets; but Moses and the prophets remain; the truth remains if you did not attend to it. Let them attend to it."

But I turn from this side, not because there are not many other points very solemn, but I turn to the beggar. I sometimes wonder whether there is any allusion in the beggar here to the words, "To beg I am ashamed." How this one got to be a beggar we are not told. Whether he suffered for standing out for divine truth, we are not told; but the moment he dies he is carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. All over then. We look, every Christian, for something far different to this. Then He was speaking to Jews, and Abraham was the father of the Jewish nation. It is the picture of a feast, and lying in the bosom of Abraham, the highest place of honour. But for us it is, "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." Carriage implies time; and the words, "it came to pass," also imply time, as if His had been a lingering sickness. Not so with the rich man; he died, and was buried, and in hell. But in the beggar's case there was time, as if the corn were ripening. Then, I say, there is also time implied in the expression of carriage: not so with us; the moment the breath is out of our body, at once are we with the Lord Jesus. We must remember the Jewish colouring of this scene, but now that Christ has died and risen, things are changed altogether. One word more

on this, "And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (verse 31). We are servants of the Lord, and are to testify not of a dead but of a risen Christ. All Christendom is in a terrible plight, because all the unbelief of Christendom is levelled at that risen, glorified Christ. One has come from the dead, but they will not be persuaded, they love their sin. "My disciples you have seen the Pharisees under My word of rebuke, now take care you do not imitate their ways." And again I say, is it unneeded, as we look around and see every one striving to be great? and all their cry is, give us money, money. Oh, when *He* speaks out again!

Now comes a word of encouragement to His true servants. Then said He unto the disciples, "It is impossible but that offences will come; but woe unto him through whom they come!" It is again to His disciples, but it is repeated because now it is to the true disciples. Offences will come. Christians are terribly divided. Alas! on a Sunday morning how terribly they are divided. Constantly splitting up, dividing, and separating, instead of gathering round the Lord; taking umbrage and offence, or perhaps offending. Now the Lord shows us His way. If two Christians split, there must be faults on one side, perhaps both. Now see what it says: "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent forgive him." Act for God, but be so patient, so gracious, so loving, so forbearing, that he may be drawn to you and you to him; that is God's way. And take care not needlessly to grieve a brother; and if we do, because he sees our faults, or because we press some truth unduly, we are accountable, and shall hear of it. But suppose your brother takes offence needlessly, observe the Lord's words now, "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." The brother is to ascertain what ground there has been for being stumbled against you; and if he finds there is none, he is to own his fault. And if he does that, even seven times in a day you are to forgive him. What a holy, loving, beautiful way it is; would to God it were more acted upon! Alas! how much easier it is to say hard things of one another, than to have good, kind, gracious things to say one of

another! How much more prone we are to think of the eccentricities and peculiarities of another, than of the grace in another.

But now observe next, "And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith" (verse 5). They felt that this was very very difficult, to live out all this loving, lovely, gentle, humble, disinterested, self-sacrificing life. "Lord, give us more faith in Thee, in Thy love and care and supervision, that we may do this." The man who tries to obey God always finds out the difficulties. Suppose that there is some precept of scripture, which you would not care whether it were scripture or not, you find no difficulty about that; it is the part that you try to obey in which you find the difficulties. All this being drawn to one another is very difficult. But then faith grows by practice. "And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you." The more you live out this life, the more you live in Christ; the more you eye God, the more will you see the God you eye; the more you eye God, the more will you enjoy the consciousness of His eye upon you every moment. Living out this life is the way for it to grow. Whose arm is the strong one? The blacksmith's; because it is always wielding the iron hammer.

Now comes the parable, if we may so call it, for not one of the three is spoken of as such. "But which of you having a servant ploughing, or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by when he is come from the field, Go, and sit down to meat? And will not rather say to him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me till I have eaten and drunken, and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which is our duty to do" (verses 7-10). You can see that the section ends here by looking at the following verse. Twelve parables—three to the Pharisees, three to the multitude, three to sinners, three to professed disciples. Of these last three, two of solemn judgment and one showing the way of grace. And what is the upshot of this? "When ye shall

have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." The Lord hints that the great hindrance to the growth in grace of Peter and the others, was this self-complacent spirit; that this was why their faith did not grow. So there is the lesson. Even if you have done all that He would have you do, and done it rightly, you are only a poor unprofitable servant at the best, and have only the blood of Christ to plead before God; and if He puts a crown upon your head, you can only cast it at His feet. This verse appears to be an allusion to Job xxii. 3, "Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to Him, that thou makest thy way perfect?" He only gives to *you*; is it any gain to Him? It is a gain to thyself; thou canst give Him nothing. At the most that you can do, it is only to tell out His praise:—only tell it scripturally. And do not lean to the one side of truth; that is the way to please the mob, but it is not the way to please God.—*Notes of Addresses by Mr. W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. H.*

THE LORD'S TABLE.

TO those who recognise themselves as the objects of the sovereign grace of God, in that they are amongst the few who have been not only redeemed by the blood of Christ from the hand of the enemy, but "gathered out" (Ps. cvii. 2, 3), through the power of the Spirit, from amongst the Gentile peoples, nothing should be more precious than the Lord's table on the Lord's day. Not only is it in itself the outward token and manifestation of the working of that SOVEREIGN GRACE which has made such what they are and has brought them to the place where they are, but it is further the token and manifestation of SUSTAINING GRACE, which ever considers and cares for those whom sovereign grace has befriended; which always recognises their need, and which, with a special delight in the work, makes provision to meet it.

It would appear as though many were suffering loss through their lack of full apprehension of the Lord's table and the Lord's part in its preparation.

In everything on this earth that is of God Himself

there is of necessity a Divine element and a human element; a Divine operation and a human operation.

Take, for example, the precious book which we are in the habit of terming the Bible, that is, *THE BOOK*. In it the Divine element and operation stands in no need of proof to the believer in whose heart the Holy Spirit dwells; to that believer historical evidences are of but secondary value, antiquarian testimonies of but subsidiary worth. He accepts them and is glad. If occasion arises for their use he uses them, but the demonstration of the Divine authorship and authority is to him of a very different character. He has seen Christ in the Book; he has heard God speak to him through its pages, and the Holy Ghost within him has added an unshakable testimony to that which he has seen and heard; therefore each and every word comes with power to his heart and his conscience as—"Thus saith the Lord." Side by side with all this is the human element and operation. By men "of old time" the Scriptures were penned, and we "speak" correctly when we speak of "the books of Moses or of the epistles of Paul." By men of more modern days the original words of the dead languages were translated into (practically) synonymous words which can be "understood of the common people;" and by men the Book has been put into the shape in which we have it in our hands, our homes, and our assemblings together.

The human element is always that which is outwardly apparent—that which is perceived by the senses. We need not remind each other of its presence, for that which is self-evident can never be forgotten. Far otherwise is it with the Divine element; such is, like God Himself, beyond the ken of the outward man; very real and present to faith, very precious to the spiritual heart and the exercised conscience, but a mystery, perhaps almost a myth, to any other: and, being unseen, it is constantly in danger of being more or less forgotten, and there is need for us to stir up one another by way of remembrance, hence these lines concerning the Lord's table.

With regard to the human element apparent in the Lord's Table and Supper, there is no question of principle involved in the table actually used for such purpose, whether it be a pretentious and ecclesiastical looking structure in a highly respectable hall or a

packing-case turned upside down in a back kitchen, although the latter would be the more preferable of the two. The bread and the wine, "the meat" of the table, are of themselves nothing beyond bread and wine of ordinary manufacture. The table is placed in position, the bread and wine disposed upon it by human hands alone, yet beneath it all the Divine element is, though unseen, not only as real and as present as the human, but it is or it ought to be the ruling principle which governs our manners and our conduct when gathered together to show the Lord's death. "We look not at the things which are seen," that is at the human things, the necessities of the present situation, we being still in the body, "but at the things which are not seen," that is at the Divine realities which God Himself has presented to our minds. When the seen is subordinated to the unseen, the human to the Divine, God is glorified on the earth.

The question suggested here is—were this so, could the table bearing the bread and wine in the midst of the gathering to the name of the Lord be made a mere burden bearer for money boxes, for hymn books, for notice papers and circulars, perhaps even for handkerchiefs and mufflers? Such things are too often placed upon the table by those who sit sufficiently near to it to use it for the purpose, and who are frequently the elder and wiser brethren to whom those who are younger look for guidance, and whose example (particularly if it be a bad one) the less instructed are prone to follow.

"Oh!" breaks in some beloved and hasty-headed objector who perhaps has himself been in the habit of offending thus, "what a straining at gnats; what an undue importance to attach to mere external things—what *are* we coming to?"

Let such objector remember that a straw serves to indicate the way in which the stream flows. Frequently, perhaps invariably, our dealings with the external things, those matters, the administration of which the Lord has entrusted entirely to our hands, and in which there is nothing little and much less nothing trifling or insignificant, serve to show as clearly as the straw shows the direction of the stream, whether our minds are occupied with the Divine or the human element in them. If, to our minds, the Lord's table is merely an article of furniture with a cloth and some other objects

upon it, set in order by some fellow-man, then by all means let us use it for our convenience ; but if we say, "THOU preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies" (Psalm xxiii. 5), then let us jealously guard that preparation and see to it that it is kept solely for "the meat of His table." Remembering that

"Evil is wrought through want of thought
As much as want of heart,"

let us not be guilty of heedless breaches of good manners when we are our Lord's guests, indecencies which the "enemies" in whose presence He prepares His table rejoice to behold, and which we would never dream of committing did an earthly superior in rank and station invite us as guests to his own board: the conduct of a man who, honoured with such an invitation from a superior, should so far forget himself as to carry his hat and his umbrella into the dining-room and deposit them upon the dining-table, is but a feeble picture of the heedless conduct that makes light of the table of the Lord.

Somewhat similar mistakes are continually being made in the business of the Lord's supper itself ; somewhat similar, because arising from the same lack of appreciation of the Divine element in the Supper and the Divine presence of the Ruler of the feast.

Each Lord's-day morning that Ruler lays down afresh the order of the proceedings. First, a definite giving of thanks, then the breaking of the bread ; then a second definite giving of thanks and then the drinking of the cup. Nothing could be clearer or more distinct than the Scriptures on this matter. Nothing is left to servants to determine ; the order is prescribed by the Master and any departure from it or any transposition of the courses is simply *disorder*, whether it be the breaking of the loaf by a brother standing at the table *before* the thanks are given, or whether it be the omission of the second thanksgiving, or the intrusion of hymn singing, or words of exhortation, between the bread and the cup. Each and all is without warrant, and is therefore neither honouring to God nor helpful to His people.

If there be those who honestly think the foregoing is unnecessary, perhaps they will kindly bear with it for a little time : much that at one period appears to be far-fetched or uncalled for is seen a little later in a totally different light. In any case may God help

all who seek to act out the order of His Word in its spirit and in its letter in this day of the overwhelming power of the strange woman, the mother of harlots, to know the constant danger we are in of slipping unconsciously into mistakes and errors on the one hand or the other, and to know further, that our only safety is to be found in constant and conscious dependence upon God Himself for guidance and direction even in matters in which some may have had, through His grace, a part for many years. W. H. H.

THE FLESH OR FIRSTBORN.

PART IV.—ESAU'S LIFE AND CONDUCT.

(Continued from page 108.)

WE have studied Esau as representing an evil principle or nature, which exists in every child of God, and which opposes the Spirit of God and His work in the soul. We must now follow the developments of that nature, and carefully scrutinize its actions. Esau as a person in manifested departure from God, claims our closest attention. If, indeed, he be a type of "the flesh," and his life and ways be placed on record "for our learning," we may not expect to find in him any thing spiritual, and we are not called upon so much to attach moral or personal blame to him, as *through* him to learn what the flesh in every believer is, and is capable of doing, if not kept under and denied. "And the boys grew : and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field ; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents" (Gen. xxv. 27).

This verse gives us in few words the bent or inclination of the nature and ways of these two brothers. Jacob dwelling in tents tells of his *pilgrim and stranger* character, while Esau's love for the field, and his ability as a hunter, mark him as one whose desires and pursuits were earthly. We do not mean to say that hunting was in itself sinful, or that Esau was not following a justifiable mode of living, but it becomes perfectly clear, that when the moment of testing arrived, he proved himself to be one whose heart was occupied with *present worldly good*, rather than *future blessing*. In his hunting operations he was "cunning," he knew the best modes of capturing his prey, but where was his wisdom as to the future?

The natural unconverted man may have a keen eye

to his earthly prosperity, and may prove himself to be wise as to making money and "laying up treasure on earth," but, alas! he, too, forgets the future.

The *wisdom* of the unjust steward (not his unrighteousness) Luke xvi. was commended by his lord. That man had an eye to the future, and made provision for it. The "certain rich man" of the same chapter did not apply this principle to his case. "He fared sumptuously every day," but he forgot that his days on earth would soon be done; "he died, and was buried, and *in hell* he lift up his eyes, being in torments." How solemn! damned for ever; all because he lived for time, and neglected God's provision for eternity. Well might Solomon in his Proverbs say, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise, which, having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest" (Prov. vi. 6, 7).

In Esau we see the entire absence of the principle of faith, which looks onward to the future and esteems the sufferings of the present to be unworthy of comparison with the glories that *shall be* revealed (Rom. viii. 18), which enables one to say, "Neither count I *my life* dear unto myself" (Acts xx. 24). "And Esau came from the field and he *was faint*, and Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint . . . And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright; and Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me . . . and he sold his birthright unto Jacob . . . and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright" (Gen. xxv. 29-34). However men may seek to justify his action, however plausible their arguments in his defence may be, yet the Holy Ghost has not left us in any doubt as to the *true nature* of his conduct. "Looking diligently . . . lest there be any *profane person* as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright; for ye know how that *afterward* when he would have *inherited* the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears" (Heb. xii. 15, 16, 17). This comment of the Spirit of God, for ever stamps his action as wicked and profane.

It is perfectly clear that there was a blessing to be *inherited*, and into the possession of that Esau would at some future time have come, had he waited for it.

Certain privileges seem to have been the rightful portion of "the elder," or *firstborn* in a family, as in the case of Cain, for God said to him concerning Abel, his younger brother, *and thou shalt rule over him* (Gen. iv. 7). Again, when Israel stretched out his *right hand* and laid upon Ephraim's head who was the *younger*, Joseph objected to this saying, "Not so my father, for this (Manasseh) *is the first-born*, put thy right hand upon his head, and his father refused" (Gen. xlvi. 17, 18, 19). Or again, "If a man have two wives, one beloved and the other hated . . . and if the *firstborn son* be hers that was hated . . . he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the first-born, by giving him a *double portion* of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength; the *right of the firstborn* is his" (Deut. xxi. 15, 16, 17). Thus it was understood, that in the *ordinary and natural* course, the firstborn had first and double privileges, and claims upon the inheritance.

But in the case before us, as in many others, God reverses this order of things and introduces what to the natural man is mysterious, and seemingly unjust. But where is he who dares to charge Jehovah with unrighteousness? As we bend over our picture, should we not rather be found ready to exclaim, "O, the depths of the riches both of the *wisdom and knowledge* of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out" (Rom. xi. 33).

Such a spirit becomes us, and especially so when we remember that "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning" (Rom. xv. 4).

If God reverses the order of nature, He has a reason for it, and that reason He has been pleased to reveal to us, He *need not* have done so, but it delights Him to call us friends, and to make known unto us His purposes (John xv. 15).

"That which is born of the *flesh is flesh*," and as Esau is peculiarly a picture of the evil nature which "is enmity against God," we see *first* God rejecting him, and that before *man* could see a cause for it; howbeit, God can see where man cannot. But we ask, do not Esau's life and ways unfold to the spiritual eye what God had *seen already*, before that life was lived? "He needed not that any should testify of man for He knew what was *in man*" (John ii. 25). But *we need* to have unfolded to us, step after step, line after line, in detailed history the wicked ways of a man in order to apprehend, with any measure of

clearness, how utterly without God he is. Although God had purposed to give the inheritance to Jacob, yet the blessing was not taken away or withheld from Esau until he had with his *own will and consent* yielded up his claim to it, until he had "despised the birthright." What was that birthright to him? "A mess of pottage," "a morsel of meat," was esteemed more highly than all the promises which God had given to Abraham. If we were speaking of Jacob, we might have much to say *against the way* by which he sought to obtain the blessing, but this can safely be said in his favour—that he had a *strong desire* to inherit the promises of God. In this is seen the wide and essential difference between the *deeper* natures of these two men. The one set no value whatever upon the inheritance, whilst the other esteemed it so highly that he fell into the sin of *deceit* in order to secure it. How often this has been the case with God's children! Right objects and right desires have frequently lain beneath very questionable modes of procedure, and all for want of *waiting upon God to know His way*.

Esau then was permitted to manifest himself, and by his own profanity, to put himself outside the pale of blessing. What a deep and solemn lesson is here! Man's utter ruin and estrangement from God is plainly told out in all this. It was not so much that God *would not* impart the blessing, as that Esau was *not capable of receiving it*, and God knew this from the beginning. "What shall I do that I may *inherit* eternal life?" was the question asked of the Lord Jesus by the rich young man (Mark x. 17). He imagined that he had some *inherent goodness*, which only wanted right direction in order to give him a claim upon the inheritance; he was taken upon his own ground and tested by the Word of the Lord, but, with only one result—that of manifested inability to enter upon the blessing, on the ground of what *was in him*.

But God *will and must* have an heir. His infinite goodness must find an object upon which to bestow itself. In the beginning man was created that God might bestow upon *him* all the blessings of creation. How wonderful! Well might the Psalmist exclaim, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him? . . . Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet" (Psa. viii. 4-6).

Thus the whole earth was placed beneath the rule

of Adam. But he lost his inheritance. Satan's lie was believed. "Ye shall be as gods," was the inducement held out to him by the serpent, and man became the enemy of God. How deep the fall! How complete the ruin! And now, no child of Adam, no unconverted "firstborn," can ever claim to be an *inheritor* of either heavenly or earthly blessing. "Ye must be born again," is the solemn statement of the Son of God.

The second birth brings man into a sphere and condition where, and in which, he not only can be blessed, but he is enabled to enjoy that blessing. It may be asked by some, were the children of Israel "born again" when brought into the possession of earthly blessings under Joshua? My answer is *typically they were*. This is seen primarily in Egypt, when "*the firstborn*" died in the substituted paschal lamb (Exod. xii.) or again, in another and fuller aspect—when Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, and commanded twelve other stones to be carried *up out of the midst* of Jordan, and to be placed on the resurrection side, the one representing the death and burial of the "old man," the other, Israel's resurrection "into newness of life." We may readily concede that *few, if any*, amongst the tribes of Israel understood in fulness the teaching contained in these ordinances, nevertheless God's thoughts and "ways are equal," whether man can comprehend them or not. But though the "first Adam" (and consequently all his seed) forfeited every claim to the inheritance because of sin, yet, blessed be God "when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son," whom He had appointed Heir of all things (Heb i. 2). That blessed One was tempted of the Devil, and encouraged to become independent of God. Possession of all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them was promised Him if He would but fall down and worship the Tempter; but, glory be to God, that *dependent One* would not take Himself out of His Father's hands in order to enjoy the inheritance at the hand of Satan: God's Heir was the *subject One* who came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him (John vi. 38); Who humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. ii. 7-9). God therefore hath highly exalted Him, and now we see Jesus—crowned with glory and honour (Heb. ii. 9) filling the throne, having received from the Father all authority in heaven

and on earth (Matt. xxviii. 18), and by-and-by He shall receive the heathen for *His inheritance* and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession (Psa. ii. 8).

“And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the *Son also Himself be subject unto Him* that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. xv. 28).

Thus we see that subjection to God, and fellowship with Him, characterizes the true Heir from first to last; there was no desire, and never shall be, to enjoy any thing apart from, or contrary to that *One* whose name is Jehovah. Alas! alas! this can not be said for those who are “born after the flesh;” man in his natural, unconverted condition, seeks to take forcible possession of that which can only be obtained through submission to God; this is clearly seen in the parable of the vineyard. Last of all, He sent His beloved Son, saying, they will reverence My Son, but they said, *this is the Heir, come, let us kill Him, and the inheritance shall be ours.* The “firstborn,” (Esau)—nature cannot be entrusted with blessing from God; it owns Him not as Supreme, but would make its nest among the stars, and dispute the sovereignty of the Almighty (Obad. 3, 4).

W. J. E.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY J. R. C.

CHAPTER VII. 14.



It is important to understand aright the meaning of the word “sanctified” and “holy” as used in this verse.

In what sense is the unbelieving husband *sanctified* by the believing wife? It cannot be that his relationship toward God is in any respect altered. He is here regarded as still an unbeliever, and, if so, in all likelihood an idolater. A similar use of the word which serves to illustrate its meaning here, is to be found in 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5: “Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is *sanctified* by the Word of God and prayer.” This does not imply that any change takes place in the article of food referred to, but simply that it is set apart for the Christian’s use by the Word of God, and God is

acknowledged as the Giver by him, who in the using, gives thanks. Men might command to abstain, but if God sanctions its use by His Word, then it is *sanctified* in a relative sense, so that I can eat to the glory of God.

So the unbelieving husband is relatively sanctified, *i.e.*, he is set apart by God for the believing wife. Godward, he is just where he was, a condemned sinner. The conversion of his wife has made no change in his relationship to God, except it be in adding to his responsibility and deepening the guilt of his unbelief. But as concerns his wife he is so “*sanctified*” that for her to depart from him would be contrary to the will of God.

The same principle applies exactly where the husband is converted to God and the wife remains in unbelief.

Then comes the much misunderstood clause, “Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy” or “sanctified,” the word is the same.

We have already seen that had the rule of the Old Testament applied as in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, not only must the unbelieving husband or wife be separated from, but also the children born of such unions. In fact, the apostle says, “Else were *YOUR* children”—not merely the children of parents, one of whom was converted—but the children of the Corinthian believers altogether. Their children had no hereditary title to blessing. They had not been circumcised and brought into any such covenant relationship with Jehovah as attached to the Commonwealth of Israel. The Corinthians had but recently been converted to God from idols, and, therefore, their children had been born to them, with but few exceptions, whilst they were heathens, and not having yet themselves believed, and been born again, and made members of Christ, regarded from the Old Testament point of view they were “unclean.” But the same “sanctification” that applied to the unbelieving husband or wife, also applied to the children. “Now are they holy.” It does not mean any more in respect to them than it does in the case of the husband or wife. It is argued, “they are *holy*, therefore, let them be baptized and so admitted into the visible Church.” But if this Scripture warrants the baptizing of children, surely it also warrants the baptizing of the unbelieving husband or wife. If it warrants the regarding of the children as Christians,

then surely it warrants the regarding of the unbelieving husband and wife as Christians also. Moreover, if the children were baptized upon the conversion of one or both parents, and thereby constituted Christians, what could be the meaning of the words "Else were *your* children unclean"? Such words have no meaning if they had already in the ordinance of baptism been "engrafted into Christ," according to Presbyterian doctrine, or "regenerated" according to the doctrine of the Churches of England and Rome. They rather prove that no such sanctifying (?) process had been applied to them, and that until they themselves became children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, they were only relatively sanctified, in the same sense as the unbelieving husband or wife.

As the believing wife was taught to look for the conversion of her husband, and so to behave herself as to win him for God, so believing parents are taught to bring up their children in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord," and so to look and pray for their conversion, until which time no ordinance of man can either engraft them into Christ or make them regenerate.

Verse 16, "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" Here is encouragement to cheer amid the trials inseparable from such a close association of the saved and unsaved. A hope is held out, which in many cases would be realized. The one who so long holds out against the truth, may, after all, be one of God's elect, to whose salvation the other may be used. We are thus encouraged to hope for the salvation of those who are near and dear to us. How often God answers prayer in this matter, the experiences of the saints can testify.

Verses 17 and 18 seem to be a taking up of another matter about which the Corinthians had written to the Apostle for counsel. They were in doubt as to circumcision. Man is ever prone to attach value to external rites. For ages, circumcision had been the divinely appointed token of the covenant of promise to Israel in the flesh. But in the new dispensation the flesh is set aside. "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing but the keeping of the commandments of God." That is to say, so long as circumcision *was* a commandment of God, it was right that it should be observed, there was blessing in

obedience; now it is no longer a commandment, it is therefore "*nothing*," but the great thing for us is still to "keep the commandments of God," for in so doing now as ever, there is great reward. It would have been a terrible loss to a Jew under the old covenant not to be circumcised. He could not eat of the Passover, or worship at the Temple; he had no access to any of Israel's privileges. But with the death of Christ, the veil was rent, the middle wall of partition was broken down, and the whole ceremonial law passed away.

But are the people of God now left without commandments? Certainly not. The New Testament contains explicitly many commandments. There is the great commandment to "love one another, as I have loved you" (John xv. 12)—and all that is involved in it. Then there is the acknowledging that such instructions as are written by Paul in 1 Cor. for the ordering of the church are "the commandments of the Lord" (see 1 Cor. xiv. 37). There is the Lord's command, "This do in remembrance of Me"—and also His command concerning baptism. For every department of our life, He has given commandments, either from His own lips or by His apostles, and concerning them all He says, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments."

Are you and I seeking to obey the Lord in all the different relationships of our life? as husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, servants?

Verse 20, "Let every man abide in the calling wherein he is called." All the lamps in the city are not gathered together in one place, they are distributed in every part, in order to give light to the whole city. So God calls one in one sphere of life, and another in another sphere; one in one family, and another in another family. One a wretched idolater, another a religious self-righteous Saul of Tarsus. One is called as a free-man; another as a bond-servant, and God's instruction is, "let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God." God means him to shine where he is.

There are some who, when God saves them are engaged in callings wherein they dare not count upon God to be with them. Some are called being soldiers. He goes to the war and aims his rifle at the heart of an enemy—a man to whom, as a witness for Christ, he ought to be declaring the gospel of God's grace. He feels there is something about this calling that is

inconsistent with his character as a follower of Christ, and he seeks his way out of it, not by deserting, but by being honourably set free.

Some may be called as they are serving behind the counter of a public-house. He feels that he dare not rebuke sin or witness for Christ in such a position—he cannot therein abide with God—therefore, he seeks to be delivered from it. Wherever the Christian is, he must not part company with God; he must walk in the light with God; he must be able to hold communion with God in every department of his life.

There is a story told about a house in which there was a secret chamber. It was never opened, no friend or servant had ever seen into it—when at last it was opened, it was found to contain a skeleton.

Is there a corner of your heart that you have never opened up to God? Is there a skeleton chamber there that you would fain keep God from seeing, and into which you wish the light might never shine?

Be wise and open it up to God. Sooner or later God will break it open, and the light shall shine into it. Let your prayer now be “Search me and try me, and see if there be any evil way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Take God into your counsel about everything. Put not forth your hand to a transaction upon which you cannot ask your Father's blessing.

A FAREWELL.

I WILL not be long!
 Though sad our parting song
 Beside the margin of the mournful sea,
 'Tis nought but bliss,
 E'en in an hour like this

Disciple-ones of such a Lord to be!

'Twill soon be o'er!
 This separation sore
 Will seem to us as though it ne'er had been,
 When next we stand,
 Thus clasping hand in hand,
 Nor time nor tide again shall flow between!

“A little while!”
 We sing it and we smile;
 We smile to think how short, how short 'twill be.
 Our Lord shall come,
 And we shall gather home,
 Beyond the surges of the sundering sea!

A. P. M.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to “prove all things,” and “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender

QUESTION NO. CLXXIV.

Does Heb. i. 5 refer to the birth of Christ or to His resurrection?

REPLY.

Undoubtedly to His resurrection. This is shown in Acts xiii. 33—“The promise which was made unto the fathers God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, ‘Thou art My Son,’” &c. Corresponding to this is the title given to the Son in Rev. i. 5, “the First-begotten of the dead.”

QUESTION NO. CLXXV.

David enquired of Jehovah, when in uncertainty as to his course, and received clear, unmistakeable replies, May

God's children now get as decided direction under similar circumstances beyond the general promise, “in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths?”

REPLY.

The prayer of the Apostle for the Colossian saints was, that they might be “filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,” and this in order that they might “walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing” (Col. i. 9, 10).

The “opened understanding” of the believer is in contrast to the “darkened understanding” of the unbeliever.

The Spirit of God is the great Opener of the understanding. The instrument He uses is the Word of God. Hence the prayer of the Lord Jesus, “Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth.”

There are those who are "unskilful in the word of righteousness." Such cannot be filled with the knowledge of the will of God.

There are those, again, "who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. v. 13, 14).

This was found in its perfection in the Lord Jesus. Of Him it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him: the Spirit of wisdom and understanding; the Spirit of counsel and might; the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, and shall make Him of quick understanding (or quick scented) in the fear of the Lord."

Of Him also it is written, "By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee." "Through Thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way."

It was through being thus filled with the knowledge of His Father's will—by the Word of God, and by the Spirit of God—that He could detect in Peter's well-meant "be it far from Thee, Lord," the suggestion of the tempter. He was too "quick scented" in the fear of the Lord to be deceived.

Again, when He had said, "Let us go into Judæa again," the disciples sought to dissuade Him from His purpose; but He was walking in the light, and to have yielded to their suggestion would have been to step aside into the dark and to stumble (John xi. 7-10).

But no amount of mere knowledge of Scripture will suffice for such guidance. It is not to be obtained from the Word apart from the Spirit, neither by the Spirit apart from the Word. And there are conditions attached. "The meek will He guide in judgment; the meek will He teach His way" (Psa. xxv. 9). "If any man be willing to do His will he shall know of the doctrine" (John vii. 17). This is a deep principle. The Holy Spirit will not teach those who have not that meekness which yields to do the will of God when it is seen.

We do not say that God may not otherwise direct. "The bit and the bridle" may guide when the eye is off Himself" (see Psa. xxxii). Paul was not suffered to go into Bithynia by the Spirit; then he was enlightened as to his going to Macedonia in a vision. Thus they went, "assuredly gathering," that so the Lord directed them.

This is perhaps the most explicit instance in the New Testament of the extra-ordinary guidance of a servant of God. God *may* thus guide. But we know of no promise which warrants us in expecting that God will so guide now. We have known of many a supposed leading of the Spirit, through visions and emotions and impulses, which proved to be mere fancies of the imagination, and sometimes tending toward direct disobedience to the Word of God.

