

THE
GOLDEN LAMP;
OR,
TRUTH IN LOVE
FOR
THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

“I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD: HE THAT FOLLOWETH ME SHALL NOT
WALK IN DARKNESS, BUT SHALL HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE.”
John viii. 12.

“Now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.”
Ephesians v. 8.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works,
and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”—*Matthew v. 16.*

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THE GOLDEN LAMP.



“THE SUFFERINGS” AND “THE GLORIES.”

THE Apostle Peter speaks (1 Pet. i. 11) of “the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow,” as the great theme of the testimony of “the Spirit of Christ,” whether in the prophets of old, or the apostles now; and we may well say—

“Our song then for ever shall be
Of the Shepherd who gave Himself thus;
No subject so glorious we see,
And none so affecting to us.”

The expression “gave Himself” used in this verse brings to mind four principal aspects of the death of Christ, which have glories corresponding to them which will be His at His coming and in His kingdom. Each of these virtues of His death is denied by Satan, and by man in his unbelief.

The first of the four aspects is unfolded in Gal. ii. 20—“Who loved *me*, and GAVE HIMSELF for *me*.”

The death of Jesus for the *individual sinner* is here brought before us. Paul claims that death, as being for him, as distinctly and individually as though it had been for him only. Each guilty sinner needs, and must have, a *personal* Surety, a *living* Substitute; and JESUS only can be this for any one. Quite true that others claim Him as well as Paul—that every sinner ever saved through Him thus claims Him; still, it remains blessedly true, that Jesus *Himself* died on the cross as the Substitute for the individual sinner. Reason

cannot explain this; but God declares, and faith owns, that while Jesus was the Substitute for one transgressor, He was also at the same time the Substitute for all others who trust in Him. Nothing short of an entire person would do for each individual sinner. Nothing short of the whole Lamb, and that "the Lamb of God," could save any single sinner from the depth of a bottomless hell, or raise him to the bosom of the infinitely and eternally blessed God. Jesus, therefore, died on the cross as the Substitute for the individual sinner.

But a second aspect of the cross appears; Jesus died there as the lover of the Church, given Him of the Father. (See Eph. v. 25.) "Christ also loved the Church, and GAVE HIMSELF for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it . . . that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church," &c.

His eye of love and of compassion beheld this precious object in its unsanctified and uncleansed state, and He gave Himself in death to make it His. Like Samson, in Judges xiv., who saw "the daughter of the Philistines," and out of love to her faced the roaring lion, and, with "nothing in his hand, rent him as he would have rent a kid." So Jesus, in willingness of love, "gave Himself" for the Church to make it His for ever. This is a second aspect of His death.

But there is a third; He died at the cross as *God's appointed King*.

"Art thou a king then?" said Pilate to Him. (John xviii. 37.) "Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world." Mark, dear reader, what for? He does not say to save lost sinners, though that would have been true; neither does He say, to make the Church my own, though that also would have been blessedly true; but He says, "To bear witness to the truth;" the truth of His *kingship*. For *this He died*. "Shall I crucify your king?" was Pilate's last question

before he wrote the title, and put it on the cross, “Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews.”

There is yet a fourth aspect of His precious death; Jesus GAVE HIMSELF at the cross as the Man of God’s delight, fashioned in God’s image, and after His likeness (see Gen. i. 26), who should by His death redeem *creation* from the bondage of corruption, and bring it into the liberty of the glory of the children of God, that, as “the last Adam,” He might possess and have dominion over it eternally for God. Hence the 8th Psalm, and the quotation of it in Hebrews ii.—“Made a little lower than the angels for *the suffering of death*,” that He might be crowned with glory and honour, and might have “*all things* under His feet.”

This is, indeed, a wide and glorious aspect of “the sufferings of Christ;” yet a needful one, both for God’s glory, that “God may be all in all,” and needful also for the fulfilment of God’s promise of “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” (2 Peter iii. 13.)

But each of these four aspects of Jesus’ death was denied, and derided at the cross by blinded, guilty man, led on by Satan.

Man and Satan denied at that cross that Jesus died on it as the Substitute FOR the individual sinner; for they placed Him there *between* thieves, thus “numbering Him with the transgressors” as *one of them*, and in this company, and thus placed between them, He remained and died.

Again man and Satan denied at that cross that it was in *willingness of love* He died; for they bound Him with cords in the garden, as if Jesus would have escaped if He could; and they *nailed* Him to the tree, as though their compulsion could keep Him there, telling Him to come down from the cross if He were *able*, and under this seeming compulsion Jesus meekly remained and died.

His being a *king*, born such—God’s king by birth—

was equally there derided. The "crown of thorns" upon His head was man's expression of this; and, for aught we know, with this mocking of His kingship still on His blessed brow, He hung upon the cross, and breathed His last. Man's selfishness took off from Him "the scarlet robe"—too valuable, in their eyes, for Him to die in; but we are not told that they relieved Him of the crown of thorns.

And lastly, they equally denied that He was the man of God's delight. "Let royal apparel be brought for the *man* whom the king *delighteth* to honour," was Haman's word (Esther vi. 7, 8); but the man of God's delight—His Son in whom He was "well pleased"—was not even allowed His own raiment in which to die; and in this nakedness Jesus remained and died.

But there were "glories" to follow; not one of the virtues of His precious death but must be manifested, and every claim of His cross must be vindicated; but where? and how? Not here below, where it is still "man's day," and the time of the "power of darkness." Not by the wisdom, the power, or the religion of the world, which, in the three languages of the then world—the Greek, the Latin, and the Hebrew—were all seen in written mockery over His head, and are all of them against Him still. God is Himself the proclaimer of the excellencies of Christ's death, and the vindicator of His claim to all for which He there "GAVE HIMSELF," and this is seen in God's raising Him from the dead, and exalting Him to His own right hand.

First. In resurrection-glory Jesus is seen as having been that sinless *Substitute* for the sinner which, at His cross, man denied He was. The raised-up One, says Peter (Acts x. 40, 43), is shown openly as the One through whose "name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." "In *Him* all that believe are justified." (Acts xiii. 39.) And no sooner is He risen than sinners by thousands thus look on

Him, each one claiming Him, through faith, and saying with Paul, “He loved ME, and gave Himself for ME.”

Again. No sooner is He raised from the dead than God gives Him that *Church* which He had loved and for which He died. He comes down again from heaven to the disciples, in John xx., as its foundation-stone; and, in Acts ii., in the three thousand joined to the fellowship of the apostles, we see the edifice rising into view in *this very world which had so lately denied Him* as the lover of it, and it still increases, spite of all “the gates of hell” against it.

Nor is His kingship any longer obscured: the place He occupies as the Risen One makes it plain. God said to Him, “Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thy foes thy footstool;” and the coming kingdom is as fully asserted as belonging to Jesus as through Him the forgiveness of sinners is proclaimed, or His love to the Church, and His lordship over it, is taught. Paul has no sooner said, in 1 Timothy i. 15, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” than he adds (v. 17), “Now unto the KING eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

And God in resurrection has also *clothed* Him whom man, alas! in blindness and wickedness, hung *naked* on the cross, and left Him thus to die. God has clothed Him gloriously; yes, clothed and crowned Him. Not yet with the “*many diadems*” of His reigning day; they are in reserve for Him when He comes as “King of kings, and Lord of lords,” and rules this earth for God for a thousand years. But God has already “crowned Him with glory and honour” (Heb. ii. 9); garlanded Him (*στεφανω*) with the wreath upon His head of the victory He has won over “that old serpent, which is the devil,” by which victory He has obtained the earth and heavens for His own, and will replace them by new heavens and a new earth, which shall stand for ever. Yes, Jesus is the man

whom God "delighteth to honour," and to whom dominion shall ultimately be given over all the works of God.

But all these "glories" are hidden now—hidden where Christ is hid, in God—where our life is also hid with Him; but Christ, who is our life, shall appear, and then shall we "also appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 3, 4); and then will these glories—fruits of His woes unto death upon the tree—also, all of them, appear.

At that moment of His glorious appearing "men in glory" will be seen with Him—sinners saved—each of whom He loved, and for each one of whom He "gave Himself."

Then also will His Church be seen dwelling in the embrace of His love, the delight of His eyes; for He has presented her to Himself "glorious, the Church not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish."

His kingly throne—"the throne of His own glory"—will then also have been given Him, and He will sit upon it, crowned, not with thorns, but with the glory that will be visibly His, as the "one King over all the earth, and His name one" (Zech. xiv. 9); while ten thousand thousand blest ones shall gratefully praise Him, Israel foremost, and the nations also rejoicing to see the King in His beauty. "Kings shall shut their mouths at Him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider." (Isa. lii. 15.)

"Look, ye saints, the sight is glorious,
See the 'Man of sorrows' now
From the fight returned victorious;
Every knee to Him shall bow.
Crown Him! crown Him!
Crowns become the Victor's brow."

And lastly. *Creation* will also then begin its subjection to Jesus as "the last Adam." His deeds of power

over the old and doomed earth and heaven, both of mercy and of judgment, will show this. In the nation of Israel, human life will be again prolonged to an antediluvian length (Isa. lxx. 20-22); sickness will not be known in Jerusalem except for sin (Isa. xxxiii. 24); the very animals will lose their passions in Immanuel's land (Isa. xi. 6-9); while, on the other hand, the carcasses of transgressors shall be visible outside Jerusalem for men's warning, with the worm in them undying, and the fire of their judgment unquenched.