A child is guided very much by direct precept. It is not competent to understand the mind of the parent or the reasons for certain instructions. It asks and it gets its direction, as David asked at Urim and Thummim and was directed. But a wife has understanding of her husband's mind through constant intercourse and communion. She may not require the same *kind* of direction as the child, for she is "filled with the knowledge of his will." So, the guidance we are thus taught to seek is of a *higher character* than that of David and the Urim, and requires a closer dealing with God and His Word.

The Word of God is not a dictionary, to take up and enquire at and lay aside when done with. It is rather a medium through which the mind of God is being continually communicated by the Spirit to His children, in order that they may grow up into Christ in all things.

In every step and turning in the path of life there is a *right* and a *wrong*, had we but eyes to see it. True guidance is to be found in a mind so exercised in the *use* of the Word, and in subjection to the will of God, that it is quick to discern and adopt the right, and to detect and refuse the evil.

It is better to be thinking of what God is than what we are. This looking at ourselves is at the bottom really pride—a want of the thorough consciousness that we are good for nothing. Till we see this we never look quite away from self to God. Sometimes, perhaps, the looking at our evil may be a partial instrument in teaching us it, but still even that is not all we need. In looking to Christ it is our privilege to forget ourselves. True humility does not so much consist in thinking badly of ourselves, as in not thinking of ourselves at all.

WALKING WITH GOD.

A CONFERENCE ADDRESS BY MR. T. NEWBERRY,
EDITOR OF THE "ENGLISHMAN'S BIBLE".



MY mind has been in full harmony with what we have been hearing, but it has been dwelling again and again on that sentence in Genesis v. 24 "And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." We have been hearing repeatedly of the pathway of obedience, as the pathway of blessing and of progress; but what beloved friends is that pathway, that "path of the just . . . that shineth more and more unto the perfect day?" It is walking with God. "Enoch walked with God." The pathway which he trod was not simply a path of obedience to God, but the pathway of fellowship with God, and I believe we shall find that the only Guide to that pathway, the only One who will never leave us nor forsake us all the journey through, the only One who can really conduct us into the pathway, keep us in the pathway, enable us to overcome every difficulty and danger of the pathway, is God Himself. To walk in the path of obedience, we must "walk with God."

Do we want to find that pathway? Let us get into communion with God. Cultivate communion with God, and you are there—without an effort, without a thought. I never shall forget the language of a lady, speaking of her own experience some forty years ago; it made an impression on my mind never to be forgotten. She was a mistress in a young ladies' school. She was telling me her own experience; that she was in the habit of keeping a diary, and at the close of each day she had to record her many failures; want of temper with one, and something wrong towards another. At last she thought, "What is the secret of it all?" "I have not been abiding in Christ: I have not been walking with Him." From that time, she said, her effort was not to control her temper, nor to seek patience with her pupils; but to abide in Christ, to remain in fellowship with Him, and all was plain. She laid aside her diary from that day. Yes, that is the secret. "walking with God." You cannot take the pathway of evil or of error, while walking with God. He will not take that pathway with you. You must forego communion with God before you can go in the pathway of error or of evil. He will not deviate

one single footstep out of that straight and narrow way which leads to life eternal.

I have long found that the way to detect error, or evil of the heart, is to look at it in the light of God's countenance. In any other way one may be deceived. In the light of human intellect or human opinion, one may be misled; but the thought examined in the sunlight of God's presence, through the teaching of God's Spirit, by His Word, is the safeguard against error, or evil of thought, or doctrine.

"Enoch walked with God." We all know the happy termination of that pathway. "He was not, for God took him." He had chosen God for his daily and hourly chief companion on earth. He had made Him the man of his counsel, the companion of his thoughts. Down-sitting or up-rising, he was in fellowship with God. We are told the secret of it, and we are told the result of it by the Holy Ghost, when Enoch is mentioned in that catalogue of worthies, in the 11th of Hebrews.

"By faith Enoch walked with God." By faith he saw Him who is invisible. By faith he walked in the pathway in which God could walk with him step by step, and "he was not." He was translated, but, says the Holy Ghost,—and I have thought of this again and again—What was the result in respect to Enoch's walking with God? "He had this testimony—that he pleased God." Without faith it would have been impossible. Faith was the starting point. Faith was the pathway he persisted in; but he had this testimony, that he pleased God. If we would please God we must not neglect companionship with God,—the whole Trinity "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Fellowship with the Father—"Our Father which art in the Heavens." Fellowship with the Son—the "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother"—and fellowship with the Holy Ghost; for the communion of the Holy Ghost is fellowship with the Holy Ghost. It is by the Holy Ghost we have fellowship with the Father, by the Holy Ghost we have fellowship with the Son; but in order to have fellowship with the Father, and with the Father, through the Son, there must be unbrokenness of communion with the Holy Ghost.

If the question were asked, "What is the shortest route from Leominster to London?" some would consult "Bradshaw" or other time-tables, but I know that the shortest route is a pleasant companion.

What will shorten the journey from the city of destruction to the heavenly city like that? Oh, how short the waste desert becomes in communion with God! How bright the darkest night! How sweet the fellowship of these long lingering hours in fellowship with God!

“Enoch walked with God.”

When Enoch first struck out that path he was not the inventor of it. Long before this we have it recorded that Adam and Eve, on the very day of their fall, heard the voice of Jehovah, walking in the garden in the cool of the day. That word, “walking,” is precisely the same as is used in reference to Enoch’s walking with God. They heard the voice of Jehovah. And what do we learn from that? How did they know it was Jehovah’s voice? Evidently it was a well-known voice. That footstep was a familiar one, and it is implied, that in the garden of Eden God walked with man and man walked with God. God set the example, and I believe our beloved brother, Chapman, will tell us that God is more anxious for companionship than we often show ourselves to be. There is a wail of sorrow as well as a strong reproach in that enquiry of Elohim, when walking in the garden in the cool of the day:—“Adam, *Where art thou?*”? *where art thou?* Where is my companion? We have taken sweet walks together. We have trod backwards and forwards in the cool of the day, in the calm eventide. I have lost my companion, my friend. Adam, my friend, my companion, my associate, where art thou?

“Enoch walked with God.” It was a long pathway. What does the word Enoch signify? There are two meanings to that word. You may get these two interpretations—*dedicated*, and *initiated*; and this name tells us much. You may learn the character of the parent, from the names given to the child in that early period. The name was often the expression of the emotion of the parent, chiefly of the mother. And what does that word given to Enoch tell us? That child, by its parents, probably by its mother, was dedicated to God. It was another infant Samuel, given in answer to prayer, and given to God in return—*dedicated*. But there is another meaning, and that is *initiated*. Oh! mothers, you are very anxious to teach your little tottering infants to walk *alone*. What delight it gives you when you are able to let go their little tiny hands

and they can *walk alone*! It is then one of your red letter days. I will tell you that it is a far more important thing to train them, to initiate them to *walk with God*. The grandmother Lois, and mother Eunice taught Timothy the way of walking with God. Oh, train your little ones to walk with God, to begin and to close each day with God, and not to forget God during their pleasures, their pastimes, or their tasks. I shall owe much to all eternity to the kind care in this respect, of my beloved sisters now safe home to glory. My mother and my sisters, if I owe anything to them, it was the early training to walk with God.

“Enoch walked with God.” But not only was he dedicated to God in infancy and one trained to that pathway, serving his apprenticeship in early youth to that best of all businesses, in order to co-partnership by-and-by with his Father; but when he became a family man, when he had the cares of a family around him, not only in early childhood and early youth, but for 300 years that pathway was pursued with patient perseverance. “Enoch walked with God” amidst the anxieties and perplexities of family life, amidst the growing evil of the world around,—no companionship outside. He was shut up to the fellowship of walking with God. He lived amidst all the growing iniquity of that world which was exhausting the patience of a long-suffering God, who had to break open the fountains of the great deep and open the windows of Heaven to blot it out of existence; for amid all that scene, with them there was no companionship.

Oh, for Enoch, you say, what a blessed pathway, what a glorious end! He walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. Perhaps we may not be taken, but Enoch’s translation was a beautiful type of the translation of the Church.

Have you ever noticed the walking with God in the 23d Psalm, before the Lord comes? I do not say it will be, it may be so. We must wait patiently, but if the Lord should tarry, and we are not translated, what then? “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.” The valley means the experience of the soul, but then, in that dark pathway—“Who is among you that feareth Jehovah, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that

walketh in darkness and hath no light, let him trust in the name of Jehovah, and stay upon his God" (Isa. l. 10)—holding fast the Father's hand in the dark. "Tho' I walk thro' the valley of the shadow of *death*." Take it in that sense. When other friends must leave us on the shore; when all must let go our hand; when we find ourselves amid the shadows of death, and when all our life's companionship must leave us, *then*, "I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

"Enoch walked with God." We said that God commenced that walk in the garden of Eden. He set the example, walking with man. Even when man had broken off all companionship, and had turned every one to his own way, how anxious was the Lord Jesus for that communion? One of His first acts after His resurrection was to renew that walk with man. Have you forgotten that seven miles' walk on the very day of His resurrection, to Emmaus, that walk with God, manifest in the flesh? That walk was commenced in Paradise, renewed with Enoch, and with Noah, and with the children of faith onwards, broken by man's own sin and wandering, renewed in resurrection. How short the journey to Emmaus! How sweet the companionship! He had walked with them so long that they took Him in to rest for the night. "Abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent." A beautiful counterpart in the opposite direction. I once heard of a Sunday-school teacher making this reply, when a little child had said, "Please, Teacher, what is meant by Enoch walking with God." The teacher said, that God and Enoch were in the habit of taking very long walks together, and one evening they walked so long and so far, it was too late for Enoch to return to his own home, so God took him home with Him; and here the two disciples had walked so far and so long, that they took Him in to their home. The longer we walk with Him the closer our walk, and the more precious our communion with Him the less we shall be disposed to let Him go, to break up the companionship, or to do without Him.

"Enoch walked with God," and there is another walk with God. It began in Paradise before the fall, renewed in grace again and again, taken up in resurrection by the risen Lord, to be *continued* in the *Paradise* of God in the countless ages of a long

eternity. "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of water" (Rev. vii. 17). That *Paradise-walk* shall be renewed; not in the cool of the day, but in that eternal life that knows no eventide, no shadow, no night. "They shall walk with Him in white, for they are worthy" (Rev. iii. 4), says Christ to those who have been faithful to Him on earth. He wont give up that companionship: *No! no! no!* He will renew it in the *Paradise* of God.

Moses and Elijah talked with Jesus on the mount concerning His decease. These two disciples, also, going to Emmaus talked with Jesus concerning His decease, just accomplished at Jerusalem. "Art thou a stranger?" "Don't you know it?" No, stranger!—When we walk by those fountains of water in that *Paradise* of God, in companionship with Jesus, how sweet it will be to talk with Him while He opens to us the Scripture concerning His death, in the light of glory, and of God; in the light of His own grace, when He tells us that His love to us on Calvary's bitter tree was endured that we might walk eternally with God.—*Communicated by J. S. A.*

The Teaching of Scripture as to our Dependence on the Indwelling Spirit of God.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

"I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever"—John xiv. 16.

NOTICE here that the Holy Spirit is said to be "another comforter." This gives us a precious thought about the Lord Jesus. So long as He was with His disciples He was their comforter. No one who knew and loved Him ever dwelt in His presence without finding Him to be a comforter. I dare say there was one who was much in His presence who never received any comfort from Him; that was Judas. But to the other disciples, although He might speak to their conscience and rebuke them,—for He never lowered the standard of His holiness to suit them, nor lowered any of His claims to meet their unbelief,—nevertheless, He confidently knew He was their comforter.

He was going to leave them for a time, but He

says "I will send you another Comforter." He knew that during all the period of His sitting at the right-hand of God, His saints on the earth would need a comforter. There is a day coming when the saints of God on the earth will not need a comforter; I mean, in the same sense that they do now. That is, when Satan will be bound; when he shall be shut up in the bottomless pit, chained and sealed there. Then Jesus Christ will be King over the whole earth; and righteousness instead of suffering shall reign, and the meek shall inherit the earth. At that time men's hearts will not be exposed to the same temptations as now. Then the Lord's people will be under very different circumstances from this present age. During the time that Christ is sitting in His patience on the right-hand of God, Satan is "god" and "prince" of this world. While the power of Satan is developing on the earth the Lord Jesus well knew that His people would need a comforter, and therefore He speaks of the Holy Spirit as such. When the Lord Jesus ascended to the right-hand of the Father the Holy Spirit was sent down, and took possession of His living temple. When the tabernacle was finished,—when everything was ordered according to the Divine pattern, then the cloud of God's glory filled it. Even so, after the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus to the right-hand of God the Holy Spirit came down and took possession of His living temple (Acts ii).

"By one Spirit were we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 13).

God did not merely come as He came to Israel, when in Divine glory He dwelt in the tabernacle, in their midst, with all the tribes gathered around Him; but nearer still,—He took up the redeemed bodies of His people and made them His living temple. As you read the Scriptures you may notice that the word "temple" is never found in the plural. God has one temple, and each believer is a living stone in that building as well as a miniature or representation of the whole. Christ is the Head, and each one members one of another,—one body, indwelt by one Spirit. This is God's temple.

The indwelling of God's Holy Spirit is a fact plainly revealed to us in the Scriptures. How do I know the forgiveness of sins? Do I know it because

I feel it? No. I feel happy because I know it, but I know it from God's word, and on the ground of the precious blood of Christ. I know that the blood of Christ was poured out to make an atonement for my sins; and I know on the authority of the Word of God, that through simply believing on Jesus my sins are all forgiven. How do I know the Holy Spirit dwells in me? Is it because I feel His presence? No. It is true that we feel His presence within us. As we read the Word the Spirit opens up and unfolds the precious things of God and of Christ to our hearts, and thus we are comforted and made to rejoice. But it is not alone by these blessed experiences of His presence that we know it. I know that He dwells within me, just on the same ground that I know the forgiveness of sins, viz.,—God has told me so in his Word. Is this not a most blessed truth that God has revealed to us in His Word? That as certainly as the Lord Jesus Christ is now at God's right-hand, so certainly does God's Holy Spirit dwell in each believer. We have a beautiful illustration of this in the 14th chapter of Leviticus. This chapter tells us of the cleansing of the leper. The blood of the trespass-offering was to be put on the tip of the right-ear, the thumb of the right-hand, and on the great toe of the right-foot of the leper. Then the oil was to be put upon the blood of the trespass-offering. That teaches us in type or shadow, that the Holy Spirit is given to us, poor defiled lepers, on the ground of the shed blood. Such is God's estimate of the worth of the blood of Jesus. The Spirit of God is one of God's infinite gifts. The Lord Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, "If thou knewest the gift of God . . . thou wouldest have asked of Him and He would have given thee living water" (John iv. 10). This refers to the gift of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon us at the infinite cost of the precious blood of Jesus.

Let us turn to a few Scriptures to show this—

"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God" (1 Cor. vi. 19). This is one definite, distinct passage.

"In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation." This does not imply that there was a lapse of time between the believing and what followed; we have it more correctly rendered in the revised version.

“In Whom having believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession” (Eph. i. 13, 14).

We are purchased, and in that sense we are redeemed, but we are waiting for another redemption; not the redemption by purchase, but by power. Israel was redeemed by the blood of the Lamb; but they were also redeemed by the mighty power of God, and brought to the other side of the Red Sea. So, also the believer in Christ is purchased and redeemed by blood, but he is waiting the redemption by power; when the Lord Jesus shall come, and then these bodies of our humiliation shall be changed, and we shall be caught up to meet Him. Till then, according to the Scripture, the believer is sealed by the Holy Spirit.

We never read in the Old Testament of the Holy Spirit *abiding* in the believer, dwelling in their bodies as a temple. He is rather spoken of as a heavenly visitor than an abiding friend. Prior to Pentecost the Holy Spirit is spoken of as “coming upon,” “filling,” operating in various ways in and through the people of God. But this truth of the Spirit of God dwelling in the believer is only revealed to God’s people in this dispensation. The descent of the Holy Spirit was consequent upon Christ’s ascension to the right-hand of God (John vii. 39). He is the seal of God upon each of His redeemed people until the day of redemption.

It is a marvel how God maintains His people in natural life day by day, “for in Him we live, move, and have our being.” It is a greater marvel still, how the souls of God’s people are maintained in spiritual life in the midst of such dreadful odds,—the world, the devil, and our corrupt flesh. Nothing but the almighty sustaining power of the Spirit of God can uphold us in the face of all the mighty power of evil that is against us. The Lord Jesus says “greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.” Do not let us be ignorant of the mighty power of Satan that *now* worketh in the children of disobedience.

In order that we may see how dependent we are upon the mighty indwelling Spirit of God, let us look at a few Scriptures which show this (Eph. iv. 26-32). “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” Observe,

it does not say, grieve not the Holy Spirit lest he leave you. As we have already seen, every believer in Christ is sealed, anointed and indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. Little as we may comprehend or understand it, nevertheless it is a fact revealed in God’s word. This exhortation, as you will observe, is in the midst of a group of plain, distinct, and familiar precepts.

Rom. viii. 13—“For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die,”—that is, ye are about to die; living after the flesh is a dying condition:—“but, if ye, *through* the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” Mark that the mortifying of the deeds of the body,—those corrupt deeds that were the habit of our lives in our unregenerate state is a work that can only be accomplished by the Spirit of God. Many, not understanding or realizing this, have tried to mortify the deeds of the body through the energy of the flesh. And so the Church of Rome has appointed penance and neglecting of the body, but these things can never mortify indwelling corruption. It is only by the power of the Spirit that sin, dwelling in us, can be kept down. If the evil, corrupt, abominable deeds of the body are manifest in any way the Holy Spirit of God is grieved within us. He is not able, as it were, to lay His hand upon the enemy and hold him down. Why is this? Because He is grieved, slighted, and dishonoured, and He does not put forth His power, leaving us to find out the terrible results of unjudged sin.

“Likewise, the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered,” &c. (verse 26, 27). Here we find that for power in prayer we are dependent upon the Spirit of God. Have some of us not got that liberty in prayer; that nearness to God, and power to take hold of Him that we once realised? Is prayer a dry exercise instead of a delight to our souls? What is the cause of this? The Spirit of God is grieved within us, and His groanings are unknown. Let us judge, ourselves, and get to the bottom of it.

We cannot pray without the Spirit of God (Jude 20). “Praying in the Holy Ghost.” “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James v. 16). The “effectual fervent prayer” is the “*inwrought*” prayer. It is the same word as we

have in Philip. ii. 13. "It is God which *worketh in you.*" It is the prayer that is wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit. Do we know anything of that prayer? We may go down on our knees and repeat words; but power to lay hold on God we can only realize through the Holy Ghost.

"Through him we both (Jew and Gentile) have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. ii. 18). Here it is access unto the Father, as worshippers. We enter within the veil to worship our Father, by the power of the Spirit of God. In confirmation of this, look at Phil. iii. 3. "For we are the circumcision which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

There is no acceptable worship without the Spirit. We may sing, and sing in tune; we may sing all the parts correctly and be perfectly pleased with ourselves, but there is no worship going up to God, except as it is caused to ascend from our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Mark, the circle is complete, "through Him;" that is Christ; to the Father, by the Spirit. There we have the three persons of the Godhead. We cannot do without God to come to; without Christ as the way, and the Holy Spirit as the power. Never let us forget these things.

Galatians v. 22, 23—"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," &c. There is the fruit of the Spirit, and we cannot bear that fruit without the Spirit of God. It is not in us, and cannot be brought forth by us without the power of the Spirit. Are we not showing love to our brethren, and is there bitterness judging one another, evil speaking, no joy, but murmuring, buffeted, distracted, and everything against us, what does all that tell us? That God's Holy Spirit within us is grieved. What is it that grieves the Spirit? Allowed sin. We cannot know His blessed revealings, comfortings, enlightenings, and guidances if we live in allowed sin.

"When He, the Spirit of Truth is come He will guide you into all truth" (John xvi. 13). Mark that He is here called "The Spirit of Truth." Holiness and truth are combined. Holiness is God's character; truth is that character revealed to us in the Scriptures.

"These things have I written unto you concerning them that would seduce you" (1 John ii. 26, 27). That is, those who would lead you aside from the

truth. "But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you." That answers to, "sealed unto the day of redemption." Although He is slighted and grieved He is not going to leave us. "Ye need not that any man should teach you." That is, you are not dependent upon man; it is not that we are to reject the service of those who are enabled through the Spirit, to teach others. We have all things in Christ, and we have the Holy Spirit to show them to us. How often do we find that we have no appetite for the Word of God? As we read, it brings no real joy, it seems so stale and dry: we read, but get no blessing from it; what is the cause of this? The Spirit of Truth is grieved within us, and cannot minister His grace to our hearts through the Word. Any allowed sin grieves the Holy Spirit of God. In Eph. iv. 25-32, mark the sins that are named, sins of the tongue; sins of the tongue are sins of the heart, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." The bitterness, wrath, clamour, and evil speaking tell of what is in the heart, and a grieved Spirit. Is there little power and blessing through the Word of God ministered in our assemblies? What is the cause? Unjudged sin—walking as men in the flesh. The Holy Spirit is not going to pour out His treasures in our midst if grieved by our naughty ways. Is there little power in prayer in our Prayer-meetings? It is because God's Spirit is grieved. Let us go into His presence that He may search our hearts and discover to us that which is hindering blessing.

Thus, we see that we are dependent upon the Spirit of God for the mortifying of indwelling corruption, for the comforting and rejoicing of our hearts by the Word: it is the Spirit who alone can do this. We are dependent upon Him in prayer for power to lay hold on God; in our worship, for power to enter within the veil, and there worship before Him. Every thing in us that the blood of Christ can cleanse, the Spirit of God can mortify. God will have His people to be holy; and He would make us to feel the shame and sorrow of going on carelessly, living in sin. We may be able for a time to maintain a fair outward appearance before our brethren, but by-and-by it will come out, and the ears of God's people will tingle when they hear of it. May God give us grace to give heed to the teaching of Scripture as to our dependence on the indwelling Spirit of God.

SECOND CORINTHIANS IV. AND V.



CHAPTER III. ends with the words "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Now, I want to offer a few very practical remarks for every-day life—I do not mean as to details, but for the life of our spirit. And do you see, dear friends, that this verse states that God has put an object before our eyes, and that that object is a glorified Christ. There, as verse 4 of chapter iv. tells us, is the "image of God." The world is full of idolatry. There is the image of God—Christ in glory. The Parsees worshipped the sun, and are called fire worshippers; they had a semblance of the truth, but put the shadow for the substance. There is the One to worship, the glorified Christ. But it is not so much about the One we have to worship that I want to speak now; but this verse states that for the every-day life of our spirit we must be gazing at that Christ. The Jew had no object to gaze upon except the Shekinah; we have a distinct object, open to the eye of faith, a glorified Christ. There are two ways in which the soul is nourished—one by feeding upon the word of God, the other when our eye is upon Christ in glory.

Now if we look down chapter iv. and the beginning of chapter v., we find four states or conditions which a believer may peradventure be brought into. This verse suggests the first, light—the light of the glory of the glorified Christ shining into our hearts. That is the object of that light shining out. If the light shines out God must have an object in view; so if the glory shines out of Christ God has an object in view, and that is to shine into our hearts. So we are told in verse 6. In Romans v. 5 it is said that the love of God has been poured into our hearts, here that light from a glorified Christ is poured into our hearts. Now these are two very practical things: God's love conveyed to my spirit so that I may enjoy it and be happy in it, and here we see something else, not merely love, but light—light from a glorified Christ. There is the life, the state in which we may live, living on Christ in glory. And then, like as Moses when he went in before the Lord took the veil from off his face, so are we before the Lord without a veil. So we have it in verse 18, "with

unveiled face." And this not as some attainment, but "we *all* with unveiled face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord." And then we get some profit by it, "are changed into the same image"; and it is the same particular tense in the Greek as is elsewhere translated as "being," "are being changed"—it is a process—"into the same image." I have already reminded you that we are told who is the image of God in chapter iv. 4, and beholding it we are changed into the same identical image. You know that Paul's theme is specially a glorified Christ; Christ had said unto him, "I will make thee a minister and a witness of these things which thou hast seen." Peter's testimony is rather of a suffering Christ. True, Paul wrote, "I determined not to know anything among *you* save Jesus Christ and Him crucified"; but the Corinthians were full of their own wisdom, so he came to them with the very rudiments of truth, and the emphasis is upon the word *you* in that passage. And we find that in three places in the Acts where we are told of Paul's conversion, in each of them we read of his seeing a glorified Christ. Then, are we to have nothing to do now with a crucified Christ? Have we done with that? God forbid! Whenever we are tempted to sin, we are to look at a crucified Christ; whenever we have sinned, we are to look at a crucified Christ; whenever Satan is worrying you with the thought that God is unkind, then look at a crucified Christ. Many things are there which will constantly lead you to look at a crucified Christ. The very supper that we have been celebrating brings before us a crucified Christ, and there is no crucified Christ now except in the memories of His people. It is a glorified Christ, and looking at that glorified Christ we get the glory. Now, I want that to be a matter of every-day life with myself; I want to take many looks every day for many reasons, as the different epistles tell us. Hebrews, for instance, as the Sin Purger, as my great High Priest, or as the great Shepherd; or Ephesians, "the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling." And so might we travel through all, and find many reasons why we should gaze upon that sight of a glorified Christ. But we need not go further than this very epistle. In chapter iii. 9, we read of the "ministration of righteousness," for every ray of that glory is evidence

of how thoroughly sin has been disposed of. There is my righteousness then. Another verse speaks of the ministration of life; another of the "ministration of the Spirit," the Spirit flowing down from a glorified Christ, the seal of my acceptance and the earnest of the inheritance, all flowing from Christ in glory. It is impossible to understand chapter iii. apart from verse 18. Nay more, look at the early verses of chapter iv., and see the use of it. In preaching, or ministering to God's own family, in verses 1 and 2. The great preservative from handling the word of God deceitfully is keeping the eye upon a glorified Christ; "but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Then as to how it bears upon the unsaved we have in the next verses (3 and 4)—"But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ"—that is, the good news of a glorified Christ, "who is the image of God, should shine unto them." I think we get a hint here as to how it was that when Paul was preaching before Agrippa, Agrippa's words were, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." And why, not quite? This verse tells us why. The god of this world had blinded his mind. Then verse 6 shows us how we get this glory from a glorified Christ—by gazing upon Him and appropriating His word. The Lord, speaking of the Holy Ghost, said, "He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." So as we gaze upon His glory and get it He is glorified.

Look now at the next—This Divine Life in its connection with our mortal bodies. As the seventh verse says, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us"; and the allusion is to the lights in Gideon's pitchers. It is no transcendental life therefore; no abstruse ecstatic life. Let the next two or three verses correct such an impression. "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair." And there is only the difference of a letter in the Greek between the word "perplexed" and the word "despair," as if we were all but on the verge of despair. Not about salvation, but about our path through life, perplexed almost to despair. "Persecuted, but not forsaken;

cast down, but not destroyed." These are correctives you see. We need ballast, and whilst we are here God sees to it that we get it. There is the light of the glory in our hearts, but God sees to it that we shall be ballasted. And do not we know, dear friends, something of this second state, of the Divine Life in its connection with our mortal bodies? In verses 10 and 11 we are told twice over of the object God has in view in this singular way of His, "that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our bodies—in our mortal flesh." By dying we live. In verse 10, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus," the allusion is to the carrying about of the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel bore with them through the wilderness; they carried death through the wilderness; and so we, "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." I think the thought is that we have got the flesh in us, sinful flesh, and God would have the new life which we get from a crucified, risen, glorified Christ, and which is in these earthen vessels,—would have it developed, by the carrying about the dying of the Lord Jesus. Whenever the flesh solicits us, God's answer for us is "Jesus died." Do you not oftentimes feel the solicitations of the flesh? That is God's answer for you, "I cannot, Jesus died." In verse 11 this life is seen more in opposition to the world, "For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." But God has one end in view, whether by opposition from within, or from without, that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. And this is in the *second* epistle to the Corinthians, and you know that the second epistles have an especial bearing upon the last days. And the errors of the day are so subtle, so blended with truth, yea with a deal of truth. Oh, these days are not only perilous but singular! Ah, then, we not only need to have our eye upon Christ in glory, but we see here that we need ballast, and God sees to it that we get it. No, He will not let us have a transcendental life yet, not all ecstasy down here. The believer's life is written in two parallel columns—in Canaan on the other side of Jordan, and in the wilderness too. Is it all perplexity, all ballast? If we put too much ballast into the ship it will sink, or into the balloon it will not rise. Is it all depression?

No, blessed be God, Jesus lives at the right-hand of God; He sees us, and we see Jesus, and that is the counteractive to depression. It is depression down here, but a joy in living upon Him up there. Now, see again in verse 14, still with the thought before you of chapter iii. 18. You see that Christ in glory? Yes! And you have looked at him many a time to-day? It is your wisdom and your power to do it; but have you? "Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also *with Jesus*" (so the Revised Version), as if it were all one single act. First the resurrection of Christ, now the resurrection of His saints, of His people, one generation after another, presently of our bodies. One mighty act which it has pleased God to take more than 1880 years to effect. Then see how it operates, verses 12 and 13, "So then death worketh in us, but life in you. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written. I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe and therefore speak." It is the voice of Christ, in the first place, taken from Psalm cxvi. This psalm was sung at the Passover feast, and must be the hymn or psalm which is spoken of in the Gospels; so that a day or two before He was crucified, Christ uttered these words, "I said in My haste, all men are liars." "I believed, therefore have I spoken;" but in verse 13 we see the connection, "*we also believe and therefore speak.*" Jesus was just about to sink down to the cross, and He said,— "Though men deceive me I believe, and therefore have I spoken." Now we are going through the wilderness, "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus," and we believe and also speak, "knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also with Jesus." There, you see, are the two counteractions—Heavenly glory to lift us up, and the ballast—the trials and weights of the wilderness, to keep us down. And do we not need it? I feel I do. And I thank God for the wilderness and for all its lessons, for all its sorrows and trials. "When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?" But suppose He giveth both quietness and trouble? "He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus, and shall present us with you."

Then follows the third state, upon which we have now a few minutes only to meditate,—the disembodied state, or the unclothed state, as it is called. And then follows, fourthly, the clothed-upon state.