But, better still, the beginning of a "new earth" will then be also seen; for surely the Jerusalem above, the holy city, ministering "healing to nations" below by the "leaves" of its "tree of life," can be nothing less than a first step toward that entire new earth and new heavens which, at the close of Jesus' millennial reign, will take the place of the present heavens and earth entirely.

If these things be so, well may Peter speak of the "glories" of Christ that follow His "sufferings." How true, and how variously fulfilled, will be Isaiah's word, "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied."

In one hour of woe He bowed His soul, and died, as it were, many "deaths." (Isa. liii. 9, marg.) At the one hour of His glorious appearing He will be seen possessed of living joys corresponding to all those woes of His death.

Well may our hearts say at the beginning of another year, "Come, Lord Jesus." H. D.

THE BELIEVER'S COMMISSION.

MATT. xxviii. 18-20.

THE parting words of our blessed Master in the gospel of Matthew call for the particular attention of His followers, and especially of those whom He has in any way set over His household.

The death of the Son of God had accomplished its mighty purpose, and the risen Saviour was the witness that God had acknowledged the full and all sufficient efficacy of His atoning death to accomplish in heaven and in earth all that He had fore-ordained. The Lord Jesus had died and risen, and ere He ascends again into heaven, to sit on the right hand of God, He comes to His disciples, and utters these memorable words: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of (*μαθητευσατε*) all nations, baptizing them into (*εις*) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching (*διδασκουτες*) them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the age" (*αιωνος*).

The commission divides itself into three parts—(1) To disciple, (2) to baptize, (3) to teach; which we will take up separately, and may the Spirit of God give us all to see our responsibility in each of these points, so that we may know what we have to do when we go forth.

I. The command is to go and tell of our Lord and Saviour with the object of making disciples, and the sphere of this ministry is "all nations." This corresponds with the words in Mark xvi. 15: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." To "disciple" is to evangelize, and to bring within the hearing of sinners that good news of deliverance and life which is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth.

"How shall they preach except they be sent?" says the apostle. As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" Thus does the Lord empower and send His disciples to preach, saying to them after His resurrection, "Peace be unto you: as my Father sent me, so send I you;" and

immediately after He breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

As preachers of peace, they have first to receive peace; and to make their preaching *mighty*, they must needs receive the Holy Ghost, which in fulness was given to them at Pentecost.

The sin of the lawyers was that they had "taken away the key of knowledge" (Luke xi. 52); and now the Lord gives the keys of the kingdom to His disciples, that wherever they go they may preach the kingdom, and lead souls into it, who thereby became "a kingdom and priests," "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people."

This exalted mission cannot be limited to a few. It belongs in measure to all. For we read, "Let him that heareth say, Come." When once a soul has heard the "come" of the divine invitation, he has to re-echo that word. Thus it reached our ears, and now *we* echo it forth again, till the last living stone quickened under its healing sound is laid on the living Stone, the sure Foundation.

Let those who have heard and obeyed the gracious "*come*" of the Saviour also hear the word "*go*," and remember that they are *sent*, even as Jesus Himself was sent, every Christian being a Christed or anointed one; for the oil on the head of the Great High Priest flows down to the lowest in the membership of His body.

II. The gospel message having been accepted by the sinner, he is thereby saved, and brought into the place of discipleship. This brings us to the next point, namely, *baptism*.

Let us be careful to maintain God's order, and *all* will be well; invert the order, and all will be confusion. If the divinely-appointed order had not been inverted, we never should have been surrounded with a baptized heathendom, and never have heard of the awful delusion of a man-made baptismal regeneration.

There is a divine baptismal regeneration, wherein the man who receives Christ is baptized by Him *in* the Holy Ghost *into* Christ; for "in ($\epsilon\nu$) one Spirit we are all baptized into one body." (1 Cor. 12, 13.) Christ Himself is the baptizer. John says, "I indeed baptize you in ($\epsilon\nu$) water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you in ($\epsilon\nu$) the Holy Ghost and fire." This must be carefully remembered in speaking of baptism, for it shows what the water baptism commanded by Christ is the type of. Baptism is not a confession, though in baptism a confession is made, not of what we have done, or mean to do, but of what God has done for us.

Before, however, we consider the significance of baptism, let us ponder the name into which we are told to baptize. Had this been understood, there would have been no danger of the profanation to which baptism has been subjected.

Baptism is "*into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* It is of great importance to note the word *into* ($\epsilon\iota\varsigma$). It is not *in*, as implying the power in which the administrator of the rite performs it; but it points to the mighty triune name into which the baptized person enters. It shows that the relationship to the body of Christ which the baptism of the Spirit accomplishes, is the result of the united and glorious workmanship of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, whereby salvation is made effectual in the case of each individual brought into the family of God.

We are commanded to baptize the disciple of Christ into *one* name, not into *three*. This exemplifies the united character of the work of God—the Father, Son, and Spirit; and yet a threefold significance is revealed to the soul.

"*Into the name of the Father.*" It is He who draws to Christ, and whom in sonship we call "Abba, Father;"

and this name tells us of all the living care and protection that seals the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to us as our *own*, enabling the baptized person to say, "This God is my God."

"*And of the Son.*" It was He who accomplished redemption's work, and who now takes into the very fellowship of His risen life the one who is baptized into Him, and therefore secures to him henceforth the continuity of that ever present intercession which is going on for the redeemed till they are brought safe into the heavenly home.

"*And of the Holy Ghost.*" He is the indweller and the indweller, whereby we are sealed until the day of redemption.

Thus have we been baptized by Him who baptizes in the Holy Ghost; and it is into this, in type and symbol, that we baptize in water those who have become disciples of the Lord Jesus; and therefore Christian baptism is often spoken of as "into the name of Jesus." This cannot be allowed as a proof that in the apostolic times any other formula was used than that of Matt. xxviii., but as explaining what was involved in the *name*; that is, that Jesus is the eternal bond of the relationship in which we stand to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, and to the Spirit poured forth by the ascended Jesus from the throne.

I would here call attention to the Aaronic blessing given in Num. vi. 22-27, which stands as a triune benediction thus:

"Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee."

"Jehovah make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee."

"Jehovah lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

After which it is said, "They shall put MY NAME upon the children of Israel; and I myself (emphatic in Hebrew) will bless them."

How beautifully this foreshadows the holy ordi-

nance before us, in which the Father is the keeper, the Son the source of grace, and the Spirit the communicator of peace; all flowing out of the eternal fountain of the love of God, for "God is love."

This *name* separates by its very nature from that with which the disciples of Jesus once stood connected when in the world, in the flesh, and in the devil. The world stands in antagonism to the Father; the flesh in antagonism to the Spirit; and the devil, the wicked one, in antagonism to Christ, the Holy One of God; and out of this threefold bondage of evil and corruption we are delivered, when taken by God out of the old man, and put by Him into the New Man. The old man was crucified with Christ, and now in resurrection we belong to the New, and, therefore, being in Christ, we are new creatures; the old has passed, and all is become new.

All this, and far more, is connected with baptism, wherein we are baptized into Christ's death and into Christ's resurrection; and therefore, asks the apostle, "How shall we who died (*απεθανομεν*) to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. vi. 2.) And he continues, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we *were* buried (not *are*) with Him by the baptism into the death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

On this subject let Rom. vi. 1-14 be deeply pondered, and it will be seen *who* are the fitting subjects for baptism, *what* the reality implies, and *what* the symbol is the confession of, without which it is but a delusion and a lie.

It is a solemn thing to be baptized; it is none the less so to baptize; and in the present day of much profession and little reality let the baptizer see that he be careful not to become a party to an unreal and false thing. Hypocrites and Judases there always will be;

but let us see to it that we are not culpable before God, either through carelessness or lack of spirituality, in putting the symbol where the substance has never been; for baptism in water is like circumcision to Abraham, a sign, even "a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." (Rom. iv. 11.) The natural seed were circumcised, and the spiritual seed are baptized.

III. He who has been discipled and baptized has to be *taught* that he may become an obedient servant to Him who was preached to him when a sinner, and into whose precious name he has been baptized as a believer.

The words are full and solemn, and lay all who teach under a deep responsibility. "Teach them to observe *all things whatsoever* I commanded you." His yoke is not hard, and His burden is not heavy, to one to whom the name of Jesus is a power and a reality. He who said, "Come unto me," said also, "Take my yoke;" and he who receives Christ as a Saviour, receives Him also as a Master; for He is both "a Prince and a Saviour." Well had it been for the church of God if obedience had been inculcated to Christ, and not to the church; to God, and not to man; to the Holy Scriptures, and not to human traditions.

Who can rightly estimate what is included in that word "ALL"? and, as if to emphasize it more, He says, "all things whatsoever." Alas for the miserable rule that has sought to divide the "all things" into essential and non-essential, measuring truth by a self-delusive estimate of what is thought to be essential to salvation, and what not; as if the whole question of our obedience were not one entirely of God's glory, rather than of man's salvation! Salvation is secured in Christ, and now the matter is one of service to Him who *so loved us*; and all true service involves obedience.

It is melancholy to see and to hear how questions of so-called usefulness and expediency creep in, when the

whole question that ought to occupy the mind should be simple, unhesitating obedience—an obedience to God, because He is God—that allows of no self-made estimate of great or small, but that bows to His word “It is written” as the command of God.

Deeply important as this principle is to the saints at large, it is doubly important to those who are teachers; and let us be reminded of our Lord's words on this subject: “Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.” Surely these words demand our attention as teachers in the house of God. A very little truth neglected frequently leads into very great evils; and the straw that tells which way the wind is blowing, will guide the watchful heart right, while to the many it will be only a straw, a little thing not deserving of notice.

We are answerable to God for all we are or allow, whether in our personal life and walk as individuals, whether in our social position either in the family or in the world, whether in our church position, in our connection and association with whatever assumes, truly or falsely, the place of the assembly of the faithful, which ought to be an “assembly of faithful men when the ordinances are duly” observed (we would not say “administered”). In all those spheres of our Christian life we are responsible to the written word alone; and human example and human tradition are of no account, and often but beacons for our warning.

Teachers in the household of God, ponder over these words of our Master! Take up the solemn responsibility to *do all* and to *teach all*, that we be not chargeable with either adding to or taking away from the word of truth. Verily Rev. xxii. 18, 19 may well exercise our hearts.

But as the words of our commission began with an assurance of infinite comfort, so they end with a promise of infinite consolation—I will not leave you

in your weakness, says the Lord. "Behold, I myself (the beautifully emphatic *εγω*) am with you all the days (*πασας τας ημερας*), unto the end of the age."

Let this promise of the "I AM" rest with us, enabling us to *evangelize*, to *baptize*, and to *teach* in the power of His ever promised presence, who has not left or sent us alone, but down to the current year, and onward to the winding-up of our dispensation, when we shall be caught up to meet our Lord in the air—has promised us nothing short of HIMSELF, and that for all day and every day; "so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me," because "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Heb. xiii. 5-6.)

Let us not say, Circumstances have changed, and therefore we must be allowed discretionary power to alter when it seems needed; nothing can be changed; nothing can be added, and nothing taken from it. As God said to Israel in Malachi's time, when outwardly everything had changed, "Remember ye the law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb;" so now God sends us back to the words of Christ and His apostles, and says to us (as Paul, when about to be offered up, said to his son Timothy), "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, 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 charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Preach the word (the whole of it, and nothing but it); be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine," &c. The Lord burn these words into our hearts! Amen. H. G.

“THE TALENTS” AND “THE POUNDS.”

MATT. xxv. 14-30; LUKE xix. 12-26.

At first sight these two parables bear a very close resemblance the one to the other, and have even been supposed to be a slightly different account of one and the same exhortation; but on closer examination we find that not only were they spoken on different occasions and to a different audience, but that they differ widely in many important particulars.

The parable of the “talents” was addressed by the Lord to His disciples when alone with them upon the mount of Olives (Matt. xxv. 3); that of the “pounds” was spoken in the crowded thoroughfare to the multitude who thronged around the Lord Jesus when on His way to Jerusalem and to the cross (Luke xix. 3, 11); and consequently in the latter we find a distinct class of persons mentioned—“Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.” (v. 27.)

In the “talents,” the amounts committed to the three servants are different, but the reward of the two faithful ones is equal; while in that of the “pounds” the same amount is entrusted to each of the ten, but the reward varies according to the diligence with which it has been used.

In both parables the unprofitable servant stands forth prominently as a warning; but in the “talents” he is cast into “outer darkness,” while in the “pounds” he is simply dispossessed of that which had been committed to him.

Let us gather our thoughts for a few moments around these “weighty words” spoken by our Lord and Master, and seek to learn the lessons they convey to us who through His grace are also His servants.

The “talents” appear to represent special gifts of mental power, temporal advantage, or any of the

thousand things which give one man greater influence than another; and our Lord would teach us that the man of many gifts must not despise his less-favoured brother, or the man who has but few be unduly cast down; for equal diligence will bring equal reward, though the work accomplished may differ widely in extent. Both the faithful labourers are called to enter the joy of their Lord; for the love that prompts the service marks its value to the Master's heart, and the widow's mite, which was her all, exceeds in worth the rich man's costly gift, which was only a small part of his abundance.

It is according to their several ability that the talents are bestowed upon the servants. Our God knows the limit of our capacity, and He alone is able to say concerning any, "She hath done what she could;" and surely, if the man with the one talent had doubled it ere his Lord returned, he would have received an equal share of joy with his more richly-endowed fellow-servants.

Does this final casting out of the slothful but gifted servant teach that the possession of "gift" does not prove a man to be a true child of God? Was this one a tare amongst the wheat? It has been suggested that the distinction between the *two* unprofitable servants in these parables may refer to that fatal line, invisible to us, that divides the mere nominal professor, who has never been reconciled to God, and consequently entirely misunderstands His character, from a true child who becomes slothful, fails to "occupy" during his Lord's absence, allowing hard, dark thoughts of unbelief to fill his heart, and who will therefore find to his eternal loss that there is no reward for him in the kingdom, his work being unworthy and burnt up, and he himself only saved "so as by fire." Such an interpretation may at least be profitably considered.

The servant in Matthew hid his talent "in the earth;" does this indicate that it was not merely un-

used, as in the napkin, but put to a wrong use, buried in the earthliness of the unregenerate man's nature?

In the parable of the "pounds" we get another side of the picture—the Lord's servants, surrounded by His enemies, left in His absence to occupy till He come again: all are equally endued with power from on high, by the Holy Ghost dwelling within them; all are equally responsible to shine as lights for Him. But one who is in earnest makes it his meat and drink to serve his Lord; he is strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus; and, as the true proverb says, "The hand of the diligent maketh rich." He trades for God with every part of his pound, with every penny, so to speak, of his income, with every power of his mind; he fights "not uncertainly," he runs "with patience," and his pound is increased *tenfold!*

And when before the judgment-seat of Christ he is summoned to receive his reward, he finds it exactly in proportion to his faithfulness—in *proportion*, but yet far, far exceeding all he had asked or thought. That long-forgotten "cup of cold water," that visit to the widow and the fatherless, that song of praise amid the shadows, can it be that such little things are deemed worthy of reward? It is even so; not one forgotten! Oh what a glorious Master it is ours to serve!

In addition to the ten "pounds," the fruit of his toil, which he presents before his Lord, the faithful servant receives ten cities in the kingdom, over which he is to exercise rule, and be the dispenser of blessing.

We find this solemn scene foreshadowed in the queen of Sheba's visit to king Solomon. She brought to him gold, spices, and precious stones; "neither was there *any such spice* as the queen of Sheba gave to Solomon." And after she had "communed with him of all that was in her heart," "Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, *beside that which she had brought unto the king,*" and "beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal

bounty.” (Compare 2 Chron. ix. 9–12 with 1 Kings x. 13.)

It seems as though the Lord lays up in store all the fruit His people bring to Him, be it little or much, that He may bring it forth as His church’s dowry in that day.

In the man whose “pound” gained five “pounds” we have the same elements of loving, faithful service; but in a far less degree. Perhaps he had grown weary in the strife, or sloth and love of ease had partially paralysed his energies; perchance he had ceased to watch for the return of his Lord, and thus had brought forth less fruit to His praise, and he must be content with a less honourable position in the kingdom. But he will not envy his brother the ten cities; he will find the five amply sufficient to employ all *his* powers, and to fill his heart with gladness. His vessel will be full, but his *capacity*, both for receiving and giving forth the joy and blessing in the glory, will be *according* to the measure of his faithfulness when on earth.

In this parable, as we have already noticed, the unprofitable servant has his pound taken from him; but we hear of no punishment inflicted, no casting into outer darkness; and his case may serve as a solemn admonition against departing from the Lord, and living to ourselves. May there not be some in our Father’s house, members of the body of Christ, who have grievously backslidden only to be restored at the last breath? And will not the Lord in His very tenderness hide such, as it were, from public notice? and though He will fill their small measure with His love, will there not be an inability on their part to enter into the joy of those who have followed in their Master’s steps? Oh, what houndless *grace* there is in Him whom we call Master! Shall we not strain every nerve to serve and honour and obey Him?

We are surrounded by His enemies, and our ears will one day hear the awful command concerning them,

“Bring them hither, and slay them before me.” We shall not wish to controvert the sentence, for our eyes will behold the King in His beauty; and we shall feel that the hatred which says of HIM, “We will not have this man to reign over us,” is base indeed, and well deserves the anger of the righteous Judge.

But our Lord is absent still, and we account that His long-suffering is salvation. These enemies and slothful servants may yet become His friends. “When *we* were *enemies*, we were *reconciled* to God BY THE DEATH OF HIS SON.” And shall we not seek His grace, enabling us to use to the utmost those “talents,” or “pounds,” which He has committed to each one of us, even the “ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God WAS IN CHRIST, RECONCILING THE WORLD UNTO HIMSELF, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES UNTO THEM; and hath put in us the word of reconciliation? Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God DID BESEECH BY US: WE PRAY IN CHRIST’S STEAD, BE YE RECONCILED TO GOD. FOR HE HATH MADE HIM SIN FOR US, WHO KNEW NO SIN; THAT WE MIGHT BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM.” (2 Cor. v. 18–21.)

NEW JERUSALEM.

ACCORDING to the interpretation of the twenty-first chapter of Revelation, which has been set forth in articles published lately in the *Golden Lamp*, that chapter describes the new earth in its eternal condition; it explains the great and beautiful city to be the habitation of Israel upon the new earth, the heavenly city for which Abraham was looking ages before. It does not exclude the church, that is the saints of the present period, from the enjoyment of its wonders of glory and of beauty; but deduces from the name of the city, the wall, the gates, the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles of the Jews, that it cannot be anything

else than a description of the eternal glory of God's ancient and beloved people, the children of Israel.

The papers referred to have already considered briefly some of the principal reasons for the adoption of this view of the chapter.

There are, however, some arguments employed by those who hold a contrary opinion which seem to call for reply, and of these I have in the following remarks selected those which seemed to be the weightiest for review and examination.