Remember that they are your own—these four—therefore hold them tight. The love and the light of God from a glorified Christ are to be shining into your heart; the love, as you gaze at the Cross and at the grave; the light, as you look at Christ in glory. Then there is the life in connection with this mortal body. Then, third and fourth, there is this unclothed and clothed-upon state. There are two points in connection with these bodies we now have, which we are prone to forget. One is, that our bodies, as at present fashioned, were never intended for heaven; they were made for the earth. From everlasting God intended us for heaven; "howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual but that which is natural." Our bodies, as at present fashioned, would not do for heaven. Another point—they are worse than what they were made, for there is sin and death in them. We must be stripped—they will not do. But do not be afraid of being stripped of this mortal coil. It says in chapter v., "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. . . . We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (verses 6 and 8). I believe it is implied, then, that the moment we are stripped of this mortal coil we see the Lord, and none else but Christ. It does not suggest that we see any of our departed friends. So far as I know, to see such would need bodily eyes; but Christ, being spirit, can reveal Himself to our spirits. Whether it seems five minutes or five-thousand years to such, I cannot say. For see what is the transposition. "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (verse 7). Then we shall walk by sight, and not by faith. That makes up for being stripped. But it is an unnatural state; still we read, "For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." *We know*; not I, Paul, but we Christians who have passed into resurrection life, and know something of resurrection power, and know that the God who has quickened our spirits can quicken our bodies. And the Person who has wrought us for this is God Himself. He who has created all these longings after the full fruition of a life in glory is God Himself.—*Notes of Addresses by Mr. W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. H.*

HE KNEW HE WAS SAVED, ALTHOUGH HE KNEW NOT THE TIME.

ABOUT thirteen years ago it was the writer's privilege to make the acquaintance of John R—. The intimacy then begun, continued without intermission, until it pleased the Lord to call old John up higher.

Although years have passed since that event, looking back on the days of fruitful fellowship spent with him whilst he was yet in the flesh, the conviction deepens that he was one of those choice spirits who lived very near and walked very close with God. His joy in the Lord was fresh every morning. Well he knew, because often he visited, the never-failing spring; so that, meet him when, where, or in whatever circumstances, the good word of the Lord seemed to rise spontaneously to his lips. That a Christian should ever be unhappy he could not understand. His own life was a song of praise; from its depth to its height the key was the same—God is good; and literally he was always singing. In conversation with him, whilst you were speaking he was crooning the words of some hymn expressive of the deep joy that ever filled his heart. His lot was cast in very deed amongst the poor of the world; hard, exhausting labour had weakened him, leaving indelible marks in the stiffened joints, and disquieting pains that oft afflicted him. Seldom did he refer to these things, but, if he did speak of himself or his circumstances, none ever heard him complain, they only served him as a text from which to preach anew the well-nigh forgotten virtues of patience, contentment with his lot, and thankfulness in that it was so much better than that of others.

John was never a public speaker in the sense this is usually understood, but it is questionable if there was a Christian in T— who spoke to more people about the grace and willingness of God to save. To the rich and the poor, the anxious and the careless, he had always a word, and often the passer by, struck by the quaint figure on the roadside and the low crooning already referred to, stopped to speak, going their way again, if not blessing the Lord at least carrying away much food for serious thought. He was “manifestly declared an epistle of Christ,” and those whose privilege it was to know him, would

as soon have thought of doubting their own existence as to have doubted that old John was born of God.

A tea meeting had been arranged for, and, of course, old John was there. An esteemed brother, now in another land, then engaged as a pilot at the harbour, brought with him to the meeting two Christian sailors, Methodists. After tea was over the pilot proposed that each should shortly tell his conversion, and give a short account of his experience since, prompted doubtless to this line of things by his sailor companions, and, forthwith beginning himself, he told the manner of and means used by God in his own conversion. Sitting next to him were the sailors, one of whom then arose, and, in a way peculiar to Methodists, recounted what he was pleased to call the Lord's dealings with his soul. Whilst he was speaking the ejaculations of his shipmate became loud and louder still, until when he had finished it was apparent his friend was in a state of great excitement. No sooner had the first finished than his companion was on his legs, and such a burst of extravagant utterances were poured forth as had never before been heard in the little hall, closing his speech by asserting, in the most emphatic terms, that he did not, and would not believe anyone was born of God unless they could tell the day and the hour on which the event took place, and point to the very Scripture that was their deliverance. Resuming his seat there was a pause, every eye was turned on old John, whose seat was next to the sailors. After a stillness that was awesome by contrast with the former tempest, John slowly rose. Tapping his breast significantly with his finger-end's, turning his eyes upward as if communing with Him he loved so well, there fell from his lips these never-to-be forgotten words:—“I'm saved, praise the Lord. I'm saved, bless His name. The day I dinna ken, the hour I dinna ken, ony verse in particular I canna point to, but He kens He saved me, and I ken I'm saved. Oh, brithers! the good Lord has mony a way of daeing his ain wark; whiles it's dune sae quietly the man's no sure himsell for a wee whether he's saved or no, and whiles (at this point looking down on the sailors beside him) it's like a man cowpit out of his boat in a big storm, and the big waves are like to swallow him; but, when maist gane, he is thrown on a rock, and he kens in a minute it's no water but firm land he has a grip o'.”

John sat down ; the experience meeting was ended ; a happy season of prayer and praise followed, we all having felt John's words were true.

P. H.

FIVE CONFESSIONS.

FROM PSALM CXIX.



ELOVED, I do not write because you do not know the truth, but because you know it. These confessions of the godly are so precious, that I want to remind you of them. The first one that I ask your attention to is in verse 94—"I am Thine." This is very sweet to those who have been redeemed by the precious blood. The time was when we could not say, "I am Thine." We were "far off" because of sin. But now in Christ Jesus we are made nigh by the blood of Christ—so nigh, that we can say, "I am Thine, O Lord." Yes, praise to His name, we are His. We are His by *redemption*. "Christ died for us." We are His by *new creation* ; for we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus. We are His by *union with Christ*, for every child of God is one with Christ. "We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." Dear brother, or sister, let us remember this blessed truth—we are not our own. We have made the confession before God ; we have confessed His name before the world,—“I am Thine, O Lord.” It is blessed to be able to say it in truth.

The next confession is in verse 125—"I am Thy servant." A servant is not to do his own will, but the will of his master. Our Lord and Master, the great Servant, said : "I came not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." If we make this confession, let us be careful not to belie it by setting up our own will in opposition to the will of God. How often this is done by those who are bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ. It is most wicked to do it, yet it is done. Think of an angel doing it. What terrible consequences would ensue ! The Holy Spirit saith : "Ye are not your own." Every child of God is a servant of God, no matter what position in life he may fill. If it be an honest position, remember the word : "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Let us remember the judgment-seat of Christ. What will you say *then*, if you have been seeking to please yourself or to please men ?

The next confession is in verse 141—"I am small and despised." This is what every true servant of God feels as he goes on faithfully in service. Lowliness of mind is where the power lies. This was ever the drift of our Lord's teaching to His disciples, who were men of like passions with ourselves, and ever trying to rise above one another. In Matthew xviii. we have the terms "little child," and "little ones," seven times over. In Luke ix. 48, we have the same teaching. It is a hard lesson to learn ; but it *must be learned* by all who enter heaven. In this chapter we find the disciples reasoning among themselves who should be the greatest. Christ rebuked them by setting a child by Himself, and before them, saying, "He that is least (or lesser) among you all, the same shall be great." The same truth seems to be taught in Luke vii. 28 ; John was great ; but, if you desire to be greater, you must become lesser. "He that is least (or lesser) in the kingdom of God, is greater than he." O what an example of this teaching was Jesus our Lord ! He was the *high* and *lofty* One. Yet He became, for us, the *lowly* One ; and He says to us, "Learn of Me." In the confession which we have just been considering, we must not fail to observe the word, "despised." A faithful servant will not become popular in this world where His Lord was rejected and cast out. Let us remember that. This leads me to the next confession, verse 19.

"I am a stranger in the earth." This is the relationship of a child of God to the world. His citizenship is in heaven. But he was not always a stranger here. Once he was *of the world*, and had his home in it. But, when he believed in Jesus, the cross of Christ cut his connection with the world for ever. That cross made him a stranger where once he had been at home. The Word of God as well as the Cross of Christ has for ever separated the believer unto God ; and, as he lives in the power of that Word, he owns that he is but a stranger here. We are in the world, but not of it. Therefore we should not stain our hands either with its sins or with its politics. We are called to walk in separation from the world : "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you" (2 Cor. vi. 17).

The next and last confession is in verse 63—"I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts." Although a stranger in the

earth, the child of God is yet in a fellowship which God has formed, and not man. Yes, blessed be God for the fellowship of saints. The people of God in earlier days were of "one heart and of one soul," and "all that believed were together." The cause of this oneness with each other was that each one, in the power of the Holy Spirit, was "holding the Head." It was not so much holding a *position* as holding the *Head*. I believe our blessed Head would keep our position right if each one of us would seek to fear Him and let Him have His place in our hearts. He would also manifest Himself more "in the midst" when we are gathered in His own blessed name. What a power we should be if each one would seek to fear the Lord and to walk before *Him*! We are called to the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ; and, because of this, there ought to be fellowship one with another. And so there is, praise God. "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). Let us seek to be obedient children, and we shall know the joy of God and the fellowship of saints. I have heard the story of a father and mother who, having occasion to go from home, left their two children alone in the house, charging them not to go near a dangerous spot, not far from the house, where some berries were growing. The children got on well for some time; but at length they thought they would just run down to the berries and take a few, and their parents would never know of it. So off they ran and were soon back. The parents came home, but the children were not glad to see them. They did not welcome the old people as at other times. The reason was asked. One of them tried to speak, but could not. The other said, "*The happy has gone out of our hearts.*" They had disobeyed, and therefore could not be happy so long as they were ignorant of their parents' forgiving love. They were not happy in the presence of their father and mother; and I am sure they were not happy with each other. The way to get "the happy" back into our hearts is by *confessing* and *forsaking* our sins (Prov. xxviii. 13; John i. 9). Dear child of God, let us seek to keep our hearts right with God, and we shall know His love, and we shall love the brethren too. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John xiii. 35).

VISIT TO THE SHETLAND ISLANDS.



FRIEND in the South of England having heard that I had lately visited the Shetland Islands, wrote to me, asking whether I intended to publish an account of the Lord's work there, as I had done in the case of the Faroe Islands. In replying in the negative, I had somewhat of the following reasons in my mind. In Faroe the work is only in its infancy, or rather up to this, has been little more than a ploughing or sowing time, of which the fruit has yet to be reaped, whilst there are the difficulties to be overcome of a foreign language, and of labouring amongst a foreign people, and only one solitary labourer to make headway against it all. In Shetland, on the other hand, the case is almost the reverse; the soil has been worked constantly, year after year, and that by a succession of faithful and devoted evangelists and teachers, who at great cost and self-denial have preached the Word of God all throughout the islands; and moreover, the people whom they sought to influence were their own countrymen, speaking their own tongue. The fruit of all this is seen in the lives of several hundreds of Christians, who are gathered to, and meet in the name of the Lord Jesus only, thus affording great encouragement indeed to these labourers to continue their faithful service, knowing that their "labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. xv. 58). So is it, that in the case of Shetland, we have exceeding cause to praise God for what he has done in the past, while we ask Him to help in the future. In the case of Faroe again, we, so to speak, ought to stir ourselves up to more prayer, that God will even yet grant the same blessed results. Thus, it seemed to me that there did not exist the same need for publicity in the former case as in the latter, and yet I have thought that this small notice would be of interest.

The Lerwick half-yearly conference, at which I was privileged to be present, was held on July 2nd, in the New Town Hall, where from two to three hundred Christians were gathered. Many of these had to come ten or twenty miles, on foot or by boat, to attend these meetings. It was a good time, and the Lord gave His blessing. Various brethren took

part :—Brother Spence, of Lerwick, speaking on 1 Peter v. 10. “But the God of all grace who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” First, there is the “call,” lastly the “glory,” the suffering comes between; all go together, not one or two without the other. 1 Peter iii. 14, “Suffering for righteousness,” contrasted with 1 Peter iv. 15, “Suffering as a busy-body in other men’s matters.” Brother John Martin followed on 2 Tim. iii. 15, “And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus,” and also other passages. First, there is knowing the Scriptures, but this is of no avail, unless there is the being “made wise unto Salvation” thereby. In contrast to this, we see how the Children of Israel departed from the way of God, and fulfilled not the purpose He had in them (Judges iii. 1-17): albeit there had been committed to their charge the oracles of God. The solemn lessons which this passage contains were dwelt on very pointedly.

Brother D. MacIntyre concluded the first part of the meeting, speaking on Rev. ii., concerning “First love,” which manifests itself in love for the Person, the Work, and the Word of Christ, love to all Saints and to the unsaved, and in sympathy with and for the servants of the Lord.

After tea, a question was handed in regarding deacons and elders in the Church, which I took up, endeavouring to show from Acts vi., that deacons (in the restricted sense now used, of those who attend to money matters) were wont to be looked out and chosen by the Church, while elders (1 Peter v. 2, 3.) (*i.e.*) those who “take the oversight,” are not so chosen; yet, are to be not as lords over God’s heritage, but “ensamples to the flock.” Again, 1 Thes. v. 12. teaches that the “brethren are to know them, and to esteem them (13 v.) and to obey them” (Heb. xiii. 17). And when God’s Word says that the “brethren” are “to know them,” this can and ought ever to be done, and the responsibility lies on those who follow that word, to seek to carry it out in practice. The day’s meetings were then brought to a close, after some suitable exhortations by our Brother John Bain.

The following night the Christians again came

together—this time in their own hall. Brother Grant from Craiggellachie gave an address to believers, which was very profitable, and I referred to Brother Sloan’s visit to Iceland, F. Arnot’s work in Africa, and Brother Spooner’s services in Betanza, in Spain, where he has opened a hall for preaching. Thus, I sought to draw out prayer for them and other labourers in the foreign field.

In visiting some of the Christians on one of the following days, I was taken to an attic room in which there now lies an aged sister. She told me how in that very attic the first company in the island had been gathered together “to break bread.” There were five in all, *viz.*, Brothers A. Boswell, W. Sloan, and three sisters, of which she was one. And now, as I thought of the large happy meetings which were just over, and the many brothers and sisters from so many places there gathered, the contrast was indeed such as to call forth feelings of deep thankfulness to God, for the marked way in which He had blessed the faithful ministry of his servants in these islands. In Lerwick there are now about 70 in fellowship, and these, besides using their hall on Lord’s-day mornings, hire the New Town Hall for Gospel-meetings on Lord’s-day evenings, as well as for an afternoon meeting for believers. Thus it was that, when on Lord’s-day evening, I was privileged to preach the Gospel therein, the hall was fairly filled with about 300 people, a meeting such as is not very often attainable in Glasgow. So much in this way have the brethren there to be thankful for. Over the islands there are other 7 or 8 gatherings; *e.g.* at Whiteness there are about 50 in fellowship, and there is a hall which holds upwards of 200, and is often filled when a stranger pays a visit. Again, it was interesting indeed to visit the little isle of Papa, which has only two houses on it, but where about a dozen meet to “remember the Lord’s death” every Lord’s-day, and get good Gospel-meetings from the little islands around, when any one comes to preach.

Much more might be told with profit, but sufficient has been said to show how interesting the work is, and how God-blessed it has been. Trusting that this may stir up others to visit the assemblies in these islands.—I am, yours in our Lord,

THOMAS M’LAREN.

Glasgow, August 6th, 1884.

MEN WHOM GOD HAS COMMENDED.

IN these days of bustle and activity in professed work for the blessed Master who has redeemed us, and in these days when excitement and hurry is so often mistaken for fruitfulness, it is well for us to turn aside at times, with prayerful and exercised hearts to His Word, to read the characters of the men the Divine Spirit has commended in its pages. After the story of Abel, the first commended one is the patriarch Enoch. The testimony concerning him is brief in the extreme, but how it should thrill our souls to hear such a blessed word from the Master's lips, "Enoch walked with God" (Genesis v. 22). Oh, brethren, do we fully enter into the meaning of this blessed word. It does not here say that Enoch *talked*, that testimony comes in quite a secondary place, but the word is, "Enoch walked!" The walk with God involves a good deal not expressed in this verse. It means that if we are walking with God, we are "dying daily," continually re-crucifying, as it were, the flesh, with its desires and affections. And, beyond that, if we are walking in the light of Hebrews xii. 29, what dross is there about us? Surely none, for a close walk of communion with God, prevents the wood, hay, and stubble from coming near His child. Truly this should be our place, beloved, for the new and divine nature now imparted to us, will never be satisfied in its cravings and hungerings, till it arrives at that blessed time when communion will flow on uninterrupted for ever, the old nature having once and for all been put off. In Deut. i. 36, we read concerning Caleb, that "he wholly followed the Lord." What a testimony, beloved, for Jehovah to give of His servant in reviewing the 40 years' wilderness experiences. Surely this word should sink into our hearts. Can this be said of us? How mournfully we should shake our heads, and own how sadly we have fallen short of the standard the blessed Master would have us reach! How cheering must have been this commendation to Caleb, to hear such words from His God! It is surely parallel with the "Well done," spoken of by the Lord Jesus in the days of His flesh.

May our lives be such, that in the great day of rewards, we may have this testimony from the Lord,

"He wholly followed the Lord;" and truly, that one word will amply make up for any trials we may have sustained through following in His steps!

The familiar history of David should next come to our minds, and the Holy Spirit's testimony concerning him. What is it? Is it that he was a great worker? Undoubtedly he was, but even that seems, as it were, overlooked in the face of the one blessed fact, that he was "a man after God's own heart" (Acts xiii. 22). God, who seeth not as man seeth, could look into David's heart, and say, "He followed Me with all his heart" (1 Kings xiv. 8).

Oh, brethren, may these truths be practically applied to our hearts, and may our great desire in this "little while" be, that we may receive such a testimony when we reach home!

Time would fail to refer to all the holy ones who have been commended by their Lord, but some might be glanced at. Moses is praised for his meekness (Numbers xii. 3), and Jeremiah, because he wept for the sins of his people (the godly sorrow that the Lord loves to see in His saints), besides the long list of worthy ones in Heb. xi., whose commendation is briefly summed up in a few words, "of whom the world was not worthy."

May these truths be impressed deeply on our hearts by the Holy Spirit, that we may manifest in our lives, whose we are, and whom we serve, and that at the reckoning day we may receive the reward due to the Lord's faithful ones. The wilderness time is shortening, "the night is far spent, and the day is at hand;" may we, as we stand on the very verge of the Lord's speedy appearing for His loved ones, spend our time here in fear, walking with Him, and ever enjoying the blessed sunshine of His approving smile!

W. W. F.

The Word of the Lord, and the attentive ear of the faithful servant, are all we need to carry us safely and happily onward.

May the fulness of Christ replenish our enlarged hearts day by day. By communion with Him the soul grows more and more capacious, and yet acquaintance with Him makes us feel more and more our own littleness.

A Christian should go on, unaffected by circumstances, in the path of practical obedience to the will of God. There, and therein alone, is practical rest found. When I am trying to have my own way, I do not find rest.

True obedience is the result of subjection to God—it is meek and holy, and therefore free from that offensive bearing which is so frequently met with, and which is so sad and grievous to the Spirit.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to “prove all things,” and “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender

QUESTION No. CLXXVI.

What are we to understand by Heb. xiii. 13?

REPLY.

The camp of Israel was the place of Jehovah's dwelling (see Num. v. 3). Outside the camp was the place of the *defiled* (Num. v. 2), and the place of the *accursed* (Num. xv. 36). There dwelt the defiled in separation from Jehovah and His people, and there judgment was executed on the guilty and the condemned.

But thither also the feet of the priest must go, in order to meet with the leper in the day of his cleansing (Lev. xiv. 3), and there too must the offering be slain and consumed that was to be for the purifying of the defiled (Num. xix. 3).

The priest and the sin-offering would not have availed for the very ones who needed them most had they not gone forth “without the camp.”

Wherefore Jesus also, the great antitype of offering and priest went forth bearing His cross without the gate of Jerusalem.

There, in the very place, where defiled and condemned, Gentle or Jew might meet Him, outside the gate of the Holy City, He suffered in order that by His own blood He might sanctify the people—those people of every kindred and tribe, guilty, condemned, lost—whom the Father had chosen from before the foundation of the world.

This is one aspect of the truth, but there is also another. We read in Ex. xxxiii., that the camp of Israel had become defiled. God could own it no longer as His dwelling-place. Moses, who was in this no doubt acting in communion with God, took “the tabernacle;”—we are not told what tabernacle, (certainly not *the* tabernacle which was not then con-

structed)—possibly His own tent, to which all Israel would resort for judgment, instruction, &c.—this tabernacle he pitched afar off without the camp, “and it came to pass that every one which sought Jehovah went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was *without the camp.*” (Ex. xxxiii. 7.)

Most important and significant was this action. It pointed to a time when the presence of God would no longer be found within any sacred enclosure on earth, but grieved and rejected, would be found by the godly in the outside place—the place that before had only been known as the resort of the defiled, the condemned, and the alien.

And as in that day Jehovah was to be found outside the camp, so in the day of Hebrews xiii. Jesus was to be found, not in the place of sacred renown, not amid the rites and ceremonies of God-forsaken Judaism, but in the place of rejection and reproach, the place where “sinners” and Gentiles alike could meet with Him “*without the camp.*”

It must be borne in mind that this epistle was written to the Hebrews, and for them it could not but have very special significance. The Hebrew believers are here called forth from the earthly city and temple, sacrifice and priest, to fellowship with the rejected One, to the place of reproach and stranger-ship with Him.

They are called to partake of an altar, and feast on a portion, and look for a city to which those who clung to the shadows of a past dispensation had no title.

Their eye and heart are turned from Judaism to Jesus from earth to heaven, from Jerusalem on earth to the heavenly city.

All this is surely clear, but it may be asked, how does all that concern us who are not Jews?

Plainly the principle is for us as well as them. Still it is to a rejected Jesus we are called to go forth ; it is around Him we are called to gather.

Where He is not we cannot stay. "*Unto Him*" is our watchword. As in the day of David's rejection, many went out *unto him* and gathered to Him, the rejected one, he became their captain, (1 Sam. xxii. 1, 2) so if true hearts go forth now unto the rejected Jesus it must be to give Him no lower place. To own him as the centre of the gathering, the *Lord* whose voice alone is to be heard, Whose word alone is to be submitted to, Whose Spirit is to guide and Whose commands are absolute.

QUESTION NO. CLXXVII.

Please explain Rom. viii. 17. When do we become joint-heirs? What are the sufferings referred to?

REPLY.

The eldest son of the Queen is heir to the throne. He became heir by birth, not by attainment. This illustrates the words "if children then heirs." Being "sons of God" we are "heirs of God." We were heirs of wrath by nature, in virtue of our being born of Adam. "We are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). Being born of God, regenerated, we become by the very fact of our new birth HEIRS.

But our heir-ship is akin to that of the wife who along with her husband enters into all to which he is heir.

Eve entered into possession and enjoyment of Eden along with Adam ; she was joint-heir. God said "let *them* have dominion" (Gen. i. 26).

So the saints are heirs of all that Christ is Heir to. They will enter into possession and enjoyment of the inheritance in union with Him, and in virtue of their being His. "All (things) are yours, for ye are Christ's" (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23).

But the path to the inheritance for Christ was through temptation, trial, suffering, reproach, cross-bearing, death ; and the path of the joint-heirs is the same. Some know much more than others of "the fellowship of His sufferings" (Phil. iii. 10), but every believer knows something of it, and tastes it in measure. Those who enter deepest into the fellowship of His sufferings and reproach will have the highest reward in the coming kingdom of Christ.

QUESTION NO. CLXXVIII.

Are those who gather unto the name of the Lord Jesus Christ included in the "great house" of 2 Tim. ii. 20?

REPLY.

The figure of a "great house" is here introduced simply to illustrate the spiritual teaching of the passage. In a small house vessels of gold and silver are not usually found. It is to the *vessels* and not to the house that attention is directed. The gold and silver vessels are evidently those which are "to honour"—the wood and earth "to dishonour."

All the children of God are vessels "to honour" (see Rom. ix. 23), but they may not be "prepared for the Master's use." The master in a great house would set aside the most honourable vessel if *not clean*, and use a less honourable one, provided he found it clean and ready for use. The idea is not that vessels are to be removed out of the house, but that vessels to be used must be clean.

Timothy is likened to a vessel, one to honour ; but how is he to be sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work ? It is by purging himself from all these defiling heresies against which the Apostle is warning him. And the word here rendered "purge" signifies to "purge out," or to "cleanse by separation." One who purifies himself from the evil doctrines must needs be separate from those who hold them, for as a canker they will eat, and there is no purity or safety but in separation.

Imaginary applications of this figure of a great house to Christendom have given rise to serious errors.

We have even found those whom one would have credited with more intelligence speaking of "baptizing into the great house," as though Scripture ever hinted at such an absurdity ! It is most dangerous to press the details of an illustration beyond what it is evidently intended to teach.

We would rather put the question thus:—Are those who profess to be gathered to the name of the Lord really vessels unto honour sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work ? This is the point at issue, not are they in the house or out of it ?

"GOD'S BUILDING."

THE Tabernacle in the Wilderness and the Temple at Jerusalem were each in their time "buildings of God." They were His in a very special sense, being devised by God Himself, wrought out by the wisdom of His Spirit, and for the express purpose of being His dwelling-places.

Like all God's other works they were in every detail significant; the outward and material forms being designed to convey to the spiritual mind truths concerning spiritual things.

And still upon earth there is a building of God. It also is devised by God Himself, wrought by the wisdom of His Spirit, and designed to be His dwelling-place.

The eternal purpose of God gave it being. Christ is the Rock of its foundation. It is composed of living stones and indwelt by the Spirit of God.

Of this building the Tabernacle in the Wilderness was a type and forshadowing, and so also was the Temple at Jerusalem; the former representing the Church in its present condition of wilderness conflict and humiliation, the latter pointing forward to the time of its establishment in the coming glory of the Kingdom of God.

In creation God wrought alone. The first chapter of Genesis is the inspired record of that mighty transaction. There God is seen in three Persons, the triune God, performing the stupendous acts by which the world was fashioned and furnished for man.

The Hebrew word for "God" there used, "Eloheem" implies a Trinity. It is not singular, neither is it *dual*, a form which is found in Hebrew though not in English, but plural—necessarily implying *more than two persons*. God said "Let us make."

God was there, the Father, of whom we read that "He created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph. iii. 9).

Jesus Christ was there, the Son, concerning Whom it is written that "by Him were all things created, &c." (Col. i. 16); and again "without Whom was not anything made that was made" (John i. 3).

The Spirit was there as it is written "and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. i. 3).

But God wrought alone, unaided. There was fellowship, but it was fellowship of Godhead alone.

No angel was taken into God's counsel or employed to co-operate in the work. Spectators they were and marvellous their joy and loud their songs as thus the eternal power and Godhead of the Creator were revealed. "The morning-stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job xxxviii. 7). But on none of them was the honour put to be "labourers together with God" (1 Cor. iii. 9).

Again, in redemption God is seen at work, and again, it is the same three Persons, the triune God.

God is there the Father, unto Whom the offering is presented and by Whom He is accepted.

The Son is there offering himself "without spot to God." And this is done "through the eternal Spirit," (see Heb. ix. 14).

But here again it is the fellowship of Godhead alone. No man, no angel could have a part in such a work.

But, on the ground of accomplished redemption another work is begun, in which it has pleased God to associate with Himself as workers—the subjects of redeeming love. Nothing can exceed the grace of such a thought. It shows in wondrous light His value of the atoning blood. It also shows into how near and honoured a place His grace has brought His people.

And this was forshadowed in the wilderness.

Israel had been brought out of Egypt, sheltered from the judgment of God by the blood of the Lamb, and from the power of Pharaoh by the presence of God. Typically, they were a redeemed people. Sovereign grace had taken them up, as Jehovah said—"I bear you on eagle's wings and brought you unto Myself" (Ex. xix. 4).

Merit in themselves there was none. At the very time that Jehovah was unfolding to Moses in the mount the counsels of His grace, Israel in the plain below was worshipping the golden calf. Surely had they stood on any ground but sovereign grace, they had forfeited every title to blessing and been cast away from the presence of God. Instead of that, such is the way of GRACE—Jehovah, knowing well their sin, but *passing it over* in righteousness, counsels for a dwelling-place in their midst and puts upon them the honour of preparing it.

In like manner does God *now* put upon His redeemed people the honour of preparing Him a dwelling-place. As the Apostle Paul writes (1 Cor.

iii. 10)—“as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon.”

But whether we look at the Tabernacle in the wilderness or the Temple at Jerusalem, or at the Church of God as His House for this present dispensation, one thing is common to them all—the plan is in each case divine; God is the architect. The plan of the Tabernacle was committed to Moses. He was, as it were, the “wise master-builder” of that day. He was in the secret of the mind of God as to every detail. Nothing was left to human device, not even the minutest part, not a pin or a cord, not a loop or a tache, but God had shewn the pattern of it to Moses in the Mount, and again and again was he warned to make all things according to that pattern. (See Ex. xxv. 9-40, xxvi. 30, xxvii. 8.)

Again, as to the Temple, Jehovah acted on the same principle. It was to David that the plan was committed, and he in turn solemnly committed every detail to Solomon, his son, whom God had chosen to build the House. But note, as with the Tabernacle so with the Temple, nothing was left to human device (see 1 Chron. xxviii. 11-19)—“Then David gave to Solomon, his son, the pattern . . . All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me even all the works of this pattern.”

Thus Solomon became the “wise master-builder” of his day, being in the secret of the mind of God as to every detail of God’s plan.

And if this was Jehovah’s way with regard to the typical structures of the past dispensation, is it to be supposed that the building of the present age, of which these were but the types—the substance of which these were but the shadows—is any more left to man’s device?

If God had a plan for the Tabernacle and the Temple, can it be supposed that He has not a plan for the Church? And if it would have been sacrilege on the part of Moses or Solomon to depart from God’s plan, what must be the sin in this age of setting aside the plan of the mighty Architect and substituting for the thoughts of God the devices of the human heart?

Nevertheless, it is a sad and solemn fact that many of God’s children have been guilty of this very sin. The *pattern of the House*, committed in all its details in person by the ascended Lord to His servant, Paul,

and by him committed to writing and preserved for the instruction and obedience of the saints, has been set aside as having no claim upon the conscience, and the numberless devices of the human mind have been readily brought in to fill up the blank.

Indeed, strange as it may seem, yet is it true that many of God’s own children have brought themselves to believe that God has no plan, and has made known no pattern to guide the builders employed in the work in this age.

They content themselves with quarry-work. “Get souls converted,” is their cry—and truly a blessed work it is, and withered will the soul become that is indifferent to it, but when converted they lie like stones in a heap at the quarry’s-mouth, or scattered up and down. The builders’ work is neglected, for the builders have never been to the Architect that they might learn His plan. They say “there is no plan,” and when told that there is—that the plan is in the Book—that some are seeking to understand it and build after the Divine pattern—they say “it has never succeeded”; they will not attempt it, and so the living stones, instead of being gathered and builded together according to the plan of “God’s building,” are surrendered to the will and device of man and allowed to drift into sects, societies, and parties—into anything and anywhere except “ASSEMBLIES OF GOD,” gathered and builded on divine principles, and after the Divine pattern.

SECOND CORINTHIANS V.

I WAS saying a month ago when upon this passage (2 Cor. iv. and v.) that there are four states glanced at. First, the Divine light of life reflected from a glorified Christ and poured into us. That God has given us “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”. Secondly, the Divine life in connection with our mortal bodies, that we have this treasure in earthen vessels, alluding to the light in Gideon’s pitchers. Thirdly, the unclothed state; and fourthly, the clothed-upon state. Now, for a few minutes, I want just to touch upon that second state again; the Divine life in connection with our mortal bodies. Twice over in the chapter, in verses 10 and 11, it is said, “that the life also of Jesus

might be made manifest in our body", or, "in our mortal flesh". We are to live over again the life of Christ. We have the life of a risen, glorified Christ now, and we are to live out that life. In verse 10, where it says, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus," it seems to refer to our keeping the flesh down, ever remembering the dying of the Lord Jesus. Thus is the life of Jesus made manifest in us. In verse 11 it is sorrow from the world; and as we encounter this on account of the Lord again is the "life also of Jesus made manifest in our mortal flesh." And to such an extent is this carried, that as Christ believed, that is, trusted in God, so we also believe, "knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus". "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." The outward man, as we get older gets weaker; the inward man should get more developed by communion with God. Verse 17, it is impossible to put into English, the Greek of the last clause could not be fully rendered; you can see how our translators have laboured to reproduce it. "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." Christ will be the medium of connection between the seen and the unseen world. The Church shall be the head in the unseen world under Christ, and Israel shall be the head in the seen world under Christ. "For the things which are seen are temporal." The mountains, the hills, the valleys, the rivers, the seas, and many other things that we see, though called everlasting, are we know all to perish, with the whole of the old creation. I would just advert to Psalm xxxvi. for a moment. There you will read of the heavens, of the clouds, and of the great mountains, in verses 5 and 6, and of a great deep; and you read of a river, and of a fountain, and so on, and these are the things seen, and the writer contrasts things unseen with them. What are the heavens for us? Thy mercy, O Lord. What is like the clouds or atmosphere? Thy faithfulness, Lord. What is like the great mountains? Thy righteousness, Lord. There is a great deep that shall not perish, even Thy judgment O Lord. There is a river which will not perish, a sea which shall not pass away. "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river

of Thy pleasures." Once more, there is a fountain which shall flow for ever; "for with Thee is the fountain of life, and in Thy light shall we see light." "For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." The judgments, the great deep shall deal with the wicked; the mercy shall deal with the saints. So the apostle says, "How unsearchable are Thy judgments," referring to His ways with the wicked; then as to His dealing with the saints. "Thy ways past finding out."

Now, we go on with 2 Cor. v. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." We are looking, not at things seen but at things unseen, and so we come to know it. Now, notice the four "we's", they each contain a precious hint for us. "We know we have." Even apart from its spiritual aspect, verse 1 sounds to many of us (for God's people are a poor people) as a very sweet note of encouragement. We know that we have a house, and that we shall not always have to be bothered about the rent. A house eternal; where is it? In the heavens. Who put us in possession of it? A house from God. We know that we are to have a house from God, eternal in the heavens. We can give these words for a motto to any who now have care about the rent. The things temporal are soon to be done with. The word "heaven" is in contrast with this poor mortal house. This body is not fitted for the life God has given you, and you must feel its incompatibility; and the next-words show this, "For in this *we groan*." We have life, heavenly life, the very same life as Christ upon the throne of God. But as yet we have it in this mortal body; an incongruous state of things, only it is God who has so arranged it, and on purpose; He begins with the spirit and presently will go on with the body; He gives us new life in the spirit, the life of Christ, and presently a home is given us to suit it. God has told us we have got a home, a home up there in heaven, so everything is according to God's arrangement and order. He has predestined us to sonship, blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, and has also provided us a home in heaven. "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural." Particularly

note the expression "we know", an expression which the Spirit of God uses when He would take in all the family of God; it is the right of one as much as of another; not *some* know but *we* know, we saints, we believers. It is not a hope but a certainty, and what is more, a *deepening* certainty; we get more and more intensely conscious that God means all this as we grow in grace. And not only is it a *deepening* but a *nearing* consciousness, as we get nearer home in time and in fact, as the body crumbles down the light of heaven shines in, and we get more intimate with heaven and more strange upon earth.

Secondly, "we groan"; and observe that the word occurs twice, in verse 2 and in verse 4. And that, as you see, for two distinct reasons. In verse 2, because we are desiring the heavenly body. We have had a glimpse of glory. We have seen Jesus there by faith, and our spirit being transformed from glory to glory, how it makes us long to be home; but oh, this cruel cage, these iron bars that keep us down. Then, in verse 4 there is another reason; one is because the glory has fired our spirits, and the other because there is a burden that weighs us down. Not to speak of disease and of ailment, there is something else besides. Just turn to four verses and look at them at your leisure in the order that I put them. First, Romans vii. 14, "But I am carnal, sold under sin." And the context shows us that is not the language of the unregenerate, but of the regenerate man who does not know Christ risen, and his portion in Christ; so that Romans vii. is the stage of being brought out of all that misery of not knowing salvation, peace, and deliverance in Christ, in Christ risen according to viii. 1. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Now, look at viii. 2. "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death"; not as a matter of experience, but of faith. If I believe in Christ it is true as we sing—

"Oh, timeless love, as Thee I'm seen,
The righteousness of God in Him."

Then, look thirdly at verse 10. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Is it all smooth sailing? Is it all singing, trumpeting, and making merry? No, the body is dead. There is another life other than the heavenly, and it is a lie to

say there is not. Because of sin,—*of sin*. Freed, verse 2; dead, verse 10; dead because of sin. Do not let them lead you into that perfectionism, it is a lie; the body is dead because of sin. But is it all mourning and all groaning? No, no; "the Spirit is life." Pulled hither and thither, like the poor little lark fluttering up but with a cage to keep it down. But it is not only the body, but sin in the body. Not because of the toothache or any other ache, but because of *sin*. Now, look at verse 23 and see the end of it. "Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Our spirits are put right, and we are waiting for God to put forth His power upon our bodies and deliver us from our lower selves, which are not our true selves, that we may be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.

But to go on with our chapter. "If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked" (verse 3). How are we to understand this? I suppose I may say that there have been four-and-twenty different interpretations of it. I will give you two;—one all privilege and one all responsibility; and then you may keep to one or the other as you like, but be sure and seek the mind of God. One makes the "if" to read as "since", "since that being clothed we shall not be found naked". But I doubt whether that can be the full meaning, because there is an "also" in the original. Then there is the other extreme, as it were, the responsibility. I would remind you here of such passages as these: "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." And again—"I counsel thee to buy of me white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed." Again, in Rev. xvi., "Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked." And the interpretation then is this, "If so be that being clothed,"—that is, with our proper hope. "Were you expecting Me?" "Were you longing for My return, and on the tiptoe of expectation?" I would remind you also of that passage in Colossians, "To present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight; if ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel." As I once heard a brother remark, "that solemn 'if'". And then, too, you remember that in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, the apostle

commends them for their faith, love, and *hope*: but in the second, while commending them for their faith and love, he is silent about the hope, as if they had relaxed that. And so, alas, is it with many Christians now-a-days.

Then we come to the third "we". "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." It is not that we want to die, what we want is resurrection, we want the Lord to come and change us all in a moment. Then we get more words about the house again. When the Lord comes life will flood our spirits, our souls, and our bodies, and thoroughly transform our bodies. We cannot conceive anything like it at present. Divine life flooding our very bodies, and transforming those bodies into the likeness of the body of Christ; sin all disappearing, "that mortality might be swallowed up of life". I feel thoroughly overwhelmed by the force and the majesty of this Divine life. What a hope ours is! There is one little difficulty here; that is, it is said that this house will be "from Heaven"; but how can that be when this body is put into the ground when it dies? Will it not be the same body? Certainly, as far as the shell is concerned; only so permeated will it be with Divine life that it will be very different. "*It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power,*" shows that it is the same body. Power will be put forth, life will stream down, and will transform the very frame-work of these bodies, and instead of being clogs they will be aids to us. Now it is an earthly house, an unsuitable body; yet God has put divine life in us, though we have got poor mortal bodies. But God is doing it on purpose, to humble us and make us know what we are saved *from*, as well as what we are saved *to*. "Now, He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God" (verse 5). It is not only that God has done a work *for* us. We often say that Christ has done the whole work, but that is only part of the truth; *God* has wrought a work in us. It is He that has brought us to this pitch of longing for our house from Heaven. We do not, by nature; we do not groan because we have had a satiety of earth's pleasures, but because we have had a glimpse of Jesus in the glory and groan to be with Him yonder. But God has brought us to it,

and the more you groan the more you show God's handiwork.

And now for the fourth "we." "Therefore we are always confident,"—such as many religious people will be doubtful,—"knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are from home from the Lord". We are willing to be from home even from the body, to be at home with the Lord. "For we walk by faith, not by sight," For if we are at home with the Lord it will be not by faith but by sight, whether in the body or not. But I would remind you for a moment what a different prospect would have been yours but for grace. When you had died bodily, if unsaved, your spirit would have sunk down into the heart of the earth, the abode of the lost, until brought out before the great white throne, as I could give plenty of Scripture to prove. Now, observe the reverse, (only it is good to look at both sides); even if the Lord tarry. "From home from the body" is to be "at home with the Lord", and that in a moment. We read in Luke xvi. that the spirit was carried by angels, but I do not think that that is the case now. I believe that was true before the Cross but the Cross changed all that, and the moment the spirit leaves the body it has gone an infinite distance and is with the Lord, without any intervention of angels whatever. This is the word for us now—"From home from the body, at home with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be well pleasing to Him".—*Notes of an address by W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. H.*

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAPTER VII. 29.

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY J. R. C.



WHEN the apostle says here that "the time is short," I do not believe that he refers to the period of man's natural life. It is quite exceptional in the New Testament to find any of the apostles referring to death in the case of believers as a necessary event at all. The Lord told Peter that he was to die, and when he spoke of John, He said, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee"; immediately, "this saying went abroad among the brethren that that

disciple should not die" (John xxi. 22, 23).* In the New Testament we find that the thing in prospect before the minds of the writers is invariably the near approach of the Lord Jesus Christ. With reference to the Passover it is written that they were to "keep it a feast throughout their generations." In the New Testament, in connection with our Feast—the Lord's supper—we are to keep it "till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 26). Death, as a necessary event to the believer, passes out of sight. He may, or may not go till the Lord comes. The hope set before the believer is the coming of Christ, and we are continually exhorted to be waiting, looking, and hastening to that hour when the Lord will come and take us to be with Himself. Not death, but resurrection is the hope invariably set before the believer, and that in connection with the coming of Christ. Many have said about this subject that it is not practical. I do not know any subject more practical. Suppose it was known that the Lord was coming *to-morrow*, what an influence this would have upon our minds and ways. I do not say that we know that His coming is so near as this.

But turn to the Epistle to the Romans xiii. 11, 12—"And that knowing the time that now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

There we find at so early a date as that, the Spirit of God inditing these words, "the night is far spent, the Day is at hand." Turn also to Heb. x. 25, "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the Day approaching." If the day of the Lord was near when the apostle wrote these words—how much nearer now. I do not say that any one of us can discover the time when the Lord may come. It is purposely hidden by God. All man's prophecies as to the date when Christ would come have turned out to be false. Jesus said, "of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son,

* This was a wrong construction to put upon the Lord's words, for He had not said so, but it serves to show how literally the disciples understood the Lord's allusions to His coming again, and how broad the distinction between *His coming* and *the believers' departing* to be with Him.

but the Father" (Mark xiii. 32). The Father had kept as it were, the secret. But He has put this very plainly before us, that He is coming, and that we are to be on the outlook for Him. This hope is to be ever before us; to govern, mould, and fashion us in all our ways down here.

I would ask you to notice this point,—whilst we are told of certain signs that will precede the DAY of the Lord, and whilst we see the Day approaching there is no sign given us to precede the *coming* of the Lord for His saints. We know that the *Day* is approaching and that the night is far spent. We know that these are the last days, and every sign that marks them is abundantly evident on every hand. We are not called to look even for antichrist, but to wait for Christ.

It is in prospect of the return of our Lord that the apostle says, "the time is short". Whilst he says the time is short in the prospect of the age running its course rapidly, we also know that if we were to live three-score years and ten, it is but a little while at the most, and that is the way the apostle looked at it when he wrote to the Corinthian saints: "for which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward is renewed day by day. For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," &c. (2 Cor. iv. 16, 17).

Mark how every word is in contrast, "light affliction" "against" "a weight of glory"; "afflictions" against "glory"; a moment against eternity. As we sing in the hymn—

"When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We'll have no less to sing His praise
Than when we first begun."

What is our lifetime compared with eternity? It is but a little time to serve Him while He is being rejected and cast out by the world. Therefore, may we redeem the opportunity, and this is what we get in the Epistle to the Ephesians (v. 14-16). "Wherefore, He saith, awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light." It is the living ones asleep among the dead. "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise." "Circumspectly" might be rendered "*strictly*," or "*accurately*". It is like one crossing a stream on stepping-stones. See that ye walk by the light that

Christ will give you ; see that you are not walking according to the darkness of your own mind, but according to the light of God's word. "Not as fools" who do not know where they are going, "but as wise", having a definite purpose before you. "Redeeming the time," or, more literally, "buying up for yourselves the opportunity." This life is a little opportunity that we have for glorifying God ; a little opportunity to win reward, to gather souls, and bear reproach. If we are serving self it is all lost time. The Apostle Paul said "I count all things *but loss* that I may win Christ."

The Lord desires that we should know His will in order to do it. He has a plan for each one of us and our wisdom will be shown by following it out—walking in His way, and serving Him only and fully. How many of us are going to write "fool" on our past life ? The man who writes death on self and lives for Christ will be found at His coming to have been the wise man.

Look in connection with this subject at a passage in Hebrews x. 35. "Cast not away your confidence which hath great recompence of reward," and now turn to the Epistle of James v. 7, 8, "Be patient, therefore unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." To those Hebrew saints, who had been enduring a great fight of afflictions, who had suffered reproaches and persecutions through their testimony for Christ, and also being identified with the apostle, who was in bonds for the truth of the Gospel, he says "cast not away your confidence" "you will be rewarded for it all when your Lord comes". And so we read in the Epistle of James, that just as the husbandman bestows expense and labour upon the ground—ploughing, manuring, harrowing, and casting in the seed ; and the work for the time being done, he waits for the harvest ; he does not grudge the expense and labour that he has put upon the ground, for he looks for and expects a full return for it all. And we are called now to sow the seed of the Word, to scatter it abroad waiting till the Lord comes, when the result of all our labour and patience will be manifest, and the reward bestowed. And the apostle in writing to the Thessalonians in view of the coming of Christ, in

connection with his labour amongst them, says, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing ? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming ?" There was the reward that he was looking for. What a recompense ! To see those to whom he had preached the Gospel, and for whom he had endured such tribulation and affliction, gathered around His Lord.

In the xiii. of Romans we read, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed—let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light." There it is a question of conflict, therefore, they are exhorted to arm themselves for the conflict, for it is a little while till He comes. You may be enduring a great fight of affliction for the sake of Jesus, and Satan would tell you there is no use so enduring, and would tempt you to cast away your confidence. No ! hold on ! for there is a great reward awaiting you when the Lord comes, and it's only "a little while" till then. Whether it is in prospect of a fight of affliction, or of the sorrows of the way, that which is brought in to cheer is, that the Lord is near, as we read in Phil. iv. 5—"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is a hand." "Let us therefore gird up the loins of our mind, be sober and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter i. 13). Three times these words occur in the last chapter of the Revelation. "Behold I come quickly", and there is the response, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." "Keep all the sayings, for I am going to bring my reward with Me." Therefore we are cheered with the hope that the Lord is coming, and it is only a little while to wait.

The 7th of 1st Corinthians aspect of the shortness of time is like the governor of a steam engine, which regulates and controls its speed. "But this, I say, brethren, the time is short ; it remaineth that they that have wives be as though they had none." That does not mean that a man having a wife is not to behave as a husband should behave. But it means that a man is not to allow his relationship to his wife to hinder him from keeping his eye on the Lord and serving Him as He would have him. I would say this as a warning, do not allow your wife, child, or any one to come in as an idol between you and the Lord's service. It is not idolatry to love your wife or child, but if you allow the object of your love to

come in between you and your obedience to the Lord, then God says—"I am a jealous God," therefore He cannot allow you to give the first place in your heart to wife or child. Very often He visits, in judgment, those who allow their wives and families to come in between them and the Lord. See that these blessings do not become a curse to you, by not keeping them in their right place. It is a blessed thing so to walk that we may have the Lord's blessing in every relationship of our life.

"They that weep as though they wept not." It does not say that we are not to weep or sorrow when the Lord takes a beloved one away from us. A man would not be a man that could not weep. Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus. But we are not to sorrow "*as those who have no hope.*" We have a source of comfort that the world knows nothing of. It is a libel on what God has done for us if we sorrow as the world. We ought to pity the world in its times of bereavement and sorrow. It is a sad sight to attend the funeral of one who has passed away without knowing Jesus as their Saviour, and leaving behind them those in the same sad condition. God's children ought not to sorrow as the world. There are many sorrows beside the loss of friends; life is full of it. If God did not permit sorrow to be felt while here, we would make the world our rest. He causes one sorrow to follow after another, to draw us nearer to Himself, and to direct our hearts into His love and into the patience of Christ.

"They that rejoice as though they rejoiced not." God would have us enjoy all His blessings. We read that the early Christians "did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart". This was one of the results of the reception of the Holy Ghost. As they ate their food thanksgiving ascended up to the Mighty Giver. Our hearts ought to be filled with joy and gratitude day by day, and our whole life should be a life of thanksgiving. We are not to be as the world, which gets intoxicated with its prosperity; their joys and pleasures do not satisfy; they are transient and short-lived; but we have "pleasures for evermore"—"fullness of joy". This world must be dissolved, its possessions must be let go, and its sorrows and joys alike come to an end. It is but *a little while*—that is the regulator, and moderator. Let us keep that in view and it will moderate both our joys and sorrows, as nothing else will.

This principle also affects the business of daily life—"They that buy as though they possessed not." The Christian is to buy but not to set his heart upon His possession.

We are not to be over elated with prosperity, or cast down by adversity. Remember that we have the Lord who will bless us apart from wealth or riches. Paul could say—"I know what it is both to abound and suffer need." He knew that the Lord was with him, and that it would all turn out at the end for blessing.

"And they that use the world as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away". That is using this world, and only keeping it for use. The Lord may give us much blessing and prosperity as long as we walk with Him, and hold it and use it for Him; but, if He sees that it is becoming a snare to us he will take it away. God will not allow the world to come in between us and our fellowship with Him, and if it does, then He will come in in judgment and restore our souls through it. "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts" (1 Tim. vi. 9). The Lord give us grace to go on calmly and humbly with Him, using this world and not abusing it. O, what a stroke to the grandeur of this world will the coming of the Lord be. Everything that is high will be abased, and the Lord alone will be exalted at that day.

In a little moment judgment and destruction will do its work, as a dear brother said "it's all for the bonfire." "The earth also and the works that are therein will be burnt up."

As we pass through it let us remember that the time is short, and may we walk in the light of the coming of our Lord, keeping our eye upon Him and our heart true to Him. Being thankful to God for every blessing, understanding what the will of the Lord is concerning our walk and testimony in this world. Assured that the Lord is coming soon, and the one who has served Him best will have the richest reward.

PRECEPTS.—The precepts which God has given us are generally grounded upon some revelation of God's character, thus—"Be ye holy, for I am holy;" "Let us love one another, for love is of God;" "Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful;" "Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

SECRET PRAYER.



It is a wonderful place that prayer occupies in the Sacred Volume. Were we to take our Bibles, and go over carefully the examples of prayer, the exhortations to prayer, and the encouragements to prayer, we would be surprised at the large place and importance which the Lord gives to it in His Word. Especially is the book of Psalms characterized by the spirit of prayer; and this book, above all others, may be said to be the breathings of the heart of Christ Himself when down here in His humiliation. We are also told by the Evangelists of how the Lord spent whole nights on the hill-side in secret prayer, at other times "He rose a great while before day and went up into a mountain to pray."

And we not only have His blessed and holy example set before us that "we should walk in His steps," but we have His clear teaching "that men ought always to pray and not to faint" (Luke xviii. 1). And perhaps the chief reason why we receive so few answers to prayer is because we do faint and give up praying when the answer does not come at the time and in the manner we would expect.

The Spirit of God also enjoins believers to "continue in prayer" (Col. iv. 2), to be "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph. vi. 18). Passages could be multiplied to any extent teaching the duty and privilege of prayer, but it is chiefly to the importance of secret or closet prayer we wish to call attention.

When the Lord was teaching the foundation principles of His kingdom to His disciples, He says, "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door pray to thy Father in secret, and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly" (Matt. vi. 6). He had just been exposing the hypocrisy of the Pharisees in their desire "to be seen of men;" and while no child of God could be called a Pharisee or hypocrite, still a disciple of Jesus, a real subject of His kingdom, may soon become like them. "Unto Thee will I cry, O Lord, my rock; be not silent to me; lest, if Thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down to the pit" (Psa. xxviii. 1). The man of God is not afraid of going down to the pit, but he fears lest he should become like those who do so; and he evidently implies that

this will be the case if his prayers are *unanswered*. And it was this danger the Lord warned His disciples against, namely, being like the hypocrites.

And the safeguard against this is to act always as under the eye of God. The Spirit of God says "that men are to pray everywhere" (1 Tim. ii. 8); and the injunction, that when we pray we are to enter into our closet, cannot mean that we are never to pray except in our closets, but it evidently does mean that the Lord attaches a cardinal importance to secret prayer; and He clearly implies that if this is neglected we will certainly become more or less like the hypocrites, formal and unreal, and having a desire to be seen of men.

Very much could be said on this subject, but a few thoughts may be helpful in keeping our souls awake to the importance of closet prayer. And one thing is clearly implied, namely, that every disciple of the Lord Jesus *must have a place for secret prayer*. My dear fellow-Christian, have you got one? Our Lord and Master says to every disciple, "Enter into thy closet and shut thy door." It is true that many a dear saint of God does not literally possess a closet, but "necessity has no law;" and if we have formed the habit of secret intercourse with the living God, and are resolved to keep it up, we will find *a place and a time* too. It may be our bed-room, or may be some concealed corner of the house; it may be behind the counter, before or after shop hours; it may be an empty stall in an out-house, or the kitchen fireside after the little ones are to bed; but if we, as children of God, are to fulfil our mission, and "shine as lights in the world," a praying place we must have, where we can pour out our hearts without let or hindrance into the ear of our Father and God.

We may go regularly to the prayer-meeting; we may be punctually at family prayers; but if the closet, the secret dealing with the living God, is neglected, these outside things will soon lose their unction and sweetness, and our life and conversation will imperceptibly but surely sink down to the level of the hypocrite and of those that go down to the pit.

My dear fellow-Christian, let me in love ask you again, how is it with you? You once enjoyed living alone with God, do you do so now? and if not, why not? Has Jehovah changed? He says to His backsliding people, "I am the LORD, I change not" (Mal. iii. 6). Has that Saviour who redeemed you

with His precious blood become to you "as a root out of a dry ground," that "hath no form nor comeliness?" Have the cares of the business, or the family, or even has the company of fellow-Christians slipped in to cheat you out of the happy moments you once spent on your knees? Or it may be you are become too well established and self-confident that you can get along now without those helps which were once necessary in your early days. Ah! dear reader, beware! Well has the poet said—

"Restraining prayer we cease to fight;
Prayer makes the Christian's armour bright;
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees."

There is a great amount of this self-confidence or carnal security in these days, and it is only by constant intercourse with our God that we can rise above and keep above the surging tide; it is only in His presence, all alone with Him, that we see things in their true light and character.

Just one word more. There is another snare that Satan sets for the saints in these days, namely, that we should never pray unless we have a desire to do so; that the in-dwelling Spirit will always prompt us to pray as often as we need it, and without such promptings we are justified in living prayerless lives. A careful reading of many of the Psalms will be sufficient to dispel that illusion. Such expressions as "Revive us again," "My soul cleaveth unto the dust; quicken Thou me according to Thy word," clearly show that the very lack of spiritual power made the heart cry aloud to God. The less desire we have for prayer the more we need to be on our knees.

G. A.

EXTRACT.—The servant of the Lord Jesus must be instant in season and out of season, knowing that he is the Lord's servant to every one with whom he has to do, ever learning of the Lord; for, seeing that he is to be continually ministering to others, he must be receiving fresh supplies from the God of all grace through all channels. Meditation of the Word and prayer should occupy the chief part of his time. In his public ministry and private conversation he should aim at heart and conscience, seeking in every way to magnify Christ and abase the creature—in short, he should set the Lord always before him, and so walk in His steps as to represent Him to every eye.

"PHILIPPIANS."

THE third chapter opens with a call to "Rejoice in the Lord." Trying circumstances have no power over the Christian so joying. Of this, the Apostle, at the time he wrote, is an example:—lying in a Roman dungeon, not knowing the moment he might be brought forth to die (chapters i. 20, and ii. 17); nowhere else do we find so jubilant a tone as in this Epistle. Each chapter opens, goes on, and finishes, either with the fulness of his own joy, or inciting to theirs.

"Still as plunged in deeper depths,
A louder song he raised."

Happy circumstances may fill the soul with gladness for a time, but there is only one unailing source of joy.

There is a joy in salvation when the weary sinner lays himself down at the feet of Jesus, and drinks in the sweet words, "thy sins are forgiven" (Luke vii. 48). The first throb of the new life is the unutterable joy resulting from knowing himself the object of that perfect love, which has cast out all his fear (1 John iv. 18).

The saved one now begins learning the exceeding riches of grace, and the will of the Lord who so loved him. Every fresh revelation and new truth, as it fills his heart and enlightens his understanding, becomes a fresh source of joy. But the secret of an abiding, hallowed joy, is to "know Him." He who possesses this knowledge, will become a partaker of Christ's joy, and his own joy will be full (John xv. 11).

When as sinners we repented and turned to God, He had joy over us (Luke xv. 10). There is a day soon coming when we shall be presented "faultless before the presence of His glory." This to us will be "exceeding joy," and our God will be a sharer therein (Jude 24). It is well for us to forget sometimes that God was pleased to use men in writing His precious Word, and so forgetting, I hear, as in the sanctuary, that God has "no greater joy than to hear that His children walk in truth" (3 John 4). So to walk brings me into manifold temptations (1 Peter i. 6); but, for the trying time, there is the "manifold grace of God" (1 Peter iv. 10), and enduring the trial by faith in Christ, we can then "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Peter i. 8).

The exhortation "Rejoice in the Lord" is a fitting opening to this most searching chapter, which among other things tells of the apostle's absorbing desire for conformity to Christ. It is not here a doctrine, but Christ Himself, who is the object of his aspirations, and to whom he would lead his well-beloved Philippians.

Christ is all (Col. iii. 11). Paul had already said, "For me to live is Christ" (i. 21), and he added, further on, that the power for such a life was to be found in Christ alone; "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (iv. 13).

At first sight, the expression in verse 10, "Tha I may know Him," seems strange. One might say:—"What does he mean; not know Christ? Is not this the one who years before boasted to the Galatians that Christ 'loved him and gave Himself for him?'" (see Galatians ii. 20).

There are redeemed ones who rest satisfied with knowing their sins are forgiven, and that some day they will be in heaven. Not so the Apostle; there was a present attainment in the knowledge of Christ, of which he had learned somewhat, and which but whetted his desire for more. Desire grows by what it feeds on. Nothing could distract Paul's attention from "the mark." He was well pleased to suffer the loss of earthly things for a fuller enjoyment of fellowship with Christ. The things that once he pursued lost all charm when compared with the incomparably better things to be found in Christ.

To look at the sun, when he is unobscured by clouds, blinds the beholder to all surrounding objects.

In like manner to behold "The glory of the only begotten One," is to become blind to the things of time and sense, in so far as they would hinder the believer "reaching forth unto those things which are before." The Apostle had been literally blinded by the bright light on the Damascus road, but in a higher sense, he had been, and continued to be blinded to earth's attractions by what he had seen of the risen Christ. Our Master hath "yet many things to say unto us"; and He hath given the Spirit who takes of the things of Christ and shews them unto us; "whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak" (John xvi. 13, 14). In the sanctuary the Spirit hears the "thoughts which are altogether precious," and it is His blessed work to reveal these, yea, even "the deep things of God" to us (1 Cor. ii. 10).

This is to know Christ as the Apostle longingly desired. Clear insight into the "treasures, new and old," the unveilings of His face, the mysteries of His grace, the triumphs to be won in His strength, the freedom from carking cares, because having "found Him" who bears them all; assured guidance, having learned by practice to trust Him, and daily proving that His precious blood cleanseth from all sin.

A commentary on this chapter might be found in the oft-quoted words, "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. xiii. 1).

How to run, and the reward to be gained, we have told us in verses 9, 10, and 11 of this third chapter.

The heavy weight which drags us down from our excellency, is "confidence in the flesh." To beware of this, he warns them (verse 3), an oft-repeated warning, and surely safe teaching (verse 1), and as he would not preach what he did not practice, we are told (verses 4-8) of the things of the flesh, in which, if there was to be any place for the flesh, he might have had confidence. But all is joyfully given up, and counted but dung and dross, as hindrances "to the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord." He gained by the loss, as Moses gained when he gave up Pharaoh's court, and Paul would have the Philippians enjoy with him this truer gain. It is well to remember we can only preach *with power* to others, what we are enjoying and practising ourselves. This is one humbling reason why so much of the ministry of the word falls lifeless on the hearers.