1. According to the explanation given by many, the first eight verses of the chapter describe the eternal state; from the ninth onward, the millennial; and in defence of this position a good deal of stress is laid upon the apparent break at the beginning of *v. 9* in the course of the narrative.

This break may be understood in two ways. Before, in *v. 2*, John, having briefly stated that he saw the city descending, proceeded to narrate the utterances with which the exquisite vision was accompanied; having so done, he proceeds, in *v. 9*, to describe what he saw more minutely, commencing from the very beginning when the angel came to him.

Or else it may be that, having seen the beginning of the city's descent, as it were distantly, the angel came, while the words were being uttered, to transport him to the great high mountain, whence he might have a nearer view of the exquisite structure. But, whichever opinion we adopt, there can be no doubt that the occasion of *v. 2* is the same as that of *v. 9*, as also that the holy city of *v. 2* is the same "great city, the holy Jerusalem," of *v. 9*. This would seem to be beyond dispute; yet, because an angel appears at *v. 9* and transfers the evangelist to another point of view, it is held that the subject-matter of what follows must be entirely distinct from what precedes *v. 9*. Also, that the time is different. It is admitted that *vv. 1-8* describe eternal things; but it is maintained that after

that point we are thrown back a thousand years, or more, to the events of the establishment of the millennial kingdom.

This strange interpretation would seem to demand a gymnastic mental action too severe for most thoughtful readers. And when we find that we are exposed to so great a wrench of our understandings, merely because an angel appears upon the scene, and the point of view becomes changed, it seems to me that the means of proof are entirely disproportionate to the end in view. In Genesis i. 27 and ii. 7 we have a repetition in the narrative similar to that in this chapter in *vv.* 2 and 9.

2. A similarity exists between the action in *v.* 10 and that in chap. xvii. 1-3. It is one of the same angels—those with the vials; the words used by him are similar, and the point of view for the seer is also here changed.

The object in view here is described as the great whore; the other as the bride, the Lamb's wife. And further, the last verse of chap. xvii. corresponds with chap. xxi., by describing the woman as that great *city* which reigneth over the kings of the earth. The argument founded upon this is, that as the corrupt church is the object of view in the one case, the church in glory must be that of the other.

There can be no doubt our minds were intended to contrast the two passages, but not in the sense suggested a very short explanation will show. The contrast is between the apostate church reigning where she ought not, and the elect nation reigning where she ought.

Grasp this—that the church's portion is heavenly; that, with an adulterous heart, she allied herself to the world in the absence of her Lord; and, intoxicated with a worldly ambition, grasped at and seized the place of power on earth that God has promised to His people Israel, and to none else. Not content to wait

till He came, and suffer meanwhile in fellowship with her rejected Lord, that she might sit in heaven hereafter on *His* throne, she usurped Israel's throne here below, and reigned over the kings of the earth. (Gen. xxvii. 29.)

Thus we are shown the church's deposition from the place that was not hers, and in chap. xxi. Israel's establishment in her proper and promised glory.

Neither now nor hereafter is the church to reign on earth; but more of this anon.

3. Many persons admit that the whole description of chap. xxi. is of a Jewish cast and character, and, while they hold strongly the obliteration of all such Jewish characteristics in the *present* church economy, endeavour to show how hereafter it will be quite consistent for the church to assume a Jewish form.

This opinion is founded upon the belief that in the millennium, the thousand years of Christ's reign on earth, the church will be reigning on earth with Him, thus occupying a position analogous to that of Israel. This description of Rev. xxi. xxii. they take to be that of the church while thus reigning on or over the earth.

But is this theory, which I admit has the sanction of honoured names, consonant with the teaching of Scripture? I wot not. The church's is a heavenly calling, Israel's an earthly. And neither in the millennial nor in the eternal ages will their places be reversed.

But one will say, "Is not the church to reign with Christ?" Certainly, I reply; but the kingdom of Christ will not be limited to earth. He will reign in heaven while He reigns on earth. The Church will be associated with Him in His reign over all principalities and powers in heavenly places, Israel will reign with Him over the earth. We know from Hebrews xii. 22-24, that as members of the church we shall have part in every glory, earthly or heavenly, and be the fulness of Him that filleth all in all (Eph. i.); but that is perfectly consistent with the

church having her own special sphere of ministry in rule, and that sphere we know will be in heaven. Read 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3: "Know ye not that we shall judge angels? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" Mark, not "the earth" merely; "the world" includes far more. See also Eph. i. 20-22: "And set Him at His own right hand, far above all principality and power, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." The universe will be under the sceptre of our Christ. The world, above, below, beneath, will own Him King, and we, the church, shall sit with Him upon the throne of this *universal* glory, having our special duty among the powers of *heaven*.

On earth, in the millennium, Christ will also have His associates in His kingdom. But who shall they be? See Rev. xx. 4: "Those who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, which had not worshipped the beast; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

The twelve apostles also will sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, and Israel's sons shall be "princes in all the earth." (Ps. xlv. 16.) Thus—

1. CHRIST.
2. THE TWELVE APOSTLES.
3. THE MARTYRED REMNANT.
4. PRINCES IN ALL THE EARTH.

But we have no warrant for bringing the church as such to any place of rule on earth. It is the Son of David who shall reign over Israel and the kings of the earth; and I need not pause here to show, but only to suggest, that our union with Christ is not in His character as David's Son, but as the One risen from the dead.

The passage in Rev. ii. 27, speaks not of the church, but of an individual, and, as I believe, of a Jewish

member of the church, who, as already explained in the remarks on chap. iii. 12, will have a special place in glory in the kingdom in connection with His people, in the same manner as the twelve apostles will, who, though members of the church, shall yet hold office in Israel. It should be remembered that Rev. v. 10, which is quoted in support of the view that the church will reign on earth, is now shown by all critics to be erroneously translated, and should be rendered, "Hast redeemed to God by the blood . . . hast made *them* unto our God kings and priests: and *they* shall reign on the earth."

It cannot, therefore, be the church, who, under the symbol of the four and twenty elders are the singers of that song, who are to reign on the earth. Thus all is consistent; the future of the earthly people is earth, of the heavenly, is heaven. Our friends would maintain that the church is heavenly while on earth, but, strange enough, earthly when in heaven.

4. The next most plausible argument is that deduced from chap. xix., where many argue that the church must be the body represented by "the Lamb's wife," and thence deduces that the church is the subject of chapter xxi. We do not dispute that the interpretation must be the same in both cases, whatever it is; but the ground, and the only ground upon which this interpretation is made to rest as to chap. xix. is, that v. 1 says, "I heard a voice of much people in heaven." This is taken to show that the marriage is in heaven, and must therefore represent the union of Christ with the church.

In reply, I have only to point out that it is not said where the marriage supper takes place; it merely states that there was praise in heaven when the great whore was judged. When it comes to tell of the marriage supper, there is no description of the scene upon which it takes place.

From other Scriptures we may, however, safely con-

clude that the marriage is the restoration of fallen and scattered Israel to their land and to their King, which in order of time will be the next great event on earth following the judgment of Christendom. The false church being deposed from her throne, Israel is established in royal honour with Messiah in Jerusalem. "The wife" of chap. xix. is thus the same as the Bride, the Lamb's wife, of chap. xxi., the one being the eternal counterpart of the other—the millennial.

5. Perhaps the greatest danger in the assertion that the new Jerusalem is the church is that those who thus teach are obliged to affirm that the expressions "everlasting," "for ever," and the like, when used in the Old Testament in regard to Israel, are to be understood in the limited sense; that, in spite of the many promises of eternal blessing to Israel, we are not to believe that they will have any inheritance as a nation in eternity. Thus it will be seen to what the denial of this truth must inevitably lead. And once admit that these solemn and reiterated promises of eternal distinctness to Israel are to be literally fulfilled, and then all difficulty about the interpretation of Rev. xxi. xxii. is at an end. Then Jerusalem will be seen to mean Israel's city; the twelve tribes in the gates to be Israel's tribes; the twelve apostles to be Israel's apostles; the nations of them that are saved, walking in Israel's light, and bringing their glory and honour to Israel's city, to be the proper hope of Israel for ever in her supremacy in the earth; and last, not least, the bride, the Lamb's wife, to be the same Israel so often thus described throughout all parts of Holy Writ. And I cannot but point out to those who maintain the contrary opinion to what an evil purpose this limitation of the meaning of "everlasting" and "for ever" may be turned by enemies of the truth, a result which most of its advocates would deplore as much as we should.

6. One or two minor points may be summarized

under one head: "Having the glory of God" (xxi. 11) is taken as a strong proof that the city so described as the church. Isa. lx. 1 might be sufficient to show that this inheritance will extend beyond the church.

It will surely be admitted that all the universe will in eternity be refulgent with the glory of God, and not one isolated part of it alone. That the city was seen "descending out of heaven from God" is taken to represent that it stopped in its descent without touching the earth, though how the nations could bring their wealth into a city in the clouds does not appear. But 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17 is taken to prove the point. In reply, we can only observe that it is from other Scriptures that we deduce that the descent of our Lord stops short of the earth, and no other is available in this case to show the like as regards "the holy city." But in conclusion let me call attention to the defect which is apparent in the whole theory; viz., that it fails to tell us what the city is.

True, it is said to be the church; but is it the people in the church, or the principles which characterize the church? If it is not material, is it visible? If visible, where is it visible? Is it the residence of the church, or are the gates, the wall, the gold, the street, representations of people, or truths, or what? Such are some of the enquiries which, after careful study of this theory, we are still inclined to ask.