Verses 12 to 14 tell that the end was not yet, the goal was still before; these words are the sufficient answer to all vain and empty boasting. Much Paul had learned; there was more to follow: many things he knew; there were depths yet unfathomed; "forgetting those things which are behind." He remembered Christ and His love, this made every step onward a pleasure, and renewed the strength to "follow after," until the longed-for moment arrived (verses 20, 21), when he would be clothed upon and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body; then would he be able to say, "all is done." The section fittingly closes with exhortation;—"Stand fast in the Lord" (chapter iv. 1).

Our Lord seeks reality, and this is a chapter intensely real. Listlessness and lifelessness are charac-

teristic of a vast number who "have named the name of Christ" (2 Timothy ii. 19).

Epistles are written to be read, and it is often forgotten that individually we are called to be Epistles of Christ. The living God by His Spirit has graven one word on the believer's heart, that word is "Christ" (2 Cor. iii. 3). It could be said of the Corinthians, "Ye are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ;" that is, the writing could be read. Is it so with us?

Paper written upon with sympathetic ink, cannot be read until held near the flame; when this is done, the characters appear, the message becomes plain. So with the writings of God; it is only as we are in fellowship with Christ, seeking conformity to Him, that we are "keeping ourselves in the love of God." This is the flame which brings out the written testimony. No longer the mere profession that "Christ is mine," but the life a witness to the power of His resurrection, shewing indeed that "I am His."

It is not only a Saviour who died for me, and who is coming to take me home. But one to be "won," and "found," and "known," as my Shepherd, my Friend, my ever-present precious Christ of God.

P. H.

JOSEPH'S FAILURE AND JACOB'S FAITH.

GEN. xlviii.



ONE of the things about which we are often liable to err is the spiritual condition of God's dear children. We cannot always discern a man's state by his words.

When we complain of a person not seeing as we do in any given case, it may be that the Lord is leading his soul into some other spiritual exercise, in which he becomes absorbed. "They, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." There are some Christians who seldom fail on great occasions, and yet who continually offend in small matters, and *vice versa*. Some, of whom we expect the least, make the best testimony in the day of trial; others, of whom we should hope the most, fail on some special occasions.

Joseph and Jacob in their state of soul, as exhibited in Gen. xlviii., strikingly illustrate these remarks. As soon as God had completed His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He brings out in Joseph

a most prominent type of the already promised seed. In the history, as well as in the personal ways of Joseph, we have the most affecting discoveries of the person and grace of the Lord Jesus. The history is always fresh, and available alike to the little child and to the matured saint. But, in every type, there is some striking defect in the person exhibiting it, by which we are to see that "this shall not be the same." Jesus must have the pre-eminence in all things.

Trial and discipline are seen in the case of Jacob. His history portrays the sorrows incident to an unquiet saint, who wishes to have his promised blessings in his own way, and the chastisements inflicted upon him by the Lord as a consequence; but throughout, we are forced to see the constant care of the Lord over him, because election is also involved in trial and discipline. His life was one of failure. "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been," was his confession to Pharaoh, yet the Spirit of God takes care to record, that "by faith Jacob, when he was a-dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff."

In tracing the character of Joseph, we have heard it seriously argued, that the cup by which his servant said he divined, was a proof that he practised heathen rites; but, we are to observe (Gen. xlv. 5) that it was the steward only who said of it, "whereby indeed he divineth," and that Joseph's own account of himself is only, "Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine" (margin, "make trial.") We believe that the silver cup in Benjamin's sack is only to be used by us now as a proof that God, by means of Christ, can prove the most innocent to be guilty; and this out of our own mouth, as Benjamin, the most innocent, was found an offender by a rule of his own laying down. But this by the way.

What, then, is the failure of Joseph? Surely Gen. xlviii. will furnish an answer. Jacob was on his death-bed full of faith, and Joseph going to close his eyes takes with him his two sons, no doubt to get his father's blessing for them. Here occurs a scene illustrative in Jacob's case of that Scripture, "The day of death is better than the day of one's birth. It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart" (Eccles. vii. 1, 2).

Jacob, on the arrival of his son by his bedside, briefly relates the appearance of God Almighty to him at Luz, and the promised blessing. He then prophetically places Ephraim and Manasseh (not Manasseh and Ephraim, as Joseph was hoping) among the number of his children, and touchingly alludes to the death and burial of Joseph's mother. It is evident that his deepest affections were with this dear son now before him; and that the decision he afterwards evinced not to meet his fleshly desires must have been a real grief to him. Meanwhile he wakes up, as it were to the presence of Joseph's sons, and desires that they may be brought near, that he might bless them. Here begins the failure of Joseph: his ears had, without doubt, heard the previous announcement of the name of Ephraim before that of Manasseh (v. 5), and he ought to have argued, from the prophetic strain in which Jacob was delivering himself, that this was no mistake, and no unmeaning change. It would have been well, then, had he stood a little in awe, and let it appear how God was going to act, instead of making a fleshly arrangement by which, like his grandmother, Rebecca of old, he sought to practise upon the declining strength and dim eyesight of his father, and thus secure the right of the first-born to Manasseh: and this attempt was the more sorrowful, inasmuch as beginning from his great grandfather, Abraham, downwards—the blessing through Isaac, Jacob, and himself, had ever gone in the way of God's election and calling, and not according to the will of the flesh (John i. 13). Joseph, fearful of losing the blessing for Manasseh, contrives, by taking him in his left hand, to place him opposite his father's right, but the artifice does not succeed; and when his father crosses his hands, and blesses Ephraim first, we are told "it displeased him, and he held up his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head," and he said, "Not so, my father." Here, then, was assuredly a gap in the faith of Joseph! Prosperity is dangerous for any saint. "The house of feasting," at Pharaoh's court, may have weakened for the moment the spiritual elements in the otherwise faithful Joseph. He had forgotten the old announcement, that "the elder shall serve the younger," and wanted a house for himself to be built up, not by God's Spirit, but upon its own foundation; and he had, like all of us, to receive his blessings by the crossing of his own will. "If any man will be wise

in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise."

This little history may be of use to us as a warning against undue expectations for our children. "The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it." If we are training them with an undue bias, owing to some natural qualifications or expectations, it is most probable that the end will be disappointment. The Lord has made Himself the centre of blessing, both for ourselves and them.

But what of Jacob in all this touching scene? What of him who had seconded his mother's scheme for disfranchising his brother of his rights, and who, in this present instance, must have had that sin painfully brought home to him—of him who had pilled the white strakes in the hazel and chestnut rods, that he might increase to his own interest the speckled and spotted cattle—of him who stole away unawares from his father-in-law; and who, after all his brother Esau's kindness to him, broke his promise by going to Succoth instead of Seir—of him whose life, in the midst, notwithstanding, of powerful deliverances on the part of God, had been a series of contrivances for his own interest, although we can also discern a certain trust in the Lord? Let us behold him now on his death-bed, with the beloved son before him, at the report of whose death he had refused to be comforted. How all the graces of the saint shine forth, mingled also with a full tide of natural affection. He learns now, for the first time, to put everything into its place. As to confession—mark how he alludes (v. 11) to his want of faith, in not believing that God would be better than his fears concerning Joseph. See him (v. 15) in contrast with his own crooked ways, confessing that it was the God before whom his fathers had walked, that had fed him up to that day; and, behold him, whilst feelingly commenting on the death of Rachael, and looking upon Joseph with the tenderest affection, yet steadily declining to meet his wishes concerning the first-born after the flesh. Again, we see him triumphing in faith, whilst worshipping with his staff as a pilgrim, in the certainty of the land of Canaan being theirs by an everlasting possession; and, in the next chapter, insisting upon being buried in the field of Ephron the Hittite, thereby pledging himself to a personal interest in that land.

All this was Jacob on his death-bed—and such, for

the moment, was not Joseph. Prosperity had made him forget himself. Jacob, with his eyes dim, and his life at its last, was made to see, that it is "not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." It was his last day on earth. Oh! how much happier would he have been, had he learned the secret, that "the flesh profiteth nothing," a little earlier in his life; then, indeed, had his "peace flowed as a river;" then, indeed, as God had truly been with him in all his difficulties, so he would have learned that they were sent but for the exercise of his faith, and would have found them but the occasions for drawing upon the fulness of God. Surely in our place of death and resurrection, we have need of more practical exhibitions of our own death at the Cross, and of our risen life in Him. May we, too, learn in the failure of Joseph, the danger of prosperous circumstances, blinding our eyes to the purposes of God concerning ourselves and children.

SIMPLICITY.

SIMPLY as simplicity is, it is soon lost, and as slow to come back, either in the individual soul or in the assembly, unless most carefully watched over. In our assemblies we need to be diligent and wise to win many souls from mere natural simplicity, lest they fall a prey to spiritual seductions (Prov. vii. 7; Gal. iii. 3) and form a following to rebellious leaders like Absalom of old (2 Sam. xv. 11); and the simplicity of new-born converts, whilst cherished carefully, needs to be built up in the faith if they are ever to be a strength instead of a weakness to the church (Heb. v. 12). But to hold on thereafter to grey hairs, and be able with Paul to say (2 Cor. i. 12) "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward,"—this is what is needed in dear brethren and sisters alike, to keep all harmoniously in their places, nourishing the body (1 Cor. xii. 21), and making that simplicity, which we prize so much, an unblemished testimony for the Lord in this sophisticated age. But further, as "It must needs be that offences come" (Matt. xviii. 7) so, as many as have obtained mercy to be faithful, need the more to

hold together (Heb. x. 25) that such gifts as are yet uncorrupted may be mutually exercised with profit (Col. iv. 12; Rom. i. 12), and that the introduction of strange doctrines and practices may be checked.

PRAISE.

GOD draws forth praise from his creatures, by unfolding Himself in His works and ways. The more He manifests Himself, the more He is to be praised. The contemplation of God must ever have this blessed result. Permanent praise will be the condition of that soul that keeps God continually in view as He is revealed in Jesus. Some dark cloud must be hanging over us, obscuring the light of His glory in the face of Jesus, when we feel ourselves unable to praise and worship God. The object of these few lines is, to stir up the hearts of God's redeemed, to sing His praises with a louder and more abiding song. Our God has said, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me."

The first sounding forth of praise that we have noticed in Scripture is, when God laid the foundation of the earth and the corner stone thereof. Then "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job xxxviii). The invisible things of God were clearly seen by the things which He had made, even His eternal power and Godhead (Rom. i.). Here, then, was a glorious sight for the angels to contemplate; they saw their God in every hue of His fair creation, and as they beheld Him, they sang His praise. They saw Him in His *works*, and they adored the Creator.

They see Him again in His *ways* of grace as unfolded in Jesus. What a burst of angelic praise issued forth from the heavenly host, when they announced the Saviour's birth, and the riches of Divine grace which were to flow through our Immanuel. When the angel proclaimed the Gospel of glad tidings, "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men." What a thrilling effect had the angel's proclamation on the heavenly host, and how they responded with one harmonious song of praise (Luke ii. 13, 14)!

The same angelic burst is seen in glory, when the risen Jesus, as the slain Lamb, takes the book out of the hand of Him who sat on the throne. Here the heavenly redeemed lead the praises of Jesus, and

tens of thousands of angels follow in their train, saying, "Worthy is the Lamb" (Rev. v.).

When Israel had passed the Red Sea and stood safely on the other side, "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously." What a rich and triumphant stream of praise broke forth from Israel on that occasion, as they stood amid the triumphs of redeeming grace; salvation perfect and complete filled their minds, and by faith they plant their feet in the glorious land, and enter into their promised rest.

See them again, in the presence of Solomon's temple, which was exceedingly magnificent of fame and of glory throughout all countries; what a burst of praise came forth from the assembled multitude, as we read in 2 Chron. vii. 3, and when the heavenly fire, and the heavenly glory, drew forth these praises of their God, and they praised the Lord, saying, "For He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever."

When Jesus retired from His disciples by His ascent to glory, what a happy state He left them in—the fruit of the redemption He had just accomplished: we read that they were *continually* in the temple, praising and blessing God. Jesus had previously opened their understandings to understand the Scriptures, and the things concerning Himself: He led them into the secret things of His kingdom and glory; and now they, who had mourned before, are found openly praising and blessing God. Such is the fruit of known redemption in the soul. Praise

must follow the wonders of redemption where they are seen and known. Gladness and singleness of heart filled the saved multitude, as they worshipped in Jerusalem the risen and glorified Jesus. The knowledge of Jesus brings with it peace and joy. He gives "the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness"—"Whom having not seen ye love; in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. i. 8).

Praise, as we have said before, is produced by the object that possesses and fills the mind. "The four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever; and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." The glorious brightness of the throne is so great that it produces this holy worship and heavenly praise. Did we keep this throne ever before us, what ceaseless worship and untiring praise would be ever ascending up from us to our heavenly Father. Neither murmuring nor complaining should have a place in the family of God: they belong not to our calling, and are offensive to the Divine ear. Blessed be God, the time is coming when all in heaven, and in earth, and every thing that has breath shall praise the Lord. Surely the saints should now anticipate their heavenly songs, and even now fall continually before the throne with praises and adoration.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender

QUESTION NO. CLXXIX.

What is the meaning of "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied?" and when shall this be?

REPLY.

It would be vain and presumptuous to limit the "satisfaction" of the Lord Jesus to any one of the glorious results of His sufferings and death here called "the travail of His soul."

Psalm xvi. 11 compared with Psalm xvii. 15 shews that after His resurrection and ascension He was satisfied with that fulness of joy which is in the presence of God. The love and delight with which

the Father set Him at His own right-hand must have yielded to the blessed Son infinite satisfaction.

But Psalm xxii. 22 shews Him at a further stage of His joy and satisfaction, in the midst of the congregation which by His own blood He had redeemed to God.

Eph. v. 27 compared with Jude 24 shews how the Lord anticipates the satisfaction and joy of that yet future hour when He shall present, all glorious through His own power, to Himself—and that before the presence of the glory of God—the bride He died to win.

And further on still, there will be His satisfaction and joy over restored Israel, as beautifully depicted in Zephaniah iii. 17.

Finally, there will be the joy and glory of His kingdom, and the wondrous satisfaction with which He shall deliver up the kingdom to His Father, in order that God may be all in all.

All this will be the fruit of the travail of His soul, and surely His satisfaction will be continuous as stage after stage is reached of glorious results, all flowing directly from His agonies and death.

QUESTION NO. CLXXX.

Was the Lord Jesus killed by the Jews, as stated in 1 Thess. ii. 15? and if so, how am I to understand John x. 18, the spirit and truth of which is confirmed by Matt. xxvii. 50?

REPLY.

The statement referred to in 1 Thess. ii. 15 is fully confirmed by Acts ii. 23, iii. 14, 15, v. 30, vii. 52, x. 39, &c.

God looks at the heart. It was the purpose of the heart of the Jews to *kill* the Lord Jesus. In action they proved this to be their object, and it pleased God that in conjunction with their murderous cruelty His blessed Son should yield up His spirit and lay down that life, which no man could have taken from Him. But neither the fact of His death having been decreed by the "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," nor the other fact—that the Lord voluntarily "yielded up" or "dismissed" His own spirit—could in any way relieve the Jews of the responsibility of His death. They were as truly guilty of the murder of Christ as they were of the murder of Stephen.

QUESTION NO. CLXXXI.

Please explain Heb. x. 38, 39 Do these verses teach the possibility of drawing back unto perdition, or the impossibility?

REPLY.

There can be no question that the possibility of drawing back unto perdition is here taught. But it is necessary to be clear as to *what it is that may be drawn back from*.

Scripture teaches in many places the possibility of a spurious faith which leads to a false profession; a self-deception which, in most cases, also deceives

others; which soon, under pressure, gives way, and the true character of the person is manifested.

Such are those spoken of in Luke viii. 13. There is no evidence here of "a broken and a contrite heart," neither is there anything that indicates a faith that lays hold of God unto salvation. Compare 1 Thess. ii. 13, in which a broad distinction is drawn between those who receive the Gospel "as the word of man" and those who receive it "as the Word of God," in whom also it "effectually works."

Another Scripture which refers to a similar class is Phil. iii. 18, 19. That they have professed to be Christians is evident from the context, but their *walk* is a denial of their profession, and their "end is destruction."

Again, the whole of chap. ii. of 2 Peter refers to persons who have professed Christianity, and in whose lives a certain outward change was wrought sufficient for a time to deceive others, and perhaps themselves also, and this "through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" but mark it is not said to have been wrought "by FAITH in our Lord and Saviour," &c.; they have the "knowledge," but not that "faith which worketh by love." Hence their drawing back again is likened to the return of the dog to his own vomit, or the sow to its wallowing in the mire—that is, they acted consistently with their nature. Any change which had taken place was not from within. It was not "regeneration." Their return to open iniquity was a drawing back from a certain amount of knowledge and profession, and it was a drawing back "unto perdition," but it was not a drawing back from a true faith in the Lord Jesus.

The Epistle of Jude fully bears out the same, as also 1 Tim. iv. 1-3, and 2 Tim. iii. 1-9 and iv. 3, 4.

See *Northern Witness*, August number, paragraph 3, page 115, "Satan there quotes Scripture, *but not correctly*; compare Psa. xci. 11 and 12 with Luke iv. 10 and 11." It is W. M. who is incorrect. Satan (as did the Lord and His apostles commonly) quoted from the Septuagint edition or version of the Scriptures, which is *exactly* as Luke iv. 10 and 11. So much has been made of this I think it *very* necessary that it should be corrected.

J. B.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAP. i. 1-8.



ALL of us are conscious, I should think, that had we only Matthew and Mark and Luke by themselves, there would be some incompleteness about them, that something more would be wanting. The *king*, the *servant*, and the *man* are portrayed in these three, but here we have "the Mighty God," "the Father of the everlasting ages," "the Prince of Peace."

It is true that many hundreds of streaks of Divinity are to be found in the earlier Gospels, but here all seem gathered together, and here we are in the full blaze of the incarnate God. This Gospel seems to me somewhat like the innermost curtains of the Tabernacle. You will remember that the others were of commoner material, but the innermost of all were composed of gold, and of purple, and of fine twined linen. Here is something like those curtains.

"In the beginning." What human mind, what created intelligence, can go back to such remote period! For it does not mean the beginning of creation; creation is not alluded to until we reach verse 3. The first two verses contemplate a period altogether anterior to any creation whatever; like the beginning of Genesis, where it is solitude, except that God is there speaking. So in these first two verses here. It is solitude again; no creature, only God is here.

It is more certainly the case that emphasis is thrown upon this expression, because in verse 2 it is repeated. "In the beginning was the Word." Not "He came into existence," not "He was made," but in the beginning He *was*. Of John the Baptist in verse 6, instead of the word "was," it should be "there *was made*," for John throughout the beginning of this Gospel is contrasted with Christ; like as at the scene before the cross, Peter is contrasted with Christ. Four times over do we find a contrast with Christ. There it is, "there was made," a man, John; "in the beginning *was*." If I had a moth in my hand, I might think what a little thing it was, just a few days old, while I had been scores of years in the world. That comparison is as nothing to that between the man that *was made*, and Him of whom it is said, "in the beginning *was* the Word."

L

But this expression "the Word," we must ponder a little. It is the expression which the Holy Ghost has distinctly chosen, both in the Gospel and in the Epistle, to designate the relationship subsisting between the Father and the Son. In the next clauses of the verse we see His oneness with God, in the clause before there is His distinctness from the Father. "And the Word was with God." Distinct from the Father, One with God. What a mysterious Being! Oh, what height up! oh in what a remote age, it has pleased the Spirit here to begin this wondrous Gospel! Mahometans say that God has no Son, nor can have; that God is alone. If so, then that is like to the sun in the sky not shining out at all, nor gladdening creation at all, but keeping all its light and all its heat to itself. But if God is love, and God is light, then the love and the light shine out. I believe this, and that other expression in Hebrews—"the brightness of His glory," are invaluable as showing the relationship of the Son to the Father. If God were only Divine, He could not give me His nature; if we have God's nature, it is through God having become man, and God revealing that wondrous, complex Being to our souls. "The Word," the mind, the thought, the purpose, He who was in the bosom of God, in the heart of God, in the mind of God. We think with words, we could not think without. He who has never known words, has never known what it is to think. Then here is God's thought: "In the beginning was the Word." Not the word of creation, I repeat; that we have in verse 3; but simply His eternal thought concentrated in this mysterious Being. Then I remark His distinctness, "the Word was with God;" and then I remark His oneness, "the Word was God;" and beyond that you cannot get. He was God. It needs no addition, it admits of no subtraction—"the Word was God."

The second verse is very different in its teaching from the first. "The same was in the beginning with God:" that is, the same Word. Emphasis is now fixed upon the existence of the Word, as such, from all eternity. Not the eternity of the Person, but the eternity of His existence as the Word. In other words, in verse 2, we have the Christhead of the Lord Jesus; in verse 1, His Godhead. There are three other Scriptures which very distinctly bring before us, likewise with this, the Christhead of Jesus.

I had better read them. Proverbs viii. 22: "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old." The Lord possessed Me, not "created Me." "I was set up—(or anointed, or Christed)—from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth. . . Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and my delights were with the sons of men." That by anticipation, because it was before the hills were brought forth. The word for "brought forth," which occur once or twice here, include the idea of piercing or wounding. God looks at the end from the beginning, and looks at the beginning from the end. It is a way of His; as if all time were but a moment with Him. Here does He speak of Christ as the Pierced One before creation was; and speaks of us in that other passage as with Him in glory before we existed. Thus, too, in the assaults against Jerusalem in days yet future, by Gomer and all his bands, as we read in the prophet; He names them not by these appellations by which we know them (Gomer or Germany), and as they will then be known; but according to their families as they descended from Mount Ararat, as the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. At the end He looks to the beginning. But now the other two passages; Colossians i. 15, speaking of Christ—"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." Some render that, "the begotten before creation." I think it refers to Christ as the pattern Being in the mind of God, and that God formed everything in reference to Him. Then in Rev. iii. there is another. "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" (verse 14). Christ; Christ set up from everlasting, the wisdom. The word "wisdom," and the term "word," are very nearly the same. Wisdom is the word unuttered, the word is wisdom uttered; that is the difference.

The same Word was in the beginning with God. But when this same Word was with God, God associated a people with Him. There are so many Scriptures which say so, that one is almost at a loss which to turn to. Take for instance, Titus i. 2.

"In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began," or "before eternal times." There are a people who are to have eternal life, and it is promised to their Head, Christ, for them, Who is their eternal life, before eternal times. So we read too in chapter iii. 7, "Heirs of eternal life according to the hope;" that is the idea:—the hope referring to chapter i. 2. The epistle to the Ephesians is so well known that I need scarcely refer to it. "According as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world." *In Him*; chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. In God's account there was the Christ, and there was the church, all together; yet had they no existence except in Christ. Christ had an existence, because we have seen that He was "in the beginning" (verse 1). I do not think that there is any reference to us, until verse 2. In verse 1 it is the Godhead, God and Christ alone; but in verse 2 it is the Christhead, and the church in Him. So that verse 2 is very important, and we should read it with care, and not regard it as useless repetition. We should never slur or hurry over any statements of the living God. They only need our meditation for their bigness and their grandness to appear. Like the stars in the heavens, at their immense distance they appear almost nothing; yet, were they brought near to us, we should see that they are worlds immense. So, it may be, we find nothing in certain verses, because we hurry over them; yet, if we stayed and pondered them, their greatness would break upon our minds.

Now we come to creation. Not a word about it before. Here is Genesis i.; so that these first two verses of John i. are millions of ages before Genesis i. They carry you back to "In the beginning;" and beyond that it is impossible to get. "All things were made by Him." Now we see this mysterious, wondrous Being coming into view; He is the Creator. The Word, this "brightness" (Heb. i.), this Wisdom, is becoming more distinctly discernible. The next words are very much stronger in the Greek. "And without Him there became no not one thing which did become." Is it not strong? yet we are prepared for strength of assertion if we have grasped verses 1 and 2. It is remarkable, if we go down the chapter, how this Being comes gradually into distinct view. Let us just take a cursory glance down the chapter. In verse 3 He is the creator of all things; in verse 10

He is in the world, but that does not say in what way; so in verse 14 we are more distinctly told how. "And the Word was made flesh." The Word *was* God—the Word *was made* flesh. Mark the word "made" now; that was such a strange thing to Him. "And pitched His tent among us." Omitting much upon which I might enlarge, look now at verse 29, and see Him coming nearer still: "Behold the Lamb of God." He has come nearer. Ah, that reminds one of verse 2, and those inspired explanations that we have in Proverbs viii. and elsewhere: "and I was with Him as a pierced one;" "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." But we have not yet got to the end in tracing the path of this mysterious One. Then in verse 33 we have, "the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." That is His gracious work now, to-day. Then, in verse 36 again, "Behold the Lamb of God," but nothing about the sin; the sin has gone, Jesus has put it away. Still "the Lamb" is His name,—in heaven it will be the Lamb; as we know from Revelation, our song there will be, "Worthy the Lamb." Then, as we go on down the chapter, we come to verse 51: "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." He the centre in those bright supernal heavens, the worshipped of all. Then go on, for chapter ii. is still part of the first: "the third day there was a marriage." A marriage! Have we not spiritual acumen enough to see what is contained in that reference to a marriage? Then He comes down lower, as He will do to this earth, and cleanses the Father's temple. It is the same Being, that mysterious Being. Had you but wings to pierce into remote ages, not only when, as certain geologists say this earth existed, millions of years back; even if that be the case, you must pierce far, far back, and infinite ages back yet, beyond creation and verse 3, and find verse 2—God choosing us in Christ, this Wondrous One, before the foundation of the world, and yet find in verse 1 that "the Word was God," and "was in the beginning with God," and none can get beyond that.

"All things were made by Him." Whether the tiniest fly that floats in the sunbeam, or the loftiest angel that basks in the presence of God. I am not exaggerating; I have no wish to exaggerate when I touch the word of God, it is too solemn a thing. But

I put it to you whether it is not so, when I read this verse, "all things were made by Him; and without Him there became no not one thing which did become." Every angel, every devil, every man, every insect, all were made by Him, Jesus. Jesus, the Creator. "And God said, let there be light, and light became." "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made: and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth."

Attention is next directed to what is in Him, and the great thing in Him is life, life for men; "and the life was the light of men." I remind you here of a verse (chap. viii. 12), "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." For in this Gospel all the chapters allude to chapter i., and chapter i. is brought out more fully in the others. Thus, I will instance a case. "Before Abraham was made, I am;" so the right reading of verse 6 here is, "there became (or was made) a man, sent from God, whose name was John." The Holy Ghost using these peculiar words, I suppose, to bring out the contrast between him of yesterday, and Him who was in the beginning with God. John the Baptist existed say 2000 years ago; He of whom he spake was in the beginning with God, and was God; and was, too, the Creator of all.

"The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light," that is, of Jesus. I never read that verse without thinking how kind of God and of Christ it was, that there should be a witness of Him. For the Light is its own witness: no one needs evidence that the sun shines; think of a person writing a book to prove it. How good, then, of God and of Christ to give a witness as to His being the light. And why? "That all men through Him might believe." What a solemn thing if, after all this display of stupendous, infinite grace, power, and love, any here should not believe. Oh! after this One has come forth from God, it does not much matter whether you are a Mahometan, and say God has no Son, or a Romanist, and put the Virgin Mary in His place; in the one it is the cutting off the emanation from God, in the other it is putting a shadow in its place. You might just as well argue that the sun has no ray, as that God has no Son; as sure as there is a ray in the sunshine, so sure does God, must God have a Son. But it is this mysterious Being against whom the hate and unbelief of the world and of Satan are specially

directed. And it is this mysterious Being towards whom our faith is directed. We are to believe in Him who came from the Father, who came into the world, and died upon the cross. The same Being who died upon the cross, and burst the chains of death; for it was not possible that He should be holden of death, for He is life itself. Not merely that He has it, but He *is* life; and He has burst the chains of death, and lives for ever.—*Notes of addresses by W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. H.*

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAPTER VII. 39.

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY J. R. C.

“The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will, only in the Lord.”



PURPOSE devoting an afternoon with you to the consideration of these words, “only in the Lord,” as I feel that the subject is of immense importance.

In the early part of the chapters we were considering the relationship and responsibilities of husband and wife, the one or other being unconverted. We saw how God would have such act in these circumstances. This relationship being sanctioned by the Lord, they were to dwell together with their children as a family, even though the one or other might be unconverted. “But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases;” but, still, such were to remain unmarried till the Lord in His grace might be pleased to open the heart to receive the Gospel, that then they might be reunited.

I have referred to this, because it shows us the reason for these words which we have just read. It may be said, was it necessary to tell these Corinthians to marry “only in the Lord,” after what the apostle had said to them already on the subject? It is a little safeguard, in case any one should think that the divine sanction given to a Christian wife to dwell with her unsaved husband also warrants a Christian woman becoming united to an unconverted man. Therefore the prohibition comes in, that if so marrying it must be “only in the Lord.” Suppose a woman

is converted, and her husband remains an idolater, but he leaves her, what is she to do then? As long as he lived she was not at liberty to marry, but the moment he was dead she was free. That is brought out in the 7th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where we see the Law looked upon as the Old Husband, which cursed and killed us and we died to it, through the Body of Christ. For what purpose? “That we should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead.” Therefore believers in Christ are united to the risen Son of God, who is at God’s right-hand. We are set free from the law, as the wife is from the husband when he is dead. We are free from the law, but married to Christ. Though I am not under the law, yet I am not to be lawless, but subject to my Lord, who is at God’s right-hand. There is no room for self-will in the economy of grace. If we were formerly bound by the law to keep its commands, and having broken it, it cursed and killed us, we are not delivered from its condemning power that we may do what we like, but rather that we should yield ourselves unto Christ, as the wife to the husband, knowing that He is our Lord, and His will is our rule of life.

The question has been asked, Do these words, “only in the Lord,” mean that she is to marry none but a Christian? It certainly must mean that. Does it mean that she may marry whom she will—make her own choice, provided only that he be a Christian? It goes deeper than that. In a matter of such importance, what we do ought to be in perfect harmony with the will of God. He means, that we are to take Him into our counsel. One Christian may desire to be united with another merely for his or her money. This would not be for the glory of God. Such a motive springs from a covetous heart, and therefore would be sinful in God’s sight.

Mark that expression, “in the Lord;” it invariably qualifies the action. “Children obey your parents in the Lord,” not only because they are Christians, but whether they be Christians or unconverted they are to obey them in the Lord. To receive another believer in the Lord is to own Christ as our Lord: to act in subjection to His authority and will. This principle goes very deep. It brings us into fellowship with Him as regards every department and relationship of life. Let that principle be brought into exercise in all our life as Christians, and it will have

a mighty influence over us in everything. It will show how far short we come of God's claims upon us. We are called to nothing short of loving the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and strength, and our neighbour as ourself. That is the offering laid upon the altar. That was done by Jesus perfectly in His life and death, also in His service on behalf of His people in resurrection. Even when He takes His great power and reigns over this earth a thousand years, when He shall have put down all rule and authority, when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, complete and perfect, "then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 24, 28).

Whether it is my business, family duties, service to the church, or towards the world, it is all to be done "*in the Lord.*" Everything is to be done in fellowship with Christ, thereby enjoying His approval and blessing.

Then follow these words, "she is happier if she so abide." That is, as a widow—unmarried. There is a deep and important principle for us to lay hold on here.

For instance, here is one who has had a happy married life, but now she is a widow; the Lord has laid His hand upon the object dear to her heart; upon him on whom she had leaned and looked up to for counsel, comfort, and instruction. He has removed him, and she is left alone. Is there any one more worthy of our compassion? God has said that "pure religion and undefiled is to visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction," &c. Having a heart to weep with those that weep, also to help them in their helplessness. The apostle here has before his mind what such an one may do for the Lord in such circumstances. As one who may use all the affection of her widowed heart in service to the Lord. If you turn to 1 Tim. v. 4 to 6, you will see this brought out. "If any widow have children or nephews (grandchildren), let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents, for that is good and acceptable before God." It is a shame for a Christian son or daughter to have parents, and if they need their help, fail to support and care for them, thus leaving them to the charity of the world, or the bounty of the church, if Christians. God forbid that any Christian should be heartless as to his responsi-

bility toward his parents, who, being old and infirm, are unable to help themselves. To care for such is good and acceptable before God.

"Now she who is a widow indeed" (that is one who accepts the breach that God has made in her life, and in effect says, "This is the end of the world for me; I will live henceforth for the Lord"), "and desolate, trusteth in God and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day." It will be a desolate life, because she has no husband, whose companionship, counsel, and human support she has been bereft of; therefore in that sense she is desolate. In another sense she is not desolate, because she has communion with God. If such an one does not know the comfort of the Holy Ghost, then her's will be indeed a miserable and desolate life. That might be said of the life of many a one. The world is spoiled for them, and yet they do not walk with God. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" Though you be a Christian, if you are not walking in communion with God, and therefore have not got the joy of the Lord, you are more miserable than any.

"She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." I beseech you to take that expression to heart. "Dead while she liveth." How many there are, children of God, who are practically dead while they live: they are not walking with God, nor enjoying Him. You would scarcely know them to be Christians. Such are a hindrance instead of a help to others: cumberers of the ground, and of no service to the Lord. The Lord save us from seeking to please self. May we rather seek to serve Him Whose we are, and Whom we ought to serve. When we put our own pleasure and interest first, and overlook the glory of God, He will have to deal in judgment with us—chasten us; and we shall find in the end that it is a bitter thing to please self and not consider the glory of God.

"Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, . . . well reported of for good works—if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted," &c. These refer to widows who were supported by the bounty of the Church. We have here a list of acts that married women may take up and do for the Lord. You see how the Lord takes a glance back at her Christian

life; what has she done since she was converted? Everything is observed and noticed by the Lord. Have we such in our midst to-day—godly, aged women, who have been addicting themselves to like service for the Lord? Such may help the younger women—give them counsel and instruction, that they also following in their footsteps and copying their example may likewise help others as they grow up to be aged women also. I trust that there are those around us who are growing up in spirituality of mind; not in worldliness, but in the grace of God, being trained and fitted for the service to which God may have called them. It is in view of the widow's life being thus occupied for God that the Apostle says, "she is happier if she so abide."

I wish, further, to consider with you what is recorded for our instruction in the Scriptures in connection with this important subject—marrying only in the Lord. It is a large subject, but I will just refer to a few of the Scriptures that bear upon this.

Turn to Gen. i. 3: "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light; and God saw the light that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness." Compare with this Eph. v. 8: "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of the light." 11th verse: "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Who are the darkness if we are the light? Every unsaved, unregenerate one is darkness, and every saved one is light in the Lord. If we go down among the world and walk in self-will we are in the dark, and no light will shine out from us. The moon receives its light from the sun, and if the sun is not shining upon the moon it throws no light upon this dark world. So if you and I are not walking in the light, in subjection to the Lord, then we are just as dark as the world around us, and more misleading. We are to walk as children of the light, for God has separated the light from the darkness.

Turn, further, to the Second Epistle to the Corinthians vi. 14: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" There you find the same thought. What communion can there be between light and darkness? There cannot be any; the one is opposed to the other, and therefore there cannot be

communion. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" Thus God would give us instruction on this subject from the very first chapter of Genesis. Now look at the third chapter of Genesis, 15th verse: "I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed." There are two seeds—the woman's seed and the serpent's seed. Who are the serpent's seed? Every unregenerate one. Who is the woman's seed? It is Christ. Inasmuch as we are Christ's are we the woman's seed. And do we not incur the serpent's enmity? Is he not still our enemy, as he was Christ's? Who has put enmity between the serpent's seed and the seed of the woman? God says, "I put it." Why did God put it? He meant separation: that the light should be separate from the darkness; children of God from the children of the wicked one; and just because it is God's desire, therefore Satan opposes it down the whole of the Scripture. It is the whole object and device of Satan to get the Church mixed up with the world, and the world with the Church. We see how this comes out in the sixth chapter of Genesis. The sin which we read of here culminated in the judgment of God by the flood. In the previous chapters we read of the line of Cain representing the ungodly, and the line of Seth of whom were Enoch and Noah, the godly. We read that "the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all which they chose," &c. Therefore the way of the Lord became corrupted upon the earth by the amalgamation of the two seeds. When the two seeds got mixed up, then the collective testimony was spoiled; then, there was only individual testimony, as Enoch and Noah. When Noah was left he was the only witness for God. We are not told that his sons were righteous, but they were saved through the righteousness of Noah.

Turn now to Exodus xxxiv. 11-17, and you will see that God commanded His people Israel to keep themselves separate from the inhabitants of the land. He said, "If you make a covenant with them, then the result will be that you will give up Me; and I am a jealous God." I never knew the case of a Christian marrying an unconverted person who did not give up God. Such do not worship idols as Israel did, but they thoroughly give up God.

Pass on to a most solemn instance of this in the book of Numbers, 22nd chapter 1st verse. This is

the chapter where we have the account of Balak hiring Balaam to curse the people of God, and how God turned the curse into a blessing.

In the 25th chapter of Numbers, you will find that the Moabites, who were a little while before this so distressed about Israel (hearing what God had done to the Egyptians), that they got Balaam to curse them, are now on friendly terms with Israel. It was the daughters of Moab that were at the root of this. Just get behind the scenes, and we see who did it. Numbers xxxi. 16: "Behold these caused the children of Israel through the counsel of Balaam to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor." Mark that when Balaam, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, had been hired to curse the children of Israel, and failed to do so, God having turned the curse into a blessing, it was then he suggested another way of getting the victory over them. He no doubt said, "just invite the people to a dancing party, and get your daughters to make themselves most attractive to them, and then you will succeed." They fell into the snare set for them; they were beguiled and led away from the Lord; and we read that "the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab," and then "they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat and bowed down to their gods." And thus he succeeded in leading God's people away from Jehovah; and then He came in in judgment and dealt with them for this terrible sin. It was the devil, the wily serpent, that was plotting against God's people, as he had done from the beginning.

1 Peter iii. 7: "Likewise ye husbands dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered." Fellow-heirs of the grace of life. Are the living to be yoked together with the dead? Those who are dead in trespasses and sins? If they have not the grace of life, however fair they may be outwardly, it is just as the white-washing of the sepulchre. What, then, can the manner of life be of the living who are yoked together with the dead?

Let the light shine, and that will save you from the temptations of the world and the flesh. Shine with the light of God; walk in communion with Him; speak of the things, character, and claims of Christ, and the light will soon overcome the darkness.

"Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Godly living and walking with God will give us power over all the snares and temptations of the world and the flesh.

If you want to bring about total spiritual shipwreck, then get inveigled in this yoke. I have known cases, even after the sin had been committed, of the unsaved one having been brought to the Lord; but, it is only one here and there. In the majority of cases it has only resulted in utter misery and disaster. If the prayer of husband and wife be hindered by the one being living and the other dead, then what must be the worship of God's assembly if composed of the living and the dead? If God calls us to separation from the marriage yoke, does He stop there? Would He not have His own redeemed ones gathered together unto Him; separated from the world and subject to Him, our Lord, now at God's right hand, the Word of the Lord their standard, and gathered together to do what He has commanded to be done? Shall we say that there is no difference between a meeting where the Gospel is preached to the unsaved and a meeting where God's own people are gathered to worship Him? Shall we mix them up together? May we see from the Word of God what a separation God has made between the living and the dead. We are not to be uncourteous to the unsaved. The responsibilities of every earthly relationship are to be owned and fulfilled whether to the saved or the unsaved. But let us be ever on our guard lest we be tempted to come down to their level, and walk and act as they do. May we so walk in fellowship with God that our ways may condemn theirs, and that they, through our testimony, may be led to consider their ways in the light of God's Word, and thus be led to Christ.

THE FLESH OR FIRSTBORN.

PART V.—ESAU'S LIFE AND CONDUCT.

(Continued from page 125.)



ALL human nature refuses to own God as over all as Supreme, and power or blessing put into its hands would only result in increased rebellion against Him. No military commander would put within the reach of treasonable soldiers, weapons which, at any moment

might be turned against himself; nor will a landed proprietor put an estate under the tenancy of one who would quickly lay claim to real ownership. This then is the character of the firstborn. But before looking further at the conduct of Esau, it will be interesting to notice one instance where power was put into the hands of a "firstborn" son, and the abuses which followed. In 2 Chron. xxi. 3, we read that Jehosaphat gave the kingdom to Jehoram, *because he was the firstborn*. The beautiful life of Jehosaphat was marred by two distinct departures from God: *he went down to Ahab* and joined affinity with that godless wicked king (2 Chron. xviii. 1, 2), but in his departure the God of Israel watched over him and sent him deliverance in the moment of his greatest peril (chap. xviii. 31), he was allowed to return to Jerusalem in peace, and the gentle rebuke of the Lord's prophet who said, "shouldest thou help the ungodly and love them that hate the Lord," seemed to have taken hold upon him, producing restoration of soul and fellowship with God (2 Chron. xix. 2).

Much that is truly beautiful and commendable is recorded of him afterwards; but alas! e'er his days closed he joined himself with Ahaziah, King of Israel, who did very wickedly. He was not this time unequally yoked in a military undertaking, but in a shipping speculation. Howbeit, the Lord was displeased, and, as a mark of His disapproval, blighted their prospects by breaking the ships (chap. xx. 35, 36, 37). All this may seem at first-sight to be foreign to our subject, but surely there is a connection.

Isaac when in a carnal condition sought to impart the blessing to Esau, contrary to the will of God. "Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison." So Jehosaphat in his departure from God lost that keen perception and right judgment which are the portion of those only who walk with Him, and as the result of this allows natural law to guide him, and bestows the kingdom upon *the firstborn*. There was no interposition of the Divine hand either directly or indirectly to prevent this, as in the case of Esau, and "*Jehoram the firstborn reigned*."

But what a history! Could we picture to ourselves a life more wicked and abominable? "He strengthened himself and slew all his brethren with the sword (2 Chron. xxi. 4). He walked in the way of the Kings of Israel like as did the house of Ahab,

for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife (the result doubtless, of his father's affinity), and he wrought that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord (verse 6). He made high places in the mountains of Judah and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah thereto" (verse 11). Is it not worthy of notice that *not a single good thing is recorded* of this king. How solemn? Even of Ahab there was something to be said in his favour; but not so with "Jehoram the firstborn," his innate wickedness proved itself at every step of his way, and we look upon him as typical of the Adam nature, we have no difficulty in seeing *why* God does not bestow blessing upon it. Power would be used in rebelling against God and in exalting self. The death of Jehoram was brought about by the special avenging hand of God. "The Lord smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease, and at the end of two years his bowels fell out . . . so he died of sore diseases, and his people made no burning for him like the burning of his fathers (verse 19). *He departed without being desired*, howbeit they buried him in the city of David, *but not in the sepulchre* of the kings" (verse 20). So closes the dark history of one who was a child of nature and not of grace. This case helps us vividly to see *why* the inheritance passes from the firstborn.

There is a striking contrast between the characters of Esau and Ishmael. Although both are typical of the flesh, and each alike rejected of God, yet Esau did not possess that spirit of utter disregard for the blessing of God, which was so manifest in Ishmael. His real nature declared itself when he sold his birthright, and his earnest desire to obtain the blessing *afterwards* must not be looked upon as indicating a better condition of heart, but rather the opposite. There is such a thing as "religious flesh," and we may rightly conclude that Esau furnishes us with an example of this.

The wild high-handed and mocking Ishmael spirit could not possibly deceive the children of God, its enmity is on the surface; but a keener perception is required to detect the vileness of an Esau. It is this latter spirit which proves such a trouble in the churches of God, and against which the warning is given, "looking diligently lest . . . there be any profane person as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright" (Heb. xii. 15, 16).

Alas, that there should be found amongst the saints those whose spirits so closely resemble that of Esau. Self-denial forms no part of their religion, present good and present honour is earnestly sought for, yet these and other evils beside are covered by a cloak of apparent zeal for God and His work. This is the spirit which craves for a prominent position, not that God may be glorified, but that the flesh may be pleased. He who is animated by this spirit loves to trace to his own instrumentality cases of conversion, or blessing of any kind, and then to make known to all *how he* was used. This spirit is covetous and filled with envy and malice, it cannot bear the thought of another being more used and blessed of God than itself. It matters not in what way it develops itself it is dangerous, because, selfish and the present "*morsel of meat*," whether it be the praise of men or love of pre-eminence is more highly esteemed than the rewards of "the judgment-seat of Christ." The man who allows this spirit to rule him is seldom if ever found in the performance of self-denying acts which are common-place and unnoticed. Godly overseers should look diligently that this "profane" spirit might early be detected and its influence deadened in the assembly. This we grant is more easily said than done, and particularly so when those who profess to be overseers *are themselves* tainted by this principle. Alas! that so many gatherings of God's children should be starved and crippled by some Diotrephes who loves to have the pre-eminence (3 John 9). Such an one cares but little how the souls of believers fare, if only *his* position amongst them be maintained: it matters nought to him that other and more profitable speakers are silenced if only he be permitted to hear his own voice.

Men of this character, whether they be old or young, frequently pass as being real and spiritual. They generally possess considerable natural ability, and not the least depressing feature of the case is found in the fact, that many believers are so blind and carnal, that they cannot detect the hidden selfishness which resists *spiritual ministry*. In speaking thus, we would seek to guard against encouraging any believer in judging a *brother's motive*, that work belongs to God and to *Him alone*. But surely where God's glory has again and again been sacrificed by the rejection of godly evangelists and teachers—by the exercise of influence which either prevents the

saints from hearing the truth, or leads them to think lightly of it when they do hear, we cannot hesitate in pronouncing this condition of things to be the direct result of "*profane*" influence.

To part with spiritual blessing by giving up the truth of God is a terribly solemn thing; yet how often do we find this being done by those who, for a time "did run well" (Gal. v. 7). Sisters in Christ whose spirituality appeared genuine, are tempted for the sake of a husband to go back to religious systems from which they professed to have been severed by the truth. Brethren are allured into "unequal yokes" with unconverted partners in business, through the love of the present "*morsel of meat*." Beloved, let us remember that life down here is short, and according to our steadfastness and self-denial, so will be our reward at the "judgment-seat of Christ." We cannot "live for both worlds," and if we would have His "well done" in that day, we must cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart *now*.

Content to let the world go by, to know no gain or loss.

Our sinful selves our only *shame*, our glory all the cross.

There is but one antidote to all the evils here complained of, and that is for each believer to *make God's glory* his *only* object, and where this is the case, *self* will no longer be permitted to stand in the way to obstruct and hinder.

Where there is an evil root, we may expect to find *only* evil fruit, and so with Esau's life. "When he was forty years old he took to wife Judith, the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath, the daughter of Elon the Hittite, which were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah" (Gen. xxvi. 34). Again, seeing the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father, he went unto Ishmael and took to wife one of his daughters (Gen. xxviii. 9). These "helpmeets" from amongst the "children of darkness" would not be likely to hinder him in his worldliness, nor put obstacles in his way to prosperity; it would have been impossible for them to have reminded him of that God whose blessing and glory he had despised, for they knew Him not. As earth was his home and his hope, no voice from God ever fell upon his ear, and no ladder connecting heaven and earth ever filled his eyes. When Israel's seed were suffering and afflicted in Egypt and the wilderness, Edom's dukes flourished and prospered, and lived at ease in their castles. Nature at this point would ask what was

lost by choosing "the mess of pottage?" Is it not better with Esau than Jacob? Truly it might *seem* to be; but what is prosperity without God? "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree; yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not" (Psa. xxxvii. 35). Edom's prosperity did not lead him to love God or Israel His people. When the poor and afflicted pilgrim band just delivered from Egypt said, "let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country; we will not pass through the fields nor through the vineyards; neither will we drink of the water of the wells" . . . Edom said unto him, thou shalt not pass by me, least I come out against thee with the sword . . . Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border, wherefore Israel turned away from him" (Num. xx. 14).

In Deut. ii. Israel received special instructions relative to Esau and his possessions. "Ye are to pass through the coast of your brethren, the children of Esau, which dwell in Seir . . . take ye good heed unto yourselves, therefore; *meddle not with them*, for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot-breadth, because I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for a possession. Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat, and ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink, for the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the work of thy hands. He knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness these forty years, for the Lord thy God hath been with thee, thou hast lacked nothing" (ver. 4-7).

Jacob had received a superior blessing to that of Esau, and God would not have His name dishonoured by Israel receiving from or interfering with Esau. The Land of Canaan, on the other side of Jordan, was their goal. "The Lord was their portion and the lot of their inheritance," and He would not have them covet anything however enviable to nature, on this side of Canaan.

"Meddle not with them," they have their portion and are satisfied with it. You have something better, but faith was needed here. The "firstborn" never sees over Jordan into resurrection, but is content to dwell in its Mount Seir. Beloved in Christ, meddle not with those whose hearts are fixed on earth; their possessions are not worth fighting for; we are passing through. "We walk by faith." Our possessions are incorruptable and they fade not away, and are reserved in Heaven for us. "Our bed is green," and

will never know change nor decay. Surely we can afford to "meddle not" with the possessions of those whose only heaven is here below.

But Edom's possessions will fade. Read carefully the book of Obadiah, where the final judgment of Edom is foretold; their sins are recounted and their enmity exposed. "The house of Jacob shall be a fire and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them and devour them, and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau, for the Lord hath spoken it (verse 18). And saviours shall come up on Mount Zion to judge the Mount of Esau, and the Kingdom shall be the Lord's" (verse 21). Victory eternal and consummate for the spiritual seed. W. J. E.

**"I have Loved Thee with an Everlasting Love,
therefore with Loving Kindness have I
Drawn Thee."**

JER. xxxi. 3.

LOVED with an everlasting love! Oh Lord,
Enlarge the puny measure of my heart
To grasp the wondrous thought! It cannot be:
The finite ne'er can hold infinity.
Yet teach me, Lord, as much as I can learn
Of Thy great love—of *Thee*, for Thou art Love.
Thou knewest from all time my wanderings;
The sinfulness and folly of my life,
Which, like a broken bow, hath turned aside
Full off from *Thee*—its Source and only Strength.
And *yet* Thou loved'st me, and still dost love,
And wilt unto the end! For I am Thine;
Redeemed with precious blood of Thy dear Son.
Thyself made manifest in flesh, to meet
The need of guilty sinners such as I.
Oh keep me ever dwelling in the light
And joy of this blest knowledge. Nothing else
Will satisfy the heart which Thou hast made
And fashioned, so that none *may* fill but *Thee*.
Beside Thy love all other is but cold
And feeble, as a spark unto the sun,
As drop unto an ocean limitless!
Oh grant that evermore, when faint and tired—
Of contest with the evilness within,
Of warfare in the wilderness without,
Of labour seeming no reward to yield—
And tempted to lie down in sad despair,
"The love of Christ constraineth" be my song!

Love for Jesus sets one to work: I know no other way.

KEY TO THE DISPENSATIONAL AND PROPHEPIC DIAGRAM.

“**G**OD IS LIGHT.” 1 John i. 5; “GOD IS LOVE.” 1 John iv. 8; “GOD ALL IN ALL.” 1 Cor. xv. 28; “None is good but One, *that is* God.” Matt. xix. 17; Mark x. 18; Luke xviii. 19.

The three circles of the three primary colours, yellow, red, blue, indicate the triune character, Father, Son, Spirit, of the infinite and Eternal *Elohim*. All the light, love, and goodness of *Elohim* centre in and radiate from the cross of Immanuel. Hence, the Cross is the centre of the diagram.

1. Creation. John i. 1-3; Gen. i. 1; Isa. xlv. 18; [where for “in vain” may be read “without form.”]

2. Chaos. Gen. i. 2; Jer. iv. 23.

NOTE.—From a comparison of these passages with Isa. xlv. 18, where the same word (*tohu*) rendered in Gen. i. 2, and Jer. iv. 23, “without form” is translated “in vain,” it seems clear that an interval of time of undefined length is allowed for, between verses 1 and 2 of Gen. i.*

3. Formation. Gen. i. and ii.

NOTE.—In these two chapters there are three words used with beautiful discrimination by the Holy Ghost—1st. (*bara*) to create, *i.e.*, to bring into being, used only six times in these chapters, *viz.*, in chap. i. 1, for the bringing of the universe into existence; in chap. i. 21, in regard to the huge monsters (whales); in chap. i. 27, three times in regard to man as something altogether new; and in chap. ii. 3, in the summary of the whole. 2nd. (*ngasa*) to make out of existing materials, which is the ordinary word throughout. 3rd. (*yatzar*) to form, to mould (as a potter), used only in regard to Adam and the animals, which were formed out of the dust of the ground.

The days mentioned in Gen. i. and ii. are evidently days of 24 hours each, and the whole period, exclusive of what is referred to in the first two verses, is one week of days ending with the Sabbath.

4. Satan enters Eden. Gen. iii. Sin and death (Rom. v. 12) are the consequences; but while Jehovah-God curses the serpent and the ground, and expels man from the garden, He speaks of a Deliverer from the power of the serpent, and clothes Adam and Eve with coats of a skin.

5. Line of Cain. Gen. iv. 1-24. Driven out from the presence of Jehovah.

6. Line of Seth. Gen. v. Called “sons of God” (vi. 2).

7. Enoch. Gen. v. 18-24; Heb. xi. 5, 6; Jude 14, 15.

* See this subject carefully worked out in the “Hand-book to the Bible,” by Walter Scott, pp. 8 et seq. Pub. G. Morrish.

This may be had, along with the Diagram, at the Publishing Office, 1/, post free.

8. Unholy Alliances. Gen. vi. 1-12. Corruption of all flesh is the result.

9. Noah and his Family saved in the Ark, when the Old World perished by Water. Shown by the Ark across the red line of Seth, with the black line of judgment. Gen. v. 28-32; vi. 8 to viii. 19; Heb. xi. 7; 1 Peter iii. 18-22; 2 Peter iii. 1-7.

NOTE.—After the Flood, the sword was put into man’s hand to execute justice. Gen. ix. 4-6, and comp. iii. 24.

10. City and Tower of Babel. Gen. xi. 1-9. Results in confusion and division into NATIONS. Gen. x., and comp. Deut. xxxii. 8.

11. Call of Abram. Hitherto there has been only a single line coloured *red*; but from this a portion of the diagram commencing in a point is so coloured, indicating the race of Abraham through Isaac. Acts vii. 2, 3; Heb. xi. 8; Gen. xiii. 1-5; Isa. li. 2.

NOTE.—This marks the commencement of God’s dealing with a family and nation *as such* upon the earth, under the covenant of *circumcision*. Acts vii. 8; Gen. xvii. 9-27; Rom. iv. 11. God’s promises were unconditional (Gal. iii. 15-18; Gen. xii. 2, 3, 7; xiii. 14-17; xv.; xvii. 15-19; xxii. 16-18) and His dealing with the nation of His choice was in grace during the time of the Patriarchs. He preserved His people in Egypt (Exod. i.), and, when the time for deliverance came, placed them under shelter of the blood of the Pascal Lamb, and brought them out through the Red Sea (Exod. iii. to xv.) In the wilderness He supplied them with manna from heaven (Exod. xvi.) and with water from the rock (Exod. xvii. 1-7.) Up to Sinai God was dealing in *grace*.

12. Giving of the Law. Shown by the tables. Exod. xix., xx. Trial of Israel’s and so of man’s ability to stand before God on the ground of full obedience.

NOTE.—In consequence of the first tables being broken (Exod. xxxii.) God made provision for the security of the second tables and for dwelling Himself among His people (Exod. xxv. *et seq.*) The tabernacle was made and the Aaronic priesthood instituted—a perpetual priesthood as far as concerns the earth. Exod. xxviii., xxix.; Num. xxv. 12, 13; Ezek. xlv. 15, 16; Heb. viii. 4.

13. The Glory of Jehovah fills the Tabernacle. Exod. x. 4, 34, 35; comp. 1 Kings viii. 10, 11, and 2 Chron. v. 11-14.

14. Earthly Sovereignty. Shown by the CROWN and the broad SCARLET line; first in the hands of Saul (1 Sam. viii., *et seq.*); afterwards committed to David and established in his house. 1 Sam. xiii. 14; xv. 27-29; xvi. 1-13; 2 Sam. vii. 12-16; 1 Chron. xvii. 10-14; Psa. lxxxix. 19-37; Jer. xxxiii. 20-26.

15. The Ten Tribes (Israel) separated from Judah. 1 Kings xi. 29-39; xii.; 2 Chron. x.

NOTE.—The ten tribes, in severing their allegiance from the house of David, virtually rejected the promise of the Messiah.

16. Elijah taken up to Heaven in the Whirlwind. 2 Kings ii. 1-18.

17. Israel (the Ten Tribes) taken Captive to Assyria. 2 Kings x. 32, 33; xv. 29; xvii.

18. Israel dispersed among the Nations. 1 Kings xiv. 15; Jer. xxxi. 10; Ezek. xxxvi. 16-19; John vii. 35; James i. 1.

NOTE.—The dispersion of Israel is more clearly indicated by passages which speak of their restoration.

19. The Jews (i.e. the Kingdom of Judah) taken captive to Babylon. 2 Kings xxiv., xxv.; 2 Chron. xxxiv.; Jer. lii. The remnant of the Jews go down into Egypt. Jer. xliii. 4-7.

20. The Glory of Jehovah leaves the earth. Ezek. viii. 3, 4; ix. 3; x. 4, 18, 19; xi. 22, 23.

21. Earthly Sovereignty in the hands of the Gentiles. Dan. ii., vii., viii., &c.

22. The Land keeping Sabbath seventy years. Lev. xxvi. 34, 35, 43; Jer. xxv. 12; xxix. 10; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 20, 21.

23, 23a. The HEAD of GOLD—the LION with Eagle's wings — representing the BABYLONISH Empire in two aspects. Dan. ii. 31, 32, 36-38; vii. 4, 17.

24, 24a, 24b. The Breast and Arms of SILVER; the BEAR with three ribs in its mouth; the RAM with two horns—representing the MEDO-PERSIAN Empire in different aspects. Dan. ii. 32, 39; vii. 5, 17; viii. 3-7, 20.

25, 25a, 25b. The Belly and Thighs of BRASS; the LEOPARD with four wings and four heads; the HE-GOAT with a notable horn—representing the GRECIAN Empire in different aspects. Dan. ii. 32, 39; vii. 6, 17; viii. 5, *et seq.*

26, 26a. The Legs of IRON; the DREADFUL and TERRIBLE BEAST—representing the ROMAN Empire in two aspects. Dan. ii. 33, 40; vii. 7, *et seq.*

NOTE.—While the symbols of Scripture have in the first place a certain defined aspect, the interpretation, when given, amplifies the original idea; so the figures of Daniel have primarily an historical aspect, but the interpretation of them points specially to the end (ii. 28; viii. 17, 19, 23).

27. Going forth of the Commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem; Commencement of the SEVENTY WEEKS. Dan. ix. 25; Neh. i., ii.

NOTE.—This must not be confounded with the permission given by Cyrus to rebuild the *Temple*, which, according to the chronology in the margin of the authorised version of the

Bible, was ninety years before (2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23; Ezra i. 1-4; Isa. xlv. 28). It is "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem"—*the city*—that the SEVENTY WEEKS (or heptads) of Dan. ix. 24, 27 are to be reckoned.

28. Seven (7) weeks and threescore-and-two (62) weeks, making together sixty-nine (69) weeks. Dan. ix. 25-27.

NOTE.—Sixty-nine weeks gives 483 years *between* "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" and the cutting off of Messiah (*i.e.*, the crucifixion). The great point of importance to notice is that the *seventieth week is distinctly separated from the sixty-ninth*. A coming prince (the antichrist even still to come) is spoken of, whose people (the Romans) should "destroy the city and the sanctuary." Now although the Acts of the Apostles carries down the history of the Church at Jerusalem to thirty years after the cutting off of Messiah, the city and sanctuary were not destroyed up to that time; and the Epistle to the Hebrews contemplates a state of things which could not have existed subsequent to their destruction. An interval, then, is plainly indicated between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks, during which the national existence of Israel as God's chosen people is in abeyance*—an interval still continuing, which will only close when the coming Prince "shall confirm covenant with the many for one week," the final seventieth week yet remaining to be accomplished.