By some it is said to be a material city, overhanging and illuminating the restored Jerusalem during the one thousand years' reign of Christ. But how can you, then, account for there being no allusion, throughout the two chapters which describe it, to the city beneath, in all its glory, from whence the upper city derives its name? Are there two Jerusalems visible together? Will not the earthly city be then in the climax of its glory? Why, then, speak of a new Jerusalem, if the first had not only not "waxed old," nor was "ready to vanish away," but was there before our eyes dressed in bride's

array? And how, in the last place, can we conceive of a description of millennial glory, as this interpretation explains these chapters, without a single allusion to Israel, the royal nation, the kingdom of priests, around whom, as metropolitan and supreme, all glories will gather?

These considerations, if fairly thought over, will force us step by step to revert to the proposed interpretation contained in previous papers of the *Golden Lamp*; viz., the scene is after the great judgment. The city is a material creation of Him who made the world, in the form of a lofty pyramidal mountain, upon whose slopes the redeemed of the Lord shall walk in their glorified bodies, bright with the rays of glory shining down from the top-stone, the chief corner-stone at the apex, the head of the corner.

The twelve tribes of Israel will inhabit that city, and Abraham, who had ages before looked for it, shall then receive the promise. All Israel shall be included—the saints of Israel past, the saints of the millennial Israel, the martyred remnant on their thrones, the twelve apostles on theirs, and even some of Israel's sons who have been baptized into the church will then, as Rev. ii. iii. seems to teach, be placed in high distinction in that city, the reward of their victory and faithfulness.

All the new earth shall have in that city its attractive centre and glory. And we, the members of the church from our heavenly home, may often come to revel in the study of its beauty and exquisite perfections. (Heb. xii. 22.) Upon every one of these and other details I am far from wishing or attempting to dogmatize; enough for us to be able to discern the general scope and teaching of the vision. Our happy eyes shall wondering discover by and by the perfect fulfilment of each minutest word, when seeing in part and understanding in part shall be no more; but we shall know as we are known.

G. F. T.

“COVETOUSNESS, WHICH IS IDOLATRY.”

WHY? Because *the love of money* comes in between the soul and its trust in the living God, and absorbs its confidence and trust. It is thus to the soul an idol. Whatever we lean upon besides the living God is an idol.

“God is jealous,” and in His love demandeth implicit confidence in Himself as the All-Mighty, the All-Wise, the All-Loving One. Therefore if we lean on the creature more than on the Creator, if we trust to the gift rather than to the Giver, if we desire to have, to acquire, to possess *things* which we can build securely on, we virtually walk by sight, not by faith; we virtually say, God’s gifts, not God Himself, are our object. Truly oft has He need to say to us, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols;” so insidiously are we led to lean upon and to trust to, yea, to feel a sort of rest in having things which *to sight* seem sufficient to afford us prosperity, and to lose sight of the living God who, while He gives us all things richly to enjoy, would have us use them without abuse, without exultation in their possession, and with calm thankfulness to Him who, knowing all our need, will not fail to supply.

A loving, earthly father supplies his children with such things as they need both for their support and for their pleasure. He looks for responsive love—for delight from their delight. He gives, that his children may have delight and confidence in him, their father. How great his joy when their intelligence apprehends his thoughtfulness for them! How pure his delight when they show they love him for so thinking of them, when they can leave their pleasures for his company (who has provided their pleasures), when they seek his presence, because he is to them not only the provider

of sources of pleasure, but the secret of their joy in their pleasures!

And shall we, beloved, weary ourselves in turning over our possessions, and in seeking to draw from them joy apart from our God and Father in Jesus Christ? Nay, let us intelligently and in the power of His Spirit learn that He is *in Himself* the source of true rest and joy, that "man shall not live by bread alone (or any other thing), but by every word of God." Oh, let us beware of a covetous heart—of a heart greedy to possess riches, which God calls "uncertain riches!" Listen to His remedy to cure us of such a disease: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; *that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute* (of their goods), *willing to communicate* (to others' needs, Gal. vi. 6); *laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*" "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: *for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*" "Make to yourselves friends of the unrighteous mammon; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into (in) everlasting habitations."

As stewards for God, His children should ever be giving, *not trying to get.* He is always giving, and He would have His children do the same, that they *may be seen to be* His children. The children of this world are ever seeking to get, and to hold, and to hoard. God's dear children should just be the opposite—wisely giving out as He gives to them for the good of those around them. And, beloved, may it not seriously affect our position and portion hereafter if we spend our lives *in trying to get*, instead of living to give, yea, to give out good measure? He has said, "It is *more* blessed

to give than to receive." This, then, is the cure for covetousness, and for the much inward misery of many of God's children who have been led astray in this matter—to give ever, day by day, out of our basket and our store, practically to those who need (and when shall the poor cease out of the land?—"the poor ye have *always* with you") whether we have little or much, remembering also that "God loveth a *cheerful* giver." This will ensure at least freedom from this canker of covetousness, and fill the donor with that blessedness which is the portion of them that thus fear the Lord.

A. O. M.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, GOD'S DELIGHT AND OUR JOY.

Is not the Lord Jesus Christ to be admired and adored for what He is in Himself? How emphatically He is the "wonderful," the great "mystery of Godliness;" the "seed of Abraham," and yet "the mighty God;" "the fruit of David's loins," and yet Jehovah's "fellow;" "made of a woman," and yet the Maker of "all things;" "like unto His brethren," yet "separate from sinners;" the "Child born," and yet the "Son given;" "found in fashion as a man," yet "the image of the invisible God"—"the brightness of His glory;" "in the likeness of sinful flesh," yet "without sin."

How glorious, how infinitely glorious He is! How exactly fitted for the work of eternal redemption! What a mighty Days-man to lay His hand on God and on us! How wise! How patient! How gracious! How truly able and ready to sympathize with us, and carry every burden for us!

And what a sacrifice that was when He "offered Himself without spot to God!" What forgiveness, as well as consecration, the blood of that Lamb speaks to our consciences—the *Offerer*, One in whom the Father

was well pleased, the Fellow of the Lord of hosts; the *Offering*, that in which Jehovah could find both satisfaction and delight. Sin was borne, judged, condemned, and put away, justice satisfied, and the holy Lord God glorified.

How blessed also it is to know that "*all* the promises of God," *all* His rich purposes of grace, are in Christ "yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us;" so that our Lord could say, "I am glorified in them." Surely we must add, "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!"

But let us dive still deeper into these unsearchable realities, and we are soon constrained to exclaim—

"'Twas love that brought Him down,
The purest, strongest love."

Eternal, unchangeable, redeeming, faithful love. Mercy "from everlasting," according to the eternal counsel and purpose of Him who *gave* us to Christ, *chose* us in Christ, and *redeemed* us by Christ; so that the divine declaration is, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." God loved us *in Him* before the foundation of the world, and determined that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

How sweet and satisfying it is thus to look back into the deep and eternal counsels of God, and see how the salvation which He wrought in Christ exactly corresponds both with His own decree and our deep necessity. The eternal purpose of God being the glory of Christ in our salvation, redemption must therefore be in and through Him. As guilty sinners could only be brought into God's presence without blame by a Saviour who was capable of satisfying the stern requirements of divine justice, our Lord Jesus Christ undertook, and did, at the cost of His own precious and guiltless life, obtain our entrance into that holy presence. He proved Himself capable to be, and was all-sufficient for, this

stupendous work. He "poured out His soul unto death." "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." He "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

Thus "*we* who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." By virtue of the infinite perfections of the *Offerer* and the *Offering*, God's eternal purpose of salvation by grace is most blessedly effected, and an everlastingly efficacious redemption accomplished for us. Thus the decree of Jehovah, the security of the believer, and the glory of God, have all been met, once and for ever, in that "one offering" which Christ "once offered." How gracious was the utterance of the loving heart of Jesus when He said, "My goodness extendeth . . . to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is *all my delight*."

We further see in the "finished" work of the Son of God, that the perfection of love displayed in the perfect work of this spotless One makes us "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Surely it was as our Substitute that He died upon the cross; and *there* we see not only the Son "forsaken" and "spared not," but also an offering brought to God in which He is infinitely glorified, in which He takes ineffable delight, and in which He finds "a savour of rest." "HE GAVE HIMSELF FOR US AN OFFERING AND A SACRIFICE TO GOD FOR A SWEET-SMELLING SAVOUR." Thus we are "righteous" by His "obedience," "accepted in the Beloved," "complete in Him;" not only ransomed from hell by His blood, but fitted for His presence by "the righteousness of God, which is unto all and upon all them that believe."

How precious it is to be occupied with God's estimate of the worth and work of His beloved Son, and thus find, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that His glory is great in our salvation, and that it is a salvation worthy of Him who doeth great things and unsearchable!

And does not the contemplation of these glorious realities make Christ Himself more precious to our souls, and necessarily therefore more constantly and unfeignedly the object of our affections and worship? Do we not thus realize the blessed liberty of His yoke? And are we not constrained to yield to Him our willing and obedient service?

Surely these things are so; and when the Holy Ghost thus reveals to us the wondrous mystery of Emmanuel's cross, how worthless and insignificant the world appears! How transient! How rapidly it "passeth away" to make room for that full power of redemption which will be connected with our Lord's return! To the spiritual eye the world now appears a dark spot, which God has consigned to judgment and destruction; but men are spending all their time and energy in seeking happiness in it apart from God and from Christ.