29. The Word made Flesh. John i. 1, 2, 14; Gal. iv. 4; Matt. i. 18-25; Luke i. 26-38; ii. 1-7; Psa. xl. 6-8; Heb. x. 5-9.

30. Ministry of John the Baptist for about three years and a half. Luke i. 5-22, 57-80; iii. 1-22; Matt. iii.; Mark i. 1-11; John i. 6-8, 19-37; iii. 23-36; iv. 1; Matt. xi. 2-19; xiv. 1-12; xviii. 10-13; Mark vi. 14-29; ix. 11-13; Mal. iv. 4-6.

31. Public Ministry of Jesus for about three years and a half. Recorded in the Gospels.

NOTE.—The ministry of Jesus did not commence publicly till after John was put in prison (Mark i. 14). The three-and-a-half years of John's ministry, and the three-and-a-half years of Christ's, making together seven years or one week, correspond respectively to the testimony of the two witnesses (Rev. xi. 3-12) during the first half of Daniel's seventieth week, and to the full development of antichrist's actings during the last half of the week.

32. The Passover. Lev. xxiii. 5; Matt. xxvi. 2, 17-19; Mark xiv. i, 12-16; Luke xxii. 1, 7-15; 1 Cor. v. 7.

NOTE.—The Jewish day commencing in the evening (*at sunset*) and finishing in the evening, it follows that each day had *two* evenings. The Passover was to be killed *at even*, and *between the two evenings* (Exod. xii. 6, marg.) that is on either the first or second of the two evenings of the fourteenth day of the first month. This accounts for our Lord being able to eat the typical passover with His disciples on the right day, and Himself to be sacrificed as the true Passover on the same day, at the very time when the rest of the Jews were partaking of the type † (see John xviii. 28, and Matt. xxvi. 45, 46). The ninth hour (*i.e.*, 3 p.m.) would be the commencement of the second evening of the day and the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice.

* See "The Coming Prince," by R. Anderson, LL.D., chap. viii. Pp. Hodder and Stoughton.

† The Jews of the present day understand "between the two evenings" as meaning between noon and sun-set, but the explanation above seems more reasonable, besides fully satisfying all the requirements of Scripture.

THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD for seven days, immediately following the passover, is typical of the character of practical separation from evil, whether personal—none were to eat of leaven—or in association with others—no leaven was allowed in the house—to be maintained by those redeemed by the blood of the Passover throughout the whole period of their earthly sojourn. Lev. xxiii. 6-8; 1 Cor. v. 8.

33. Judgment of Sin on the Cross. Shown by the CROSS in the centre of the diagram with the black line descending upon it. Psa. xxii. 1-21; Isa. liii; Zech. xiii. 7; Matt. xxvii. 45-50; Mark xiv. 33-37; Luke xxiii. 44-46; Rom. viii. 3; 2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. iii. 13; 1 Peter ii. 21-24; iii. 18.

34. The Sheaf of Firstfruits — Resurrection of Christ. Lev. xxiii. 9-14; ["on the morrow after the Sabbath," *i.e.* on the *first day of the week.*] Matt. xxviii. 1-10; Mark xvi. 1-14; Luke xxiv. 1-12; John xx. 1-18; 1 Cor. xv. 4, 20-23; Eph. i. 20; 2 Tim. ii. 8.

35, 36. Ascension of Jesus to the Right Hand of God. John xx. 17; Luke xxiv. 50, 51; Acts i. 9; vii. 55, 56; Mark xvi. 19; Eph. i. 19-23; iv. 8-10; Psa. lxxviii. 18; Phil. ii. 9, 10; Psa. cx. 1; Heb. i; viii. 1; x. 12; xii. 2.

37. Heaven Opened consequent upon the Vail having been Rent and Jesus having entered with His own blood. Matt. xxvii. 51; Mark xv. 38; Luke xxiii. 45; John xx. 17; Acts. vii. 56; Heb. ii. 9; ix. 7-12; x. 19-21; Eph. ii. 13, 18.

38. Pentecost; the Two Wave Loaves; the Descent of the Holy Ghost. Lev. xxiii. 15-21; Acts ii. 1-4; Eph. ii. 13-18; 1 Cor. xii. 13; John vii. 39.

NOTE.—This was the commencement of an entirely *new* thing—ONE NEW MAN. THE BODY of Christ formed and indwelt by the HOLY GHOST (Col. i. 18). Hitherto the wondrous purpose that Jews and "Gentiles should be heirs-TOGETHER, and a body-TOGETHER, and partakers-TOGETHER" (Eph. iii. 6), had been "hid in God" (verse 9) "from the ages and the generations" (Col. i. 26).

39. The Church of God.* Matt. xvi. 13-18; xviii. 15-18; Acts xv. 14; Eph. i. 22, 23; ii. 19-22; iii.; iv. 1-16; v. 23-32; Col. i. 18, 24-27; 1 Tim. iii. 15. The special subject of Paul's ministry, as the *House or Temple of God*, the *Body* (38) and the *Bride of Christ*. The Church as the *Kingdom of the Heavens in mystery* (Matt. xiii). The Church in her *historical aspect* (Rev. ii., iii).

NOTE.—The last four churches in Rev. ii. and iii., Thyatira (Romanism), Sardis (Protestantism), Philadelphia (Revival of faithfulness to the Lord Jesus, and subjection to the Word of God alone, in dependence on the guidance of the Holy Ghost), and Laodicea (degeneracy of Philadelphia) all run on to the Lord's coming for the Church.

* N.B.—The expression "Church of Christ" occurs *no where in Scripture*, and it is to be feared that its so frequent use implies some lack of apprehending the full character and dignity and meaning of the "Church of God." (Only once do we find "Churches of Christ" (Rom. xvi. 16) where assemblies of believers gathered to His name send salutation to fellow-believers.

40, 40a.—Jerusalem Trodden Down of the Gentiles, and Judah (the Jews) Dispersed. Luke xxi. 20-24; Lev. xxvi.; Dan. ix. 26.

NOTE.—Accomplished by Titus, A.D. 70.

41. All Israel, Lo-ammi. Hos. i., iii.

NOTE.—Israel (the ten tribes) having rejected the house of David (15) were carried captive to Assyria (17) and thence dispersed among the nations (18). The Jews, after the Babylonish captivity (19), were restored to their land (27), and God bore with them until after they had rejected, first their Messiah, and then the testimony of the Holy Ghost through Stephen (Acts vii. 51-60). Now, the Church (39) having been formed by the descent of the Holy Ghost (38), the Jews still hardening their hearts are finally rejected by God as a *nation* until the "fulness of the Gentiles" (*i.e.*, the Church) shall have come in (Rom. xi.; Acts xiii. 46, 47; xxviii. 25-28).

42. Satan, Prince of the power of the Air; God of this Age. Isa. xiv. 12-15; Ezek. xxviii. 13-15; Luke x. 18; John xii. 31; xiv. 30; 2 Cor. iv. 4; Eph. ii. 2; vi. 12.

43. The Coming of Christ as the Morning Star; the Distinctive Hope of the Church. John xiv. 1-3; Col. i. 27; 1 Tim. i. 1; 1 Thess. iv. 18; v. 11; 1 John iii. 3; Rev. xxii. 7, 12, 16, 17, 20.

44. Rapture of the Saints. Rom. viii. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 23, 51-57; 1 Thess. iv. 13-18; v. 9-11; 1 John iii. 2.

45. The Church in Heaven prior to the commencement of, and during the 70th week. Rev. iii. 10; 1 Thess. v. 1-10; 2 Thess. i. 6-10; ii.; Rev. iv. 4-11; v. 8-14.

NOTE.—He who now letteth (2 Thess. ii. 7) is the Holy Ghost in the Church (1 John iv. 4). The Church is seen in heaven complete (Rev. iv., v.) before the commencement of the judgments.

46. The Judgment-seat of Christ. Rom. xiv. 10-13; 1 Cor. iii. 12-14; iv. 1-5; 2 Cor. v. 9-11.

NOTE.—See Matt. xxv. 14-30, and contrast verses 31-46.

47. The Jews Restored to the Land.

NOTE.—It is plain from many passages of Scripture that at the opening of the 70th week the Jews will be in much the same condition nationally and religiously as they were at the conclusion of the 69th week. The nation then, as formerly, will be subject to the (final form of the) Roman empire; the temple worship will be going on as before, and, while there will be a godly remnant waiting for the salvation of Jehovah (as of old, Simeon and Anna), the great majority of the people will be ready, in unbelief, to receive the One who shall come "in his own name." Dan. ix. 27; xii. 11; Isa. lxvi. 1-3; Rev. xi. 1, 2. The Psalms *passim*.

48. The 70th Week. Dan. ix. 27. Rev. iv. to xix. contains the detailed account of God's dealing in judgment during this period.

49, 49a, 49b. (1) The FEET and TOES of IRON and CLAY; (2) the BEAST with SEVEN

HEADS and TEN HORNS; (3) Coming up out of the SEA; (4) the WOMAN sitting upon the Beast. (1) Dan. ii. 33 41-43; (2) Rev. xiii. 1-10; xvii.; Dan. vii. 19-25; (3) Rev. xiii. 1; xvii. 1, 15; (4) Rev. xvii., xviii.; xix. 1-4.

NOTE.—The *ten toes* correspond to the *ten horns*, the *clay* to the *waters* (i.e., democracy), and the number (Seven) of the heads of the beasts and their several characteristics in Daniel to the number of the heads of the Revelation beast and its combined character.

50. The First Half of the 70th Week; the Two Witnesses; Taken up to Heaven. Rev. xi. 3-12.

NOTE.—This portion of the diagram is coloured darker, as this will be a time of distress and the beginning of God's judgments. Matt. xxiv. 4-8.

51. Satan Cast into the Earth. Rev. xii. 7-17.

52. The Second Half of the 70th Week; the Great Tribulation. Matt. xxiv. 15-28; Mark xiii. 14-23; Dan. xii. 5-7.

NOTE.—This portion of the diagram is coloured still darker than that indicating the first half of the week as being the time of the *great tribulation*.

52a. The Beast fully Energised by Satan. Indicated by the *black line* rising up and running through the end of the scarlet line of Gentile sovereignty. Rev. xiii. 2-7; xvii. 8-17; 2 Thess. ii. 12; Dan. ix. 27; xi. 31-36.

53. The Second Dragon-speaking Beast with Horns like a Lamb; the False Prophet. Rev. xiii. 11-17; Dan. viii. 9-12, 23-26.

NOTE.—The 70th week is the focus towards which, as immediately preceding the manifestation of the Son of Man, prophecy culminates.* Evil will then have its unbridled development, and the enmity of Satan and of wicked men against God will only be intensified by His judgments. Babylon, the false religious system, will attain a higher degree of domination and dignity, together with a profounder depth of moral depravity than ever before, until finally destroyed by the kings of the earth. The BEAST, the ANTICHRIST or LAWLESS ONE, coming in peaceably and by flattery at the beginning, will, in the midst of the week when fully energised by Satan, throw off all restraint, and "as God sit in the temple of God." The FALSE PROPHET will lead the diabolic worship of the Beast, so completing the infernal trinity of DRAGON, BEAST, and FALSE PROPHET. Still, while iniquity will thus be ripening for judgment, God's mercy will be extended to those who have not previously heard and rejected the truth; and before "the end" the "gospel of the kingdom shall be preached for a witness unto all nations."

54. The Marriage of the Lamb. Matt. xxv. 10;

*The 70th week terminates with the manifestation of the Son of Man It has its commencement of course seven years before; but that commencement is not necessarily synchronous with the rapture of the saints. This event may take place at any *moment*. But when the 70th week opens, a certain state of things will already have been established. (47 Note). During the time the Church is on the earth, the "gospel of the grace of God" is proclaimed; but, when she has been removed, the character of the testimony for God will be the gospel of the *kingdom*. [See two articles by F. C. Bland, in *Northern Witness* for January and February, 1882.]

Eph. v. 25-27; Rev. xix. 6-9; (Psa. xlv. 13-15); John iii. 29.

55, 55a., 55b, Christ and His Armies; the Stone cut out without Hands; the Glory of Jehovah Returns to the Earth. Rev. xix. 11-21; i. 7; xvii. 14; Psa. ii. 1-5; Dan. ii. 34, 35, 44, 45; Joel iii. 9-14; Zech. xiv. 1-5; Matt. xxiv. 30; Psa. lxxxv. 9; Ezek. xliii. 1, 2; (Rev. i. 15); xlv. 4; Hag. ii. 7, 9.

56. The Beast and the False Prophet Cast Alive into the Lake of Fire. Rev. xix. 19-21; Dan. vii. 11; viii. 25; xi. 45; Isa. xi. 4; Ezek. xxi. 25.

57. Satan Cast into the Bottomless Pit and Bound 1000 Years. Rev. xx. 1-3.

58. The Times of the Gentiles.—The whole period during which earthly sovereignty is not exercised by a prince of the house of David. Luke xxi. 24.

59. The Memorial of Blowing of Trumpets. On the *first* day of the seventh month. Lev. xxiii. 23-25; Psa. lxxxii. 1-5; Isa. xxvii. 12, 13; Matt. xxiv. 31. THE DAY OF ATONEMENT—on the *tenth* day of the seventh month. Lev. xxiii. 26-32; Zech. xii. 10 to xiii. 1.

60. The Outcasts of Israel Assembled. Isa. xi. 10-12; Ezek. xx. 33-44; xxxvi. 24-38; Hosea ii. 14-17; Zech. x. 7-12.

61. Millennial Kingdom; all Israel one Kingdom. Rev. xx. 4-6; Dan. ii. 44, 45; Gen. xv. 18; xlix. 10; Psa. lxii.; Isa. ix. 6; xi. 1-10; xxiv. 23; xxxii. 1; Jer. xxxiii. 5, 6; Ezek. xxi. 25-27; xxxvii.; xlviii.; Micah iv. 1-7; Zech. xiv. 8; Matt. xix. 28; xxv. 31-46; 1 Cor. xv. 25. THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES—on the *fifteenth* day of the seventh month. Lev. xxiii. 33-43; Zech. xiv. 16-21; John vii. 2, 37, 38; Isa. xii. THE SMITING OF THE ASSYRIAN AND OF ROSH, at the commencement of the millennial kingdom. Isa. x. 5-34; xiv. 24, 25; Micah v. 5; Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.

62. The Holy Jerusalem; the Bride the Lamb's Wife. Rev. xxi. 2, 9-27; Isa. lx.

63. Gentile Nations in Blessing. Gen. xii. 3; xxii. 18; Isa. ii. 2-5; xix. 18-25; Rom. xi. 12, 15; Rev. xxi. 24-26.

64, 65, 66, 67. Satan Loosed for a little season; Gog and Magog; their Judgment and Satan's. Rev. xx. 3, 7-10.

NOTE.—This is the final trial and failure of the creature. From his first creation failure has stamped his entire course. Under whatever circumstances placed—whether innocent, or with knowledge of good and evil—under law or dealt with in grace, and, at last, in the absence of all temptation from with-

out, the creature proves himself unable to maintain his own integrity, and, apart from the sovereign grace of God, fails, and fails utterly.

68. Judgment by Fire. 2 Peter iii. 7, 10-12.

69. Judgment of the Dead before the Great White Throne whence they are cast into the Lake of Fire. John v. 28, 29; Rom. ii. 6, 8, 9; Rev. xx. 11-15; xxi. 8.

70. New Heavens and a New Earth. Isa. lxxv. 17; 2 Peter iii. 13; Rev. xxi. 1, 5.

“Blessed is he that readeth, and keepeth the words written, for The Time is at Hand.”

Rev. i. 3; xxii. 7.

W. F. H. N.

THE TIME IS AT HAND.

REV. xxii. 10.



At even or midnight,
Or at the cock-crow, or the dawn
of day,

I come to change your darkness into light—
I come without delay.”

So spake the Master's voice;
And e'en as sank its tones in every breast,
So sank that Sun wherein we did rejoice,
Adown the cloudy west.

On mountain peaks of snow
(While wrapped in gathering gloom the valleys lay)
Our lifted eyes beheld the after-glow
Fade to the sombre grey.

The darkness came apace.
The very moon that rose to rule the night
In earth's black shadow veiled her silver face,
Eclipsed in heaven's height.

The prowling wolf drew near
In hungry hate, to scatter and devour,
And, while the hireling fled with craven fear,
The flock defenceless tore.

Oh midnight of distress!
When superstition spread o'er land and sea
Her vampire wings, and truth and righteousness
Had almost ceased to be!

But still the cock-crow came;
And there were some who roused them from their
sleep;
And faithless ones were startled into shame
And turned themselves to weep.

Thus longing eyes have seen
The evening darken down to noon of night;
Thus listening ears have heard the challenge keen
Herald the morning light.

Even and midnight past,
The cock-crow merging in the morning dawn;
Surely the Master comes at last—at last—
So long has He been gone!

The dawn has portents dread.
The chilling mists come whirling up the hill;
The eastern sky is lowering darkly red;
But we are waiting still.

And from the land afar—
From the right-hand of Majesty on high—
Anew the echo falls from star to star,
“The time is nigh—is nigh!”

What is it that He saith?
“A little while!”—our hearts within us burn;—
There rests to us one memory—'tis His death!

One hope—'tis His return!
Aigle, Switzerland, 14th Sept., 1884.

A. P. M.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION.—The resurrection of the Saints takes place at Christ's Coming; as it is said, “every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits, and they that are Christ's at His coming.” This resurrection is altogether another thing from the resurrection of the wicked. There will be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust, but on different principles. The former having life in Christ, which life has nothing in common with the world around. Moreover, they have the Spirit of God dwelling in them. “If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Rom. viii. 11). “The body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body; and God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise us up by His power” (1 Cor. vi. 13, 14). The body is the Lord's as well as the soul. As to the wicked, Christ raises them up for judgment, but not at the same time. Christ will accomplish, for the bodies of His saints, what He has already accomplished for the soul; the wicked will be called up for judgment and forced to honour Christ in spite of themselves (John v.; Luke xx. 35, 36). There is a remarkable distinction. As regards all my sins, He put them away at His first coming. I am going to appear before Him who has already died for them.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to “prove all things,” and “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender

QUESTION NO. CLXXXII.

Where individuals in an assembly give no sign of LIFE, and yet are not living in any of the sins mentioned in 1 Cor. v., what steps should be taken by those who would seek to act for God?

REPLY.

Many a living soul shews little sign of life. No doubt there are many in the fellowship of gathered saints of whose vitality there is good reason to “stand in doubt,” as Paul did of the Galatians.

He travailed in birth for them again, until he should see “Christ formed in them”—nothing short of which could satisfy him that they were begotten of God.

Ministry of the Word in the power of the Holy Ghost and the power of real godliness in the assembly will commonly result in any who have only made a profession, and who have no heart for Christ, “going out from us because they were not of us.”

If there is real waiting upon God about such a matter, there will surely be a manifesting of the truth sooner or later. Either they will “go out” themselves, or they will be allowed of God to fall into such sin as shall warrant there being put away from the fellowship of saints. Or better still, and what has before now taken place, they may be brought to see that all along they were self-deceived and be truly converted to God.

QUESTION No. CLXXXIII.

What is meant by “the sure mercies of David?” Acts xiii., 34.

REPLY.

The promises that Christ should be of the seed of David were as definite as that He should be “the seed of the woman,” or “the seed of Abraham.”

As seed of the woman, He was to be the bruiser of the serpent’s head. As seed of Abraham, in Him were all nations of the earth to be blessed. As “Son of David” he inherits the throne of Israel, and his dominion shall be “from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.”

The sorrow of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke xxiv.) was that He whom they had known as Son of David, and on whom their hopes had been built as Israel’s Redeemer, had been cut off without accomplishing any deliverance. They did not understand God’s way of redemption. They were slow of heart to believe the great fundamental truth of *resurrection*. They knew that the Son of David was to reign for ever and ever, Ps. lxxii., lxxxix., Is. ix. 7, but not knowing that every promise of God was founded on atonement and secured in resurrection, they were sorely perplexed.

Christ risen from the dead and seated at the right hand of the throne is God’s security for the fulfilment of all His covenant promises.

The “sure mercies of David” are not the mercies that were granted to David in common with all the children of God—daily mercies meeting daily need. The expression refers to covenant mercies specially promised to David and to David’s seed, in which were included not only future blessing to Israel nationally but to the whole world. Many of these prophetic Scriptures apply in the first instance to Solomon, who was undoubtedly a figure of Him that was to come. Notably 1 Chron. xvii. 11, but the language used clearly has reference to a greater Son of David than Solomon.

It is remarkable that Paul, in writing to Timothy, refers to the Lord Jesus in this relationship, “remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel” (2 Tim. ii. 8).

Christ in resurrection is the nail in a sure place, on which hang all the covenant blessings of the children of God.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAPTER VIII.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.



AS I have before remarked, the writer of the Epistle to the Corinthians appears to have had, as his first object, to answer a number of questions which had troubled the minds of these converts from heathendom, and to give them the mind of the Lord about these matters, so that thus they might act together for God's glory. One of these questions appears to have been about the eating of those things which were offered to idols. And it is very easy to see how such difficulties would arise in their minds. If you turn to the 25th chapter of Numbers, you will see that one of Satan's devices for the ensnaring of Israel in the wilderness was of this nature. Also, turn to Acts xv. 28, 29, where we read, "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, &c." There we clearly find from the Old and New Testament that it was contrary to the mind of the Lord to eat things offered to idols.

This was not on the ground of these things being unclean in themselves, but it was absolutely necessary at the outset when converts were being gathered out from the heathen abominations around that they should be kept separate from it all.

There was always a table associated with the sacrifices. When we read of "*the sacrifices*," it always refers to the peace-offering. If we read of "*the offerings*," it may refer to the burnt or meat offerings; but if we read of *sacrifices* it refers to the peace-offering. And the special characteristic of the peace-sacrifice was *fellowship*. The burnt-offering was wholly given to God upon the altar; but the peace-offering was partly laid upon the altar for God, a portion was given to the priest; and then the worshippers' table was spread, and he, with his family gathered around the portion of the sacrifice which was his, and they ate it together. Thus the teaching of the peace-sacrifice was fellowship. Jehovah had His portion, the priest had his, and the offerer had his also. Thus God, the priest, and the offerer all

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fed upon the one sacrifice. That is just a type of what we have in the first Epistle of John i. 3, "truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

God delights in His Son—He said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He is called "the Bread of God." Our souls, created anew and made to find our joy in communion with God, can rest and delight in that same Saviour, and feed upon that same "Bread of God." God has spread a table for us with the very same provision that satisfies and rejoices His own heart; and this is fellowship.

The sacrifices of the heathen were usually accompanied with a table, upon which the part of the sacrifice was laid, and at which the worshippers of the idol feasted. Just as the offerer in Israel was having fellowship with Jehovah in the peace-sacrifice, and as we have fellowship with the Father and the Son when we eat the bread and drink the wine in remembrance of the death of Jesus, so an idolatrous feast signified that they were having fellowship with their god. Hence it was a very serious thing even to appear to be mingling in with such abominable revelry. Therefore, the injunction not to eat of those things sacrificed to idols, for in so doing they were having fellowship with Satan—he was the object of worship and not God. Turn to 1 Cor. x. 19-21, "What say I then? that an idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." These idolatrous practices were instigated by Satan—he was their author; and, in reality, this was devil-worship.

Covetousness is idolatry (Col. iii. 5); and the man who, with a greedy heart, is set upon amassing a fortune—who is determined to make money at all costs—is a worshipper of the devil, although he does not know it. All idolatry is really worshipping of Satan.

The Corinthians were the most highly educated people on the face of the earth at that time, but the filthiest idolatry was associated with the highest cultivation of the intellect.

Although men's intellects may be highly developed, their moral condition may be very low. Such are

mere tools in the hands of Satan, and the greater their intellectual attainments, if they are not converted, they serve his purpose all the better. Do we say anything against education? No. But whatever education we have, let us see that our sharpened intellects are used for God. In these latter days, when knowledge is on the increase, and when education without God is being made as universal as it can be, it is the more rapidly preparing the way for one vast fellowship of iniquity with "the man of sin."

These Corinthians were an intelligent people, and when the light of the truth entered into their hearts, they soon found out that an idol was not anything. These Corinthian saints were a gifted people, even with the gifts of the Holy Ghost. It is a solemn fact that even knowledge of the things of God, instead of being used in blessing to our souls and others, will only puff up with pride, unless it is coupled with the fear of the Lord.

Let us look at two Scriptures to show this: Isaiah xi. 1-3, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots, and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord." In the blessed Lord Jesus, the pattern servant, these two things were coupled together and never were separated, viz., "Knowledge and the fear of the Lord." "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. i. 7)—28, 29 verses, "Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer: they shall seek Me early but they shall not find Me, for that they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord." These are two things which must go together. If we have knowledge of the things of God, and have not coupled with it the fear of the Lord, then the necessary result will be that we shall become puffed up with pride. That is one way in which Satan gets God's servants spoiled. We may know a great deal of the Scriptures, and consider ourselves deeply taught in divine things, and people may be hanging upon our lips, but all the while we may be getting puffed up, and may not be very far off from a grievous fall. As we increase in knowledge, may we in like measure increase in humility and in the fear of the Lord.

Turn now with me to 2nd Peter i. 5-9, "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge." Let us not disparage knowledge, although we are on the other hand to take care that we be not puffed up by it. May we seek to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter iii. 18). This is what God would have us do—grow not only in knowledge, but also in grace. In all our searchings of and meditations on the Word, let us seek to do so in humble dependance upon the Spirit of God to teach us. Knowledge thus acquired, let us not disparage. In the Lord Jesus "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 3). Reading and pondering the Word of God in His presence, may we ever seek to judge ourselves and see how far we are living out what God is showing us from His Word. There is a remarkable illustration of this tendency of knowledge to puff up that we do well to look at—2 Cor. xiii. 7, "Lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations, there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure." We don't find the Apostle Paul talking much of the revelations that were given to him. He does not appear to have mentioned this till fourteen years after it occurred. He says that "he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words that it is not lawful (or possible) for a man to utter."

There is such a thing as gratifying the pride of our own hearts by telling to others in a boastful spirit of spiritual experiences. God saw that even the Apostle Paul, notwithstanding all his humility, and the discipline the Lord had brought him through,—that even he was in danger of getting puffed up. Therefore the Lord, in His mercy, anticipated the temptation of His servant, and gives him "a thorn in the flesh" to keep him humble.

There is no time we need more to be on our guard than when servants of God get together and recount what they have seen of the Lord's work or what they have learned of His truth. So often this is not done in a spirit of humility, and then it degenerates into glorying in service and in knowledge rather than the Lord who called to the service and gave the grace to do it. "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. i. 31).

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAP. i. 9-14.



WANT you carefully to notice the beautiful arrangement by the Spirit of God of these opening verses of the Gospel by John. The Spirit of God is pleased to mark four stages in the coming down of our Lord Jesus Christ to our actual condition. How I can see that there are four is thus: that after each one of these stages there is a reference to John the Baptist. He shows us first the beginning of the coming down of our Lord, then He says something about John the Baptist; He shows us something else about the coming down of the Lord, then another reference to John the Baptist; again a further stage in the path downwards of the Lord, with a further allusion to the Baptist; and so again a fourth time repeated. First He begins at the very top. I need not now recapitulate what a month ago I said upon these verses. He is God, was with God, was in the beginning with God. He could not begin higher than that. And then the second verse is the Christ-head, as the first is the Godhead of the Lord. The third verse is His beginning to descend. Creation, whilst it is ascribed to Him, was a condescension on His part, an act of goodness. And yet, when there is the creation, "the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." That is all it finds here—darkness. Then comes the first reference to John the Baptist.

Now we commence to-day the second of the four stages in the descent of our Lord. I will mention the four, that you may see them for yourselves. In the first, He is the Author of all creation; in the second, He is full of grace and truth; in the third, He tells out God; in the fourth, He is the Lamb of God. Any one could see that the fourth was a come down indeed; from the first verse, "the Word with God," to that Lamb, "the Lamb of God" bearing away the sin of the world. Yet associated with this we have the fact that He is risen, because it is said He baptises with the Holy Ghost, and that was not until Jesus was glorified. Verse 9 is the beginning of the second stage. There is some little controversy as to the interpretation of verse 9, but it is generally conceded that the Authorized Version does not convey the true sense. The words "that cometh" in the

original may refer either to the word "every man," or to "the Light;" and the question is whether it is "the Light" coming into the world, or "every man," which the Spirit meant. In my own mind I have no doubt it was "the light." "That was the true Light, which, coming into the world, lighteth every man." Mind, it is not enlightens—for *that*, it must get inside—but "lightens," just as the sun gladdens creation. As we have it elsewhere, "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." The true Light was shining, the sun was about to arise. I would remind you of a somewhat parallel passage. "The people which sat in darkness saw a great light." Mark that it is "a great light," and not "great light;" that is not at all the force of it. In the humble, holy life of Jesus there was a wondrous light, and specially when He reached the cross and told out the true nature of God; there was light, for any one in the world to see what God is thinking. The Light was coming, and on the cross it may be beheld. So I take the words "that cometh" to refer to the Light.

The next verse is still going on with this descent. In verse 9 He is coming, in verse 10 he is here. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." The darkness comprehended not the light. The tenth verse is a great come down from verse 3; it is by no means a repetition, but a very great descent. In verse 3 all creation is ascribed to Him; in verse 10 it is only this little bit of a planet that is ascribed to Him. In the first two verses there is absolute silence, as if God were alone there; in verse 3 creation comes in, and in this tenth verse "the world was made by Him"—this world. What a wonderful thought, the Creator of the world has visited this world, personally, and, as we shall see lower down in this very passage, in the flesh—that is, in actual humanity. In actual humanity the Creator of this planet, or, if we go back to verse 3, the Creator of all things; or to verse 1, He who was in the beginning with God, and was God, has been here. "And the world was made by Him." As we sometimes sing in our hymn—

"Wand'ring as a homeless stranger,
In the world Thy hands had made."

It is the picture of the descending of the Lord Jesus, of His gradual approach to us. The next verse

brings Him yet nearer. This, again, is not accurately rendered in the Authorized Version. "He came unto His own property, and His own people received Him not," is the right reading. That is to say, it is not quite the same word for "His own" in the two parts of the verse. All was His own. If we think of any action of His, say when He required the foal of an ass, to ride upon it in lonely state into Jerusalem, His message was, "The Lord hath need of him;" he asked it not as a loan, for He was its proper owner. "He came unto His own property, and His own people (that is, Israel) received Him not." They said, "This is the heir, come let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours." You can see He is coming down; we can trace the path of that descent. Now leaks out an allusion to God's grand, eternal purpose. Once Christ is rejected, God can do as He likes in grace. Once Christ has cried upon the cross, "It is finished," the flesh is judged and disposed of. This is assumed in verse 11, "His own received Him not." We know they did more; they crucified Him. What is God's eternal purpose? The reproduction of Himself in man, by the presentation of Christ unto their souls. So now this is seen, as soon as the way is clear for Him to begin. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power (or authority) to become the sons of God." Mind, to *become*; He *was* God. Nothing is said of His becoming except in a verse or two further on, "He became flesh." In the original, there is a contrast maintained throughout between the word "became," or "was made," and the word "was," which it is impossible to bring out fully in any translation. He "*was*" three times over in verse 1; but nothing about His *becoming* anything until we come, a long way down the chapter, to "the Word was made flesh." He *was*: all things were made, or became, by Him. There was, or there was made, or there became a man sent from God. So now we see what He has come down for; the purpose has leaked out; that hell-deserving sinners may be picked up and made partakers of the Divine nature, having had their sins washed away in the blood of the rejected One. Oh, what a purpose His was in coming! "Even to them that believe on His name." What a mighty purpose achieved by such simple means! Believing in His name—a son. Mind, it implies that you know something of Him as the

manifestation, the outcome, the unfolding of God; that your spirit has had to do with Him. Such is implied in the words "believe on His name;" that is, in His character, in what He really is. Then when we have believed on His name, we are sons at once. At the same time there is no doubt the further thought suggested of how, if we are sons, we grow son-like. I remember a passage, 1 Peter i. 15, "As He which hath called you is holy, so *become* ye holy in all manner of conversation: because it is written, *Become* ye holy; for I *am* holy." Thus if we are sons, the son-nature is gradually to be developed in us. It is first formed by faith—the soul eyeing Christ, God's uncreated Son; then developed by continually eyeing that Christ, and copying Him.

"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." It is obviously designed by the Spirit, I think, to suggest what a tremendous thing is the new birth; and that the flesh, in no way whatever, has aught to do with it. It is His own operation, and to Him be the glory. At the same time, you would perhaps like that I should explain what is the exact force of these negatives: "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man." To save time, I read a little extract. "Blood, the whole corporate frame; the will of the flesh, the appetites of man inclined to evil; the will of man, his personal being. Not according to the laws of nature; nor according to the appetites of man; nor according to the will and reason of man." Not in any of these ways born, but of sovereign grace, by the presentation of the crucified, risen, glorified Christ to the soul; and faith looks at Him, and receives Him, and the new nature is formed. And then we are to keep on beholding Him, and the new nature is developed; and to keep on following Him, and the son-life is carried out.

"And the Word was made flesh." Now do you not see something at last said of the Word different from anything else in the former verses? Oh, what a wonderful thing for Christ to come down so very, very low! He who was God, the Word in the beginning with God; even when there was no creation—creation being only alluded to in verse 3, as if this were another time altogether. Moses speaks of "in the beginning," and John also; but Moses' "in the beginning" is of creation, John's "in the beginning" is of a time infinite ages before creation came into

existence. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God—and the Word was made flesh." (And I just remind you of these words, "He was made sin for us.") "And dwelt among us;" the exact translation is, "and pitched His tent." As if God liked to dwell with man; and as He had done in the wilderness, in a tent and a tabernacle, so again now would He have a tent, and "pitched His tent among us." And I think it suggestive that the Lord was born during the feast of tabernacles; and that is why I am going to quote a rather long extract from a book. I have for years maintained that the Lord was born in September, and not in December, and believe there is an allusion to it here. I do not mean to say that it is proved here, but that there is an allusion to it. The Lord "pitched His tent," or was born, during the feast of tabernacles; that is, in September. But now for the extract. "David divided the year's service of the priests into twenty-four courses, and the eighth course fell to Abijah (1 Chron. xxiv. 10). The Jewish ecclesiastical year, commencing with the month of Abib or Nisan, nearly corresponding to our March, *o.s.*, the eighth course would occur at the end of June, or at the beginning of July, in our computation. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was of the course of Abia; and as he was ministering "in the order of his course" (that is, in June or July), when the angel appeared to him, and that immediately on his return home his wife Elizabeth conceived, it follows that the conception of John the Baptist was about midsummer, where we place his birth. In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy (Luke i. 26, 36), *i.e.*, in December, where we place Christ's birth, the angel Gabriel announced to the Virgin Mary that she should be the mother of Christ; and, counting onward for nine months, we come to the month of September, and to the Feast of Tabernacles, which was a type of the incarnation of the Son of God, as the period of the Saviour's birth. In which feast time of eight days, Christ pitched the tabernacle of His flesh amongst us, as appears, John i. 14: "And the Word was made flesh, and pitched His tabernacle amongst us."

"And the Word was made flesh." He took human nature, that we might be made sons of God. Understand, not fallen human nature. We are fallen men.

We might as well say the nature in Him and in us is the same, as to say that a shattered mirror is the same as a mirror whole. He took human nature, but not fallen human nature. Adam was innocent, Christ was holy; therefore, as a man, He was more perfectly human even than Adam. Thus it is that the Holy Ghost says "the second man." Not only did He not take our fallen nature, but not in every sense Adam's. And the word "holy," used about Christ, is not the common one, but the strongest one possible in Greek. He took humanity, actual humanity, was a perfect man, but not a fallen man. Not even an innocent man; He knew holiness, and knew God, which Adam did not.

"And we beheld His glory." You will see the force of that if you look at Exodus xl. 34. "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle." That is the thought here. First the tent is reared, the perfect humanity provided, and then the glory of the Lord floods it. Not merely the glory of God, but His own glory. The glory fills it, that tent of humanity. It does not refer to the transfiguration, nor to any outward glory whatever. There is a reference to outward glory in chapter ii. 11—"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory." That was outward glory; this is not. It is the glory that was in Him, and that shone out of Him in every feature, in every glance of His eye, and every word that He spake, in every action that He did. What it just wanted was, not to be blind, and to be with Christ five minutes, and you would be seeing that glory. The actings of the God-man, in that tent of humanity. And His example is to us one continued precept of the highest kind.

"My gracious Saviour and my Lord,
I read my duty in Thy Word:
But in Thy life Thy law appears
Drawn out in living characters."

An example we cannot but do well to imitate. "We beheld His glory." *We*; not anybody. We who have been made sons; we who had been up and down with Him; we who could not return to our fishing, for we had heard His voice, and that voice had gone to our souls; we who had caught the glory of His eye, and fell at His feet worshipping; we beheld the glory filling that tent.

"The glory as of the Only begotten of the Father."

The word "as" is a very little word, and very easily skipped, but it has here a very mint of meaning. It denotes that the glory seen was the very glory of the One who had ever been in the bosom of God, of the only One who had come out of God. Could you not suppose God, and some one coming out from God? You would be sure that such would be some very illustrious person. And we saw it all; Jesus, "the glory as of the Only begotten of the Father."

Just by way of parenthesis, I remark that He has another character in resurrection: "the *First begotten* from the dead." His descending is with that real, divine, beautiful purpose. Once the only Son, but presently we will be made sons too. "Full of grace and truth." Full, full! However much grace He showed, still as full as ever.

Just a hint from chapter ii. 11. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory." This *beginning*, as if to say that it was *only* a beginning. Oh, had He been received, He who could turn water into wine would have turned a blasted creation into a glorious abode, and have been none the less rich however much He had poured out of God. For that is the force of verse 18; "He hath told Him out." Truth is the revelation of God, the letting forth of what God is. There is no truth outside Christ; if we want to learn the character of God we must look at Christ. If we want to feel the thoughts of God we must have the Spirit of God, for the Spirit also is the truth. The Father could not be said to be the truth, for truth is the manifestation of God. And Christ is full of it, and could tell you all about God both in word and in action, and make you glow again to know what God was. And though once by nature you hated God, He could tell you so much as to make you rejoice to know that God, and to know that that God is your God for ever and ever.—*Notes of an address by W. Lincoln, communicated by J. S. H.*

Nothing can purchase the love of Jesus; it must flow to us freely from His own heart. If I do not see that the love with which we have to do came from God, without there being any reason whatever in us to draw it forth, I could have no comfort in thinking about it; I should soon become suspicious of it, and therefore sad and sorrowful. But it is Divine love; it is free, and knows no change.

THE FLESH OR FIRSTBORN.

"MY FIRSTBORN" AND THY "FIRSTBORN."

IN tracing our subject thus far, we have encountered no great difficulties, nor have we had our thoughts divided.

The spiritual and moral conditions of those typical men, whose lives we have considered, have engrossed our attention; but now we come to a *double* line of teaching, and it is well for us to observe the distinction. God was about to deliver His people "out of the land of Egypt and from the house of bondage," and Moses was commanded to appear before Pharaoh with the words, "Thus saith the Lord, Israel is My son, even *My firstborn*: and I say unto thee, let My son go, that he may serve Me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even *thy firstborn*" (Ex. iv. 22-23).

Here *God* claims to have a "firstborn," and the deliverance of that honoured one from cruel bondage was to be closely connected with the destruction of Egypt's firstborn. God had then, and has still, in His thoughts but two classes or two men, and if we keep this before us, what otherwise would be a complicated and difficult subject, becomes easily understood.

The firstborn of man (that is, those who represent man in his natural sinful condition) had up to this time been on their trial, and our searchings through the Scriptures which bear on their nature and conduct, have left us without a doubt as to their complete and irretrievable ruin.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John iii. 6), and it never was, and never can be in the purpose of God to improve that which in its very nature is enmity against Him. We cannot grasp too firmly this solemn truth. If God in grace saves a soul, if He gives that one power over his old sins, let us not deceive ourselves by the thought that an improvement has been effected in his evil nature. No such change has transpired. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" is a simple question, the answer to which we do well to notice, "*Not one*" (Job xiv. 4). How forcible this is! There are impossibilities even with God, and this obviously is one of them. "It is *impossible* for God to lie" (Heb. vi. 18), and (speaking with due reverence), the defilement of man by sin,

and his consequent opposition to God, compelled the God of love to become a God of judgment. No other course was open to Him. Judgment is His strange work (Isa. xxviii. 21); it is foreign to His heart. Sin has *forced* into His hands the sword of vengeance, and now that sword must fall upon that nature which cannot be remedied.

Egypt was the scene of this judgment, and the "firstborn" the subjects of it. All the plagues which preceeded this one were but leading up to it, and in the message to Pharaoh through Moses, which we have quoted, no mention is made of any other.

The *utter destruction* of that wicked thing called "the flesh" is demanded by every law of righteousness. Justice can grant no compromise in this matter. The Throne, which is established in "justice and judgment" (Ps. lxxxix. 14), must not fail to defend itself against a spirit which is not subject to its laws (Rom. viii. 7).

The reader will in all probability ask "but what do you mean by the flesh?" The importance of this question cannot be overestimated, nor can its answer be too carefully given. Man is a complex being; he is made up of "spirit, soul, and body" (1 Thess. v. 23), and yet to speak of any or all of these his component parts as being "*the flesh*" would be an error of the gravest nature. As Adam left the hand of God, the Creator, in his sinless, unsullied condition, his constituent parts counted no less nor yet any more than those just named. Whilst he continued in his primitive state—viz., that of innocence, his entire being was in happy subjection to God; his material body, which was composed of flesh and bones (Gen. ii. 23), offered no resistance to God.

There are two senses in which the word *flesh* is used in Scripture, a *material* and a *moral*, and a careful study of the passages where the word occurs will generally enlighten the spiritual mind as to the meaning. But what we desire to make clear is that God has no conflict with the material body *as such*. "They that are *in the flesh* cannot please God" (Rom. viii. 8), does not mean, that so long as a man exists in the body in this world he therefore cannot please God. "Ye are not *in the flesh* but *in the Spirit*," &c. (ver. 9) was spoken to men still in the body. Hence we must look for the interpretation in a *moral* rather than in a material sense. Some have erred exceedingly from the truth

because of not discerning the distinction between these two things. The idea that the body is in itself an evil thing has led many to wage war with it by self-inflicted punishments, starving themselves, &c., in fact the chief features in the Monastic system are traceable to this impression. The apostle speaks of the "mortal flesh" (2 Cor. iv. 11) and the "mortal body" (Rom. viii. 11), which mean the same thing, but this is not what he meant when he wrote "in me (that is, *in my flesh*), dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. vii. 18). "Your body (mortal) is the temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. vi. 19), and as the members of the body are yielded "as instruments of righteousness" (Rom. vi. 13), God is glorified. The flesh in this material sense is but the servant of an indwelling principle, whether sin or righteousness (Rom. vi. 16).

The flesh, then, against which God makes war, or rather which makes war with God, is a defiled, perverted, and ruined nature. The moment sin entered, that moment the spirit, soul, and body of man were equally involved in its guilt and consequences. Sin took possession of his entire being, and enmity to God, and hatred of light, were the results of his fall. "*In the flesh*" simply means in the fallen, the natural, the sinful, the God-hating condition and position. No child of Adam ever entered this world in any other estate, and as we shall see just now, the only way out of this wretched standing-ground is through death. "*My flesh*" refers not to the position I stand in, but to the wicked nature itself. No unconverted person is entitled to make use of the expression "my flesh" in the sense of Romans vii. 18. There are two distinct positions in which men are said to stand, and *only two*. Paul reminds the Romans of a position they *once* occupied, but *out of* which they had passed. "*When we were in the flesh*, the motions of sins which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death" (Rom. vii. 5). But deliverance from that position had been granted them, and mark how this had been accomplished. "But *now* we have been discharged from the law, *having died* to that wherein we were holden" (ver. 6 R.V.). And having died out of that position, it could be truthfully said of them, "Ye are *not in the flesh*, but *in the Spirit*, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Rom. viii. 9). To speak of a child of God as being *in the flesh* would be

unscriptural; this is the position of the unsaved, but those who are really converted are *in the Spirit*. This is a ground common to all who are born again. Thus we see that "*in the flesh*" and "*in the Spirit*" describe the relative positions Godwards of the unsaved and saved respectively.

We frequently make use of and hear the expression, "Brother F— acted and spoke in the flesh." By this it is meant that he allowed himself to be brought under the control, not of the Spirit of God, but of his evil nature. However grievous these victories of the flesh over the Spirit may be, yet these connect themselves with and appertain to experience and walk, and not to judicial position. It is still true of such, "Ye are not in the flesh."

Now to return to our type. Egypt is typical of the world, and all "the firstborn" in it were placed under the death sentence, not even the firstborn of Israel were exempted. If they were to escape judgment, it must be through death, through blood—the blood of the Paschal Lamb. Mercy provided that remedy, and grace urged the acceptance of it, but unswerving justice viewed the entire scene with an impartial eye. "The wages of sin is death," and justice saw no cause for dispute in the substitution of a victim, provided that victim be of God's choice, "without spot or blemish." The firstborn of an Egyptian, sheltering behind the sprinkled blood, would not have been denied the salvation of God, nor would the firstborn of Moses have escaped apart from it. Judgment *must* fall, and justice *must* be satisfied. Death *must* devour its victim. But there were two ways that night by which justice received his dues, and they are each so solemn that it is difficult to know which to place first.

Here let me say to the unconverted reader that there are yet in the mercy of God two ways open to him, but soon, very soon, there will be no choice. "The Lamb of God," the great Antitype of our subject, is placed before a guilty world for their acceptance—Jesus Christ, the Son of God, on a cross, "bearing sin in His own body on the tree,"—dying and dead *for* the ungodly (Rom. v. 6)—delivered for their offences (Rom. iv. 25)—justice receiving from His hands the fullest satisfaction for sin! Well may we sing "Hallelujah, what a Saviour!" When the sinner bows his heart to the judgment of the cross, he gains

a new position. Justice declares him to be dead, and faith echoes back the blessed words, "*I was crucified with Christ*" (Gal. ii. 20).

The firstborn, *i.e.*, my carnal nature has come to its judicial end. Praise the Lord! Not only has Christ died for me, but *I have died in Christ*, and can sing, "I live, and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," who from the law of sin and death hath made me free. "Knowing this that our *old man* was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin, for he that is dead is freed from sin" (Rom. vi. 6, 7). All this we have in the type before us. Israel may have been, and indeed were, quite ignorant of what was shadowed forth that night in their midst, but God saw it all. Now, shadows are past, and the substance has appeared. Justice no longer receives a *typical* satisfaction, but a full, a real, and never-to-be-repeated payment on the sinner's account. The wisdom of God leads the recipient of this good news into the court-house, where he hears his case argued to the full: here he joyfully discovers that justice no longer stands against him, the sword which awoke against the Shepherd and smote Him—that sword, still wet with the blood of the Lamb of God, has been dropped—its work is done so far as the believer is concerned; and now, with a voice as loud as thunder, the wondrous question is asked, "Who is he that condemneth?" In vain the universe is searched for an enemy sufficient for this, and again that voice is heard to declare that "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1). Thus we see how that in the substitution of a victim justice was satisfied, and in that victim the firstborn met their doom.

But we have yet to consider the other and equally solemn side of this question. Man in his sins, wholly corrupted and at war with God, stopped on the highway of the world—the world which he would fain claim as his own—stopped by the God of judgment and convicted of guilt. No power is there within him to deliver himself, and O how terrible the thought!—no blood of victim in eternity can ever be found to wash that guilty soul from its sins. "If ye die in your sins where I am, thither ye cannot come." How solemn! The Judge has delivered to the officer, and the officer has cast into prison, and that soul shall not come out thence until "the utter-

most farthing" be paid (Luke xii. 58). But when will that be? *Never! never!* Infinite requirements received infinite satisfaction at Calvary. But how could this be? Because of the infinite worth of Jesus. Those demands must remain unsatisfied to all eternity in the case of those who die without Christ. Dear unconverted reader, consider this e'er the die be cast, and your doom fixed; e'er the sword of judgment fall, and the wail of woe be heard in the land of darkness; e'er the gates of hell close upon your damned soul, and "the worm that never dies, and the fire that is never quenched" have become a felt and visible reality to you. Consider it, and fly for refuge to "the precious" atoning "blood of Christ." There is no safety in anything else.

But, now, what about God's firstborn?

We have witnessed the dread sentence practically carried out upon the firstborn of the Egyptians, and forensically (as argued by justice) upon Israel's. We have remarked that the deliverance of God's firstborn was to be closely connected with the death of the other, and here the question urges itself upon us—viz., could there have been a new birth—a second creation—a deliverance from sin, apart from the death of the firstborn?

Both type and substance in Scripture answer *No*.

The grace that saves the soul, leaves "*the body of sin destroyed—crucified.*" Apart from the resurrection from the dead, no child of Adam could ever claim to be amongst God's firstborn. Elective grace might speak of Israel as being "firstborn," e'er the figures of death and resurrection were completed, but surely grace acted and spake in view of this. The Son of God's love is "*the firstborn of every creature*" (Col. i. 13), but apart from that One becoming sin for us on the cross, and winning for Himself in resurrection the title "*Firstborn from the dead*" (Col. i. 13), we could never have shared that honoured name. But now we have been raised together, and made to sit together with Him in the heavenlies (Eph. ii. 6), and are made to form a part of the church of *the firstborn* which are enrolled in heaven" (Heb. xii. 23).

"Out of Egypt have I called my Son" is a word spoken concerning Israel (Hosea xi. 1), and then applied to Jesus when the infant Saviour had literally been brought from that country (Matt. ii. 15). But will not this have a fuller accomplishment yet when in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the dead in Christ shall rise,

and the living shall be changed, and together be caught up to meet the Lord in the air? (1 Thes. iv. 16, 17). Christ, "the Firstborn from the dead," is not complete without His members (1 Cor. xii. 12), and whilst we rejoice in past deliverance from hell, and present deliverance from the power of sin, yet grace promises a still fuller deliverance in the future, when these "bodies of humiliation" shall be fashioned "like unto His glorious body" (Phil. iii. 21). "*Even so, come, Lord Jesus*" (Rev. xxii. 20).

W. J. E.

THE POT OF OIL.

2 KINGS iv.

HE touching narrative of the poor widow, recorded in 2 Kings iv., is full of blessing and encouragement for every tried soul. It speaks in every line of the secret treasures hid in the God of grace; and how He can cause all grace to abound unto all joyfulness when every other door seems shut, and no hope left. Such is His divine wisdom, that He is pleased in *our weakness* to perfect *His strength*, and to come to our rescue, and our help, when there is none to save, and no eye to pity.

A certain woman (a widow) was in debt, and the creditor came to take unto him her two sons to be bondmen. What was she to do? She cried unto Elisha the prophet. The man of God asked her what he should do for her. "Tell me," said he, "what hast thou in the house?" And she said, "Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house, save a pot of oil." She had no possessions, no means to settle with the creditor; her position so far was hopeless. She is directed by the prophet to borrow vessels *not a few*; to shut the door upon herself and upon her sons, and to pour out from her pot of oil into all the borrowed vessels. She did so, and *they were all filled*; there was not another to be had; and the oil stayed. The man of God then bade her, "Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest." What sweet lessons of God's grace and faithfulness, and of faith, may the poor and needy servants of the Lord find here! What consolations and instruction for their widows and orphans! The husband of the widow, who had lived and died in the fear and service of his Lord,

left to His divine and gracious care his widow and his sons. They had struggled on until the creditor was about to strip the widowed mother of her children. This sorrow her faithful God spared her. Her husband's God wrought for her help. He heard the widow's cry, the cry of the needy one. He sets her free, saves to her her sons, and furnishes both her and them with a living also. Well may we say, Let not the widow nor the fatherless fear, but trust in the Lord. They are richer than they think, and mightier, through grace. The house is not empty. The well is not dry. In their very midst is a treasure and a fountain indeed. God, known in grace, can make all grace abound toward them. The husband may be dead, but God liveth, and His fulness in their very midst can neither be measured nor exhausted; liberty, victory, and abundant sustenance He can give.

The widow filled her vessels in *secret*, according to the prophet's directions. *She shut the door upon her and upon her sons.* She did it all in faith, in the secret of God's presence. She obeyed the word of the Lord by the prophet, and received the answer and the blessing—even more than she had room to contain. To ensure blessing, we must exercise faith, and rely on the changeless word of our God. In the secret of His presence we shall find an abundant fulness. Our need sends us there, and He opens to us His gracious hand and pours forth abundant blessing. Oh! that our hearts could trust Him as He would have us, and never for a moment doubt His love, or His ability to help in every time of need! His fountain is one of living waters, while all others fail. Paul was as poor as this desolate widow; yet he could speak well of his fountain, even of those resources he had in the living God. "As having *nothing*," he said, "and yet possessing *all things*."

Further: we should not only come to God in times of trial, but we should daily and hourly *live upon Him*. Israel fed on the paschal Lamb after they had obtained redemption. So our life should be one of constant faith upon the Son of God, an unceasing dependence upon Him, a continual drawing from His fulness. "Whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he" (Prov. xvi. 20). He is the marrow and the fatness which satisfies the souls of His people. Throughout eternity they shall be enriched by the rivers of His pleasure.

What a blessed and firm standing the widow now takes before the creditor! She is released upon the ground of payment of all she owed being made to him. The gospel does this for us; we meet God in the blessed confidence that his Son has paid all our debts; that all our sins were laid on Him, and that He put them away for ever by the sacrifice of Himself. Such are the riches of divine grace, and such the portion of all who have fled (to Jesus) to lay hold on the hope set before them.

May not the Church also find instruction in this narrative? Her Lord has left her. We are orphans, left by Him under the care of the Spirit; yet the fountain of grace is ours. He who spared not His Son will also with Him freely give us all things. Jesus said, I will never leave you nor forsake you. He knows our need, and He will supply it. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and sympathises with us in all our sorrows. This is our pot of oil, and is ever with us, ever nigh at hand. Though our Lord be absent, as regards His *person*, he is ever with us in *Spirit* to guide and tend the flock of God. He causes His people to lie down in green pastures, beside the still waters. They know His voice, and they follow Him. Soon He will come again, and take His bride away from the tribulation of the world, for ever to be with Him in glory above. In the meantime, He is the Shepherd and the Bishop of His people; to Him we look, on Him we lean, in Him every want is supplied, and every desire met.

So very comprehensive is the word of God that many forms of instruction, of different application, may be gathered from the same Scripture. In this narrative we have traced the care and the grace of God to orphans and widows; we have also seen the history and characteristics of the Church of God, now sorrowfully realising the absence of her Lord, but with the fountain of God's unfailing grace in her midst. The same tale also unfolds God's grace to the house of Israel, now forsaken and in widowhood.

Jeremiah thus mourns over Israel in his Lamentations, ch. i. 1,—“How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow!” In Is. liv. 4, the Lord comforts Israel,—“For thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.” Further, we read in Hosea v. that Israel will seek the Lord in the latter day, in the time of their

sorrow and trial,—“In their affliction they will seek Me early.” In Is. lxi. we have the Lord’s gracious answer to their cry. Israel is invited, as our widow was, to seek God in secret,—“Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast” (Is. xxvi. 20).

HOPE TO THE END.

BELOVED, let us give heed to this word, “now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” When the Edomite asked reproachfully, “Watchman, what of the night? watchman, what of the night?” the watchman said, “The morning cometh;” so, beloved, when in these “last days” we find “scoffers walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming?” we may joyfully reply, “the morning cometh!” “The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light!” Let us not be satisfied with putting off a little evil here, and a little evil there; but let us obey the command of God the Lord, when He says, “Come out, come out, and be separate from it all;” let us not suffer a hair’s breadth of evil to stand in our way! Let us deliver ourselves from that worldly burden that weighs down the heads of believers, and prevents them from looking up and seeing that their redemp-

tion draweth nigh! “Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless.” Let us show to the world that “our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself?”—“let us stand fast in the Lord!”

Oh, that the power of God may be made more manifest in us! Oh that we may rise out of the dust! Rise in all our proper glory, and show the world what are our hopes and expectations, show that eternity is written upon them! Show that eternity is written, too, upon our actions, beloved, as well as upon our hopes! When everything that the world is now rejoicing and glorying in shall become the object of God’s wrath and fiery judgment, when they shall call on the rocks and hills to fall on them and hide them in vain, the saints shall prove that their crowns are incorruptible, and their inheritance that which *fadeth not away*.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to “prove all things,” and “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender

QUESTION No. CLXXXIV.

What is the meaning of 1 Tim. iii. 10? and what is the difference between Bishops and Deacons?

REPLY.

The ordinary acceptance of the term “deacon” as applying only to those who “serve tables,” or act in connection with money matters, is a serious mistake.

The word simply means “servant,” and may be applied to any who serve in any capacity, though

generally, when used, it does not include “overseers,” who are named distinctively (see Phil. i. 1).

“Let these also first be proved,” implies that the previously mentioned class “overseers” (or Bishops), had to be “proved” before being recognised in that capacity.

For this reason an overseer was not to be “a novice,” or one newly come to the faith; and the importance of this is easily seen and generally conceded.

But it is not so generally accepted or acted upon

that in order to serve in the Church of God in any responsible and accredited way, there must first be a period of such duration as shall afford time to prove or try the faith and character of such servants.

Although it be only acting as a door-keeper, yet so holy is the Church of God—and so jealously ought its character to be maintained—that in whatever capacity, its servants ought to be those, and those only, who have so approved themselves, that they have the confidence of the believers.

Bishops or overseers are not called “servants” or “deacons” of the Church, for in their case it is the Lord who calls and appoints, and it is their direct responsibility to Him that is chiefly recognised. For such ministry the Church is not authorised either to choose or appoint, though exhorted to know, acknowledge, honour, and submit.

But where there is the necessity for ministry in temporal things—taking charge of contributions for the poor, and administering the same, paying necessary expenses, and remitting to labourers in the Gospel, &c., &c., there is clear precedent for the Church selecting those for such service in whom all have confidence, that from their known and proved character the work will be faithfully done. In this way they become in an especial way *servants of the Church*, and responsible to give account of their stewardship, not only to the Lord, but also to the assembly in which they serve.

We believe that the same principle applies to the recognition and support of evangelists. Such ought to approve themselves in the Gospel among the saints with whom they are in fellowship, so that when they go forth to labour in the Gospel in other parts, they may go fully commended, not only as believers, but as approved fellow-servants. Thus in all their journeyings they will have the sympathy and prayers and support of those from whose midst they had gone forth.

Were this acted upon, none would be hindered who are worthy, but some would cease to be supported who are unfit persons to be owned by saints in such a ministry.

QUESTION No. CLXXXV.

Who are “the elect” mentioned in Matt. xxiv. 31? and are they gathered in heaven, or on earth, and by whom?

REPLY.

The local and Jewish character of Matt. xxiv. is clearly seen in such verses as 15, 16, 20, 22.

The elect of verse 31 are doubtless the same as in verse 22. That they are not the elect of this dispensation is evident, for they are to be saved in the flesh by the shortening of this unique period of tribulation, and not by being changed and caught up as the Church will be.

Verse 20 shows the escape by flight of a portion of the elect remnant of Israel; others, no doubt, previously shall have been driven to the ends of the earth. But “He that scattered Israel shall gather them,” and this He will do by angelic ministry, in this respect also showing the contrast to the Church for which “the Lord Himself shall descend.”

QUESTION No. CLXXXVI.

In the July No. of Northern Witness notes of address by Mr. Fraser, he is reported to have said that he knew of no gathering of Saints now in so bad a condition as the Corinthian Church, yet the Apostle said nothing about separating from it. Are we to understand by this remark that a believer would now be warranted in remaining in fellowship, where such errors of doctrine and practice were tolerated?

REPLY.

Most certainly no such inference was intended, either by the speaker or by the *Editor* who inserted the report of his address.

The intention was to show that in all cases of evil, the first action to be taken is to bring the Word of God to bear upon it in order to conviction and restoration. Separation from an assembly is a last resort, a step only to be taken when evil has so prevailed that the Word of God fails of effect on the conscience, and to remain longer in fellowship would be to be a partaker in other men’s sins.

It would be well to balance this side of the truth, however, with what is equally true—viz., that since the Word of God is complete and such epistles as 1 Cor., familiar to all, it is hardly possible to conceive of an assembly of believers falling so far from the truth as did the Corinthian Church. If such a thing ever could occur, the sin of such an assembly would be of infinitely deeper dye than that of Corinth, seeing that it would be against abundant light, which they had not.