But more than this: since we are "justified from all things," and "perfected for ever" through the "offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all," our hopes and prospects must be correspondingly perfect and pregnant with glory and bliss. And, blessed be God, they are, and that too in strict keeping with God's eternal purpose "in Christ." "The mystery of His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself" being "to gather together in one *all things* IN CHRIST." We are taught to "look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body," and to rest in the assurance that He will come again and receive us unto HIMSELF, that "when HE shall appear we shall be *like* HIM; for we shall see HIM as HE is," and "BE FOR EVER WITH THE LORD." It is Christ Himself, "in whom we have obtained an inheritance," who is our hope; and He says, "BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY!"

How precious it is, beloved, to know that all this

wondrous and everlasting blessing comes to us through Him who offered "HIMSELF," "gave HIMSELF" for us, "put away sin by the sacrifice of HIMSELF." It is Christ HIMSELF who now appears in the presence of God for us; and it is "the Lord HIMSELF" we wait for, and expect to *see*, and to be *with*, and to be *like* for ever!

How blessed is the harmony of the purpose of God, the grace of God, and the glory of God! Surely it is the LAMB who is the Alpha and Omega, the one centre around which God has ordained that everything shall revolve. He is not only presented to us as the "LAMB slain from the foundation of the world," but in the glory that is to be revealed "the LAMB is the light thereof," and those only are there "which are written in the LAMB's book of life." None was found worthy to open the book or to look thereon but "the Lamb as it had been slain;" and it is the worthiness of the LAMB that fills heaven with unceasing praise and glory. From the throne of God and the LAMB the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal," proceeds; and it is the LAMB that feeds, and that leads the blood-washed multitude to fountains of living waters. It is because the throne of God and of the LAMB is there that there will be no more curse.

By grace Christ is *our* LAMB as well as the LAMB of God; yea, rather, because He is God's LAMB He is our LAMB. We have come to God *by Him*, we have access to the Father *through Him*, our sins were laid *upon Him*, we trust *in Him*, we have peace with God *through Him*, we are complete *in Him*, and we wait *for Him*. We find in HIM full salvation, suitable salvation, everlasting salvation; yea, God's salvation, and therefore all our salvation. He is verily and indeed to us THE FIRST AND THE LAST, THE CHIEFEST AMONG TEN THOUSAND, THE ALTOGETHER LOVELY.

"O CHRIST! what burdens bowed Thy head!
Our load was laid on Thee;

Thou stoodest in the sinner's stead,
 To bear all ill for me :
 A victim led, Thy blood was shed ;
 Now there 's no load for me.
 " Death and the curse were in our cup :
 O Christ, 'twas full for Thee !
 But Thou hast drained the last dark drop,
 'Tis empty now for me.
 Thine own free-will bore all the ill :
 Now life and peace for me.
 " Jehovah lifted up His rod :
 O Christ, it fell on Thee !
 Thou wast sore stricken of Thy God !
 There 's not one stroke for me.
 Thy tears, Thy blood, beneath it flowed ;
 Thy bruising healeth me.
 " The tempest's awful voice was heard :
 O Christ, it broke on Thee !
 Thine open bosom was my ward ;
 It braved the storm for me.
 Thy form was scarred, Thy visage marred,
 Now cloudless peace for me.
 " For me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast died,
 And I have died in Thee :
 Thou 'rt risen, my bands are all untied,
 And now Thou liv'st in me.
 The Father's face of radiant grace
 Shines now in light on me."

SALVATION.

It would be of great profit to ponder the various modes in which the word "SAVE," with all its derivatives, is used in God's word ; for it not only would enable those who preach and expound God's word rightly to divide the word of truth, but it also would in many cases be a means of removing doubts and fears generated by a want of intelligence as to God's great salvation.

For the sake of clearness and simplicity, let us consider, under the following specific heads, the usage of the word "save," with its derivatives, "salvation," "saviour," and words of similar import, such as "preserve," "safe," "redeem," "forgive," &c. &c.

In many of the Scriptures quoted there may be a double meaning; but let us endeavour rightly to understand (through God's gracious teaching by His Spirit) the primary sense, and then, should occasion require, we can seek ("lawfully" ever) to apply it as seems meet in other ways; *e.g.* 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10.

First. Let us take throughout the Word specimens of those Scriptures which refer to salvation from the guilt of sin.

Secondly. Salvation from the power of sin.

Thirdly. Salvation from the presence of sin.

Fourthly. Salvation or preservation from temporal ills. (a) Of the body from sickness, &c. (b) Of the person from enemies, &c.

I. SALVATION FROM THE GUILT OF SIN.

Exodus xii. 13: "When I see the blood, I will *pass over* you."

1 Corinthians v. 7: "Christ our *Passover* is sacrificed for us."

Titus iii. 5: "According to His mercy He *saved* us."

2 Timothy i. 9: "Who hath *saved* us."

Ephesians i. 7: "In whom we have *redemption* through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."

1 John ii. 2: "And *He* is the *propitiation* for our sins."

Acts xvi. 30, 31: "What must I do to be *saved*? . . . Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be *saved*."

Luke ii. 11: "A *Saviour*, which is Christ the Lord."

Acts v. 31: "Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a *Saviour*."

1 John iv. 14: "The Father sent the Son to be the *Saviour* of the world."

1 John i. 7: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son *cleanseth us from all sin*."

Thus we find Salvation expressed under the various

phases of "atonement," "redemption," "ransoming," "cleansing," "forgiveness," "saving," &c., all conveying to us one meaning, even that God, who is rich in mercy, has provided, in Jesus Christ crucified, a full and complete deliverance from the guilt of sin for every one that believeth.

II. SALVATION FROM THE POWER OF SIN.

We find, amongst many, the following Scriptures illustrative of this truth :

Matthew i. 21 : Called "JESUS (or Saviour) : for He shall *save* His people *from* their sins."

Acts iii. 26 : "God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, *in turning away* every one of you from his iniquities."

Romans v. 10 : "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled . . . much more, being reconciled, we shall be *saved by His life*."

Hebrews vii. 25 : "Wherefore He is able also *to save them* to the uttermost who come (and have come) to God by Him," &c.

James i. 21 : "The engrafted word, which is able *to save* your souls."

Jude 24 : "Him that is able *to keep you from falling*," &c.

Ephesians v. 23 : "The Saviour of the body." See also Romans vii. 24, 25 ; 1 Timothy iv. 16 ; James v. 15, 20.

Surely in the above most precious Scriptures, which are but a few gems out of the exhaustless treasury of the King, we cannot fail to see that "Salvation" comprises far more than "cleansing," "pardon," "justification," &c., precious though these be. It comprises God's provision, in the Risen and Ascended Son, for our life here below ; for our preservation, through Him to whom all power is given, from all evil ; and, on His part, there is no limit to His power to keep us from failure. Let us then give thanks unto our God for His

unspeakable gift, and seek to walk worthy of Him unto all well-pleasing.

III. SALVATION FROM THE PRESENCE OF SIN.

In other words this may be described as "the redemption of the body" (the purchased possession, Eph. i.) which the return of the Lord Jesus Christ ensures to His people. The following Scriptures will afford light upon this truth. As the Crucified One saves from *guilt* by His blood, and as the Risen and Ascended One saveth by His loving *power* from sin's dominion, so will the Coming One gloriously finish the work, and save from the *presence* of sin, and that for evermore.

Romans xiii. 11: "Now is our *salvation* nearer than when we believed."

Hebrews ix. 28: "Christ shall appear the second time without sin (not as a sin-bearer) *unto salvation*."

1 Peter i. 5-9: "Kept by the power of God through faith *unto salvation*." "Receiving the end of your faith, *the salvation of your souls*."

Ephesians i. 14: "The earnest of our inheritance *until the redemption of the purchased possession*."

Romans viii. 23: "We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, *the redemption of our body*."

2 Corinthians v. 2: "Clothed upon with our house which is from heaven."

See also 1 Corinthians xv. 52-54; 1 Thessalonians iv. 16-17.

Thus at His coming *we* shall be changed in a moment, and freed from the presence of sin, putting on incorruption; for He shall "change this vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." What a glorious consummation!

“Free from sin, free from sin,
And from all defilement clean;
Lord, I long to be like Thee,
And in glory bright to see
Thee, my soul’s eternal joy.”

IV. SALVATION (OR PRESERVATION) FROM TEMPORAL ILL.

Under this head such a Scripture as 1 Timothy iv. 10, comes, one apparently difficult to understand. “For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.” Surely this refers not to the salvation of the soul from sin, but to the preservation of the body from harm. God is the Preserver of men (Job vii. 20), of all men, but specially cares for (and what wonder!) His own redeemed ones; of whom it is written, “He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.”

So also 1 Peter iv. 19: “Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.” Here the word “souls” seems to mean “beings, selves;” and the sense of the passage seems to be an exhortation to those persecuted, to commit themselves to the care of their God, and rest quiet. “I will both lay me down in peace and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.” Again, in 1 Tim. ii. 15, the word “saved” evidently means “preserved from death.” In the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms, the term salvation is used to denote deliverance from enemies round about, and though often typical of spiritual deliverance should not be confounded therewith. For instance, Luke i. 71 evidently has this double import.

The following Scriptures will serve as an example of the use of the word in this sense:

Ps. xliv. 3: “Neither did their own arm save them.”

Psalm cvii. 13: "*He saved them out of their distresses.*"

1 Chronicles xvi. 35: "*Save us, O God of our salvation.*"

2 Kings xix. 19: "*Save thou us out of his hand.*"

Jeremiah xiv. 8: "*The Saviour of Israel in trouble.*"

Thus every one believing in the Lord Jesus Christ may say with truth, "I am saved;" for he has trusted to One who has undertaken the whole work of saving him—to One who is never the Author without being the Finisher of our faith. The believer passes instantly from death to life (John v. 24), and in the power of that new life, eternal because it is hid with Christ in God, begins to live unto Him who sustains the new inbreathed life, who loses none of those given to Him by God the Father, but will preserve unto His heavenly kingdom "according to His own purpose and grace."

Thus it is no presumption to rest firmly on His word, and boldly (yet humbly) to be assured of, yea, and to assert, the fact (where need is) that we are the sons of God, and saved with an everlasting salvation. Yet do we "*work out our own salvation with fear and trembling*" (lest Satan and the flesh combined should get an advantage over us); for *it is God* that worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. "Saved by His life," we live because He lives. One with Him, we are left here to manifest Him. "Saved by hope," we look forward to His coming again the second time unto our salvation eternally. "For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change these bodies of humiliation, that they may be fashioned like unto His body of glory."

Then shall we know fully all things concerning His glorious work, and marvel that we so little entered into the reason of our salvation—even that we should *now* "show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light."

A WORD TO THE WISE.

THE Church of God is infinitely precious to Christ. He gave Himself for it that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Every individual member is bone of His bone, and an object of His perfect love; and so sweet is the fellowship of His beloved people to Him, that wherever even two or three are gathered together in His name there He is in the midst of them.

His presence may not always be enjoyed, but still He is there. Unbelief, or indifference, or worldliness, may hinder many of those present from realizing His nearness; but still He is there, ready to manifest Himself to all whose hearts are thirsting for Him, and He is waiting to satisfy the hungry with good things.

The two disciples, going down to Emmaus, were *blinded by their unbelief, and little thought that the Lord was with them while they talked together and were sad*; but there He was with them, ministering to them; and in due time, when their hearts were softened and prepared, He revealed Himself to them, and filled them with joy unspeakable. He is always with His people. He never leaves nor forsakes them. He taketh pleasure in them that fear Him. He is always considering them and loading them with blessings.

The apostle John beheld Him in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, which are the seven churches; for, sad as the condition of many of them was, "He forsaketh not His saints."

Nothing escapes the observation of His searching eye; there are no difficulties but what His almighty power can overcome—no necessities, however numerous or diversified, but He is able to supply—no sorrows beyond the reach of His sympathy—no perplexities or

troubles that He cannot deliver from—no mysteries that He cannot solve—Himself above all created glory, and yet accompanying His failing people through the wilderness, onward to their destined rest and eternal joy. Such, and much more, yea, the fulness of all blessing, He was, and still is, in the midst of the churches; and blessed indeed are those who obediently respond to His grace by gathering together in His name.

Still, it is sadly true that believers may *nominally* gather together in the name of Jesus, and yet *practically* have the door shut against Him. He was still in the midst of the churches, and yet outside the Laodicean door, knocking and calling for admittance. The church had lost sight of the fact that it was the house of God. It had declined from its proper position as God's witness, the light of the world; and having let slip the truth of God, that it had all spiritual blessings in Christ, and that the flesh profiteth nothing, *there was consequently no felt weakness and need, and therefore no practical acknowledgment of the Lordship of Christ.*

God hath made HIM both Lord and Christ. The Redeemer of the church is its HEAD. The sense of our lost and hell-deserving condition compels us to cleave to Him as "the Christ;" and the deep necessities of the church, if truly estimated, would compel us joyfully to acknowledge "the only Potentate" as the Master and Ruler of His own house. But is it so?

There was no charge of insincerity at Laodicea, no record of contentions and divisions, no special outbreaks of evil troubling them, but, with all the appearance of concord, and the maintenance of a church position, where was the Master of the house? The church was poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked, and knew it not. It was rich, and increased with goods; but where was the pure gold, the white

robe, and the needed eye-salve? Their self-complacent ease and carnal confidence had blinded them to their actual need, and led them to take the rule, the service, and discipline of the church into their own hands. The flesh knows of no other ruling element than itself. The Lord was *outside* the door.

The fine gold had indeed become dim; but the Lord yearns over this scene of spiritual poverty and weakness. Unsolicited, He stands at the door and knocks; unsought, He gives counsel, and proclaims the unchanged grace of His heart. It is the voice of patient, faithful love that He utters; He feels, and He wishes them to feel, that He is *outside* their assembly. Barrenness of soul and spiritual blindness are the necessary results; and restoration to communion and blessing can only follow their opening the door to Him.

Does not all this tell us how possible it is to begin in the spirit, and afterwards to come under the rebuke, "Thou art neither cold nor hot"? How easily we let slip the power, and retain only the form of godliness; content, alas! with an unholy quietude that excludes Christ! But what other channel of healing is there than by opening the door to the Master of the house, receiving His counsel, and unfeignedly yielding to His gracious rule? If He Himself be not the one great attraction in our assemblies, the bond of our union, the source of all rule, service, and discipline, what marvel if lukewarmness, apathy, worldliness, and such like things abound?

Is it not one most humbling sign of our want of power, that where such truths of Scripture as the coming of the Lord, the heavenly calling of the church, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and consequent holiness and unity of the church, are clearly seen, and even an external position according to these truths assumed, there is little else to distinguish such from professors around?

Where is the power that such truths should exert?

Where the humbleness of mind, the tenderness of heart, the separation from the world, the deadness to all its objects and its pleasures? Where the love to all saints, the bowels of mercies towards perishing sinners, and the unfeigned joy in the Holy Ghost which such truths are calculated to produce?

How is this lack of power to be accounted for? Has the Holy Ghost forsaken His habitation? Does He no longer dwell in the believer, and in the church? God forbid! He came as the seal of the Father's infinite satisfaction in the perfect accomplished work of Jesus; and His presence is secured to the believer and to the church by the unchangeable efficacy of that work and of the Father's delight therein.

Could we have forfeited the presence of this blessed One, we surely should have done so, long, long ere this! But the same word which assures us the Comforter should come, assures us that He would never depart. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth."

But while it is thus impossible that the Holy Ghost should be withdrawn from the church, who can doubt that He may be grieved, and hindered, and well-nigh quenched? Nay, who can doubt that this has been done? Our lack of power is not because the Holy Ghost has departed, but because He has been, and is grieved and hindered by our unbelief and our sin.

And what becomes us in such a case but to humble ourselves and confess our sins, to review our ways and search our hearts, and return unto the Lord our God. When we think of our Bibles unread, our closets unfrequented, our tempers ungoverned, our lusts unmortified; when we think of our pride, our self-seeking, our self-sufficiency, our sloth, our carelessness, our love of pleasure, and love of the world, is it any wonder that the Spirit has been grieved, and that He no longer puts forth His power and manifests Christ as

in the days of old? Yes, we have deeply grieved that holy and blessed One; and what humiliation of heart, what self-abasement, becomes us on account of all these things!

May we, beloved in the Lord, lay these things to heart, and unsparingly judge ourselves as to our practical dealings with the Lord Himself.

Is He now knocking at the door of our assembly for admission? Do we believingly gather together in His name, and feel the reality of His presence? Do we know what it is, when gathered together, to sit at His feet, and to hear His word? Have we the heartfelt consciousness of the utter impossibility of obtaining any wisdom or blessing but from Him who is Head over all things to the church, through whatever instrumentality He may appoint?

We read of those who had but a "little strength," and yet kept Christ's word, and did not deny His name; and, however low we may have fallen, if there be but true humiliation before Him, and a renewed seeking of His manifested presence as our chief joy, He will not fail to revive us again, and so lift up the light of His countenance upon us that our hearts will be filled with His love, and our mouths will tell forth His praise.

THE BAPTISM INTO DEATH.

IN Romans vi. 3, 4, we read, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

A careful examination of the use of the definite article in the Greek leads us to believe that in the Holy Scriptures the insertion or omission of it has a definite meaning. Whenever it is used, peculiar signification seems to be attached to the word it is used

with; whenever omitted, the sense of the word seems merely general.

In the passage before us, the translators have omitted to bring in the definite article before "baptism into death" in verse 4, and have thus left the impression that the meaning of the passage is, "Therefore we are buried with Him by (the ordinance of) baptism into death."

In Colossians ii. 12, the article has also been omitted in the English translation.

If we read these passages, inserting the article, they present to the mind the fact of a wondrous change wrought, not by the ordinance of baptism (however good that may be in its place), but by "*the baptism into His death.*"

We who believe in Him are buried with Him in His death-baptism, that we may also share His resurrection-life.

We are "crucified with Christ," "planted together in the likeness of His death," that we may (having suffered in Him our death-sentence) be raised as He was, by the glory of the Father, to "walk in newness of life."

God counteth those who believe partakers in the death of their Saviour-substitute, Jesus Christ: thus He speaks of them as "buried with Him in the death-baptism." They likewise partake of His victory over death; for if buried with Him in the death-baptism, they also are raised "through faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead."

Thus God, in His wisdom and prudence, secureth newness of life through the risen Christ to all the members of His family; while as the Just One, His answer to every accusing voice is, "It is God that justifieth. Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Rom. viii. 33, 34.)

A. O. M.

SIN ;

AND WHAT THE RELATION OF THE BELIEVER IS TO IT.

As it is God who can alone reveal Himself to the creature, so it is God only who can reveal to him what is opposed to Himself. Sin is not what man thinks it *may* be, but what God has revealed it to be ; and hence the absolute necessity of a revelation from God to make us acquainted with that deep and dark moral and spiritual evil which we denominate *sin*.

In many minds *conscience*, and not *God*, is appealed to in order to decide between right and wrong ; and perhaps in most persons there is a latent, unallowed belief that would justify the appeal.

It is, however, a matter of painful surprise that some earnest seekers after holiness fall into this over-estimate of conscience, and consequent under-estimate of sin. But for this, all thoughts of sinlessness, even for a moment, and of perfection in any measure or degree, would never have entered into the mind of earnest, godly souls, whose object is to glorify God, but who seek to produce a condition of spiritual life that is untrue to the Word and unreal in fact.

The effect of this is to lower the standard of right and wrong, and thereby to make holiness and sin something less than God has declared them to be. A human standard is assumed to be the divine. God's thoughts are estimated by man's, and God's truths are weighed in the balances of man's fallen misconceptions.

It is painful to see sinners making this false estimate, but doubly painful when those whom God has set as lights in the darkness of this age thus bring down the measure of the truth of God to the measure of a man, however exalted, however mighty that man may be in the pathway of holiness.

Here, as elsewhere, our only appeal must be to the

Word and to the Testimony. Whatever accords not with that is wrong, whatever its assumption; and its experiences are a delusion, whatever their pretensions. We are only kept right as we hold God's truth in its blessed extremes, not attempting to harmonize the one side of truth with the other, but content, with the simplicity of a child, to hold each as given from above, awaiting the reconciliation of apparently opposite truths when eternal glory shall shine on all, and reveal harmony where we thought all was discord, and congruity where we only saw confusion.

Truth is a test, not to our intellect, but to our heart; and he whose heart is right and whose eye is single will be led right. All others the truth will mislead; for so has the wisdom of God ordained.* Humble-minded babes in Christ go right when the worldly-wise Christian goes wrong, with the same data before them both, and the same truths before their eyes. The spiritually-minded see, and the carnally-minded are blinded.

With these thoughts before us, we will seek to trace out, under the guidance of the first epistle of John, what Scripture teaches regarding sin, specially as connected with the believer. Let us consider—

I. WHAT SIN IS.

John says: "Sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John iii. 4.) In the Greek it reads, "Sin is lawlessness" (*avouμia*). Sin, then, is any departure from the law of the living God, which Paul describes as "holy, and just, and good."

The characteristics of the law, therefore, are *holiness, righteousness, and goodness*; and its requirements are like its characteristics both in kind and in measure.

It seeks nothing more, but can be satisfied with nothing less; and all this holiness, righteousness, and

* Ponder over Hosea xiv. 9; Psalm xviii. 26 ("froward" meaning "crooked"); also 2 Peter iii. 16.

goodness is summed up by our Lord in those two great commandments—"The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart, and with *all* th: soul, and with *all* thy mind, and with *all* thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Mark xii. 29-31.)

Again we read, "God is love." He who is love seeks love. But mark the force of that oft-repeated "ALL." God claims *all*, and commands a love so absorbing that the will, the affection, the intellect, and the powers have *all* to be brought under its mighty influence ere God gets His due. To come short of *all* is to fail; to fail is to sin. It is to "come short of the glory of God;" it is to be brought in "guilty before God." (See Rom. iii. 19, 23.)

This is the lawlessness (*avomia*) of which John speaks. This is sin. God's law, like His holy, acceptable, and perfect will, seeks a *full* response from the creature—the response to a perfect love that was content to give *all*, and can be satisfied with nothing less than *all* in return. Could we only realize what this absolute, this holy and righteous claim of God is, there would be for ever an end to assertions of attained holiness, and of perfect sanctification.

Such is sin; not only a transgression in thought, word, and deed, but a coming short in the inworking or the outworking of any of those four "alls" which make up the claims of God's holiness.*

But beyond and beneath all this there is the deep root of sin in our being, that defiles the holiest thought, the holiest word, and the holiest deed, so that nothing clean can come out of the unclean, even under the mighty working of the Holy Ghost; for the Holy Spirit acts not within us independently of ourselves. It is *we* who act. Every act of faith is *our*

* The word for "sin" in Hebrew signifies a missing of the mark to be attained.

act, and therefore it can never come before God without having in it that "iniquity of the holy things" that has to be borne and provided for by our great High Priest. (Read Exodus xxviii. 30.)

Sin is a deep and dark mystery, of which we know little. God has fathomed it, and provided against it, according to His perception of what it is; and the measure of sin is the measure of the cross of Christ. It will ever be that he who has had much forgiven will love much; and hence the deep importance of not cheating our own souls of love to Christ by resisting the evidence of the Word as to what sin really is *in* us or *on* Christ. We will now consider—

II. THE RELATION OF SIN TO THE BELIEVER.

First, let us see what it is *not*. We read in chapter iii. 9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin (*ἀμαρτιαν ου ποιει*, is not doing sin); for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin (*ου δυναται ἀμαρτανειν*, is not able to be sinning), because he is born of God."

This is a very important passage, but one liable to be misunderstood, if the force of the present tense in the Greek is not known. Its force is to give the idea of continuance in any thing, or the living in any course; and hence here the living in sin, as contrasted with falling into sin. As the washed sow wallows again in the mire, so an outwardly-reformed sinner *lives in sin* still—not, it may be, in any outward or gross form of sin, but in sin; for he was born in sin, lives in sin, and dies in sin, if he dies unsaved. Sin is the element in which he moves.

Not so the child of God; he is created in righteousness, he is accounted righteous because in Christ, and when he dies he sleeps in Jesus. His element is Christ, and therefore holiness. He may fall into sin, as the lamb may fall into the mire; but the mire is

not the element that accords with its nature: it does not wallow in it, it abhors and avoids it.

To this corresponds what Paul writes in Romans vi., where sin is spoken of as a master that has had his dominion taken away. Sin exists still, but does not reign; it has no authority; and the saved soul is no longer its slave. The ransomed soul can take up the song of Moses, and join in Miriam's chorus—

“Sing unto the Lord; for He hath triumphed gloriously:
The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.”

Israel came out from under the dominion of Pharaoh, and the believer in Jesus comes out from under the dominion and lawful authority of Satan, the prince of this world; and being no longer in sin, he cannot possibly go on living in subjection to it or taking pleasure in its ways. But while he is not in sin, sin is in him, and this leads to our next point.

We have seen what the believer's relation to sin is not; and now in the next place let us see what Scripture describes *the believer's normal condition* to be.

There is much that is abnormal in the state of most, through unbelief, forgetfulness, worldliness, and so forth, which has its painful withering influence in the Christianity of all more or less; but with this we have not now to do.

The Lord has not left us without instruction on this point. John writes: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (Chap. i. 8.) From this we see that to have sin dwelling within is the necessary condition of this life; so that although we are no longer *in sin* as to our standing, or going on in sin as to our walk, we have a “*law of sin*” in us working in our members, to which the flesh is necessarily subject. Thus, while as to the mind we ourselves “serve the law of God,” as to the flesh we serve or are in subjection to “the law of sin,” and therefore cry out with Paul, by reason of the actual and necessary condition of our being, “O wretched

man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans vii. 24, 25.) That which is a law is no longer an accident; it is a necessary part of our being, a rule under which the flesh exists till death, or the Lord's advent, separates corruption from us for ever, and corruption and mortality give place to incorruption and immortality. (See 1 Cor. xv.)

This is a deadly warfare, which is further described in Gal. v. 17: "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are placed in opposition (or are antagonistic *αντικειται*) one to another." This antagonism must last till mortality has passed away; and while under the energy of the Spirit of God the flesh will be weakened, the spirit will in the same ratio be strengthened; as Saul's house, in the time of David's reign in Hebron, waxed weaker and weaker, while David's house became stronger and stronger.

In all these important doctrinal verities the typical history of the Old Testament comes in to make plain what otherwise might be overlooked. We read that when Israel was to come into the land, God said, as a part of His purpose towards them, "I will not drive them (the Canaanite nations) out before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. By *little and little* I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land." (Exodus xxxiii. 29, 30.)

No "act of faith" could bring a deliverance once and for all. It was "by little and little" then, and it is thus only that the Christian enters upon the possession of his inheritance, which can never be perfectly enjoyed till the Prince of Peace, the true Solomon, comes; even as was said concerning them, "Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba." (1 Kings iv. 25.) Not only will it not be otherwise than with Israel, but there is a spiritual needs-be that

it should not be so, and those who see it thank God and take courage, and bless Him who has so ordered it.

But because the normal condition of the believer is the casting out of the enemies "little by little," let none fall into the belief that his legitimate experience is one of defeat. Far from it; it should be one of daily victory, but with the knowledge that he must be content to bear the brunt of a daily conflict. Here Israel failed, as we read all through the book of Judges, and herein Christians fail. But if we have failed here, let us not fall into the delusion that we can get beyond our present wisely-appointed condition of needing to put on the whole armour of God, and having done this, still standing ready for the fight. When *we* fight God will fight *with us*, and fight *for us*; for Israel's armies were God's hosts. But God fights not *alone* as a rule in these battles, as He did against our enemies on the cross of Christ, or at the Red Sea, and in the land of Egypt. How easily do we miss the distinctly-marked line that sometimes but very narrowly separates the most precious truth from the most extravagant delusion.

Again John writes: "If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." (Chap. i. 10.) We were sinners, and we are sinners, and anything that touches that great truth touches the veracity of God, and therefore makes Him a liar, and His word, which is based on this assumption, has found no place in us. Oh, may it find an abiding-place! or else we have ill-learned what Job's history is given to teach.*

I would notice here that the word "have sinned" in this verse is in the perfect tense (*ἡμαρτηκαμεν*), and therefore has the force of that which was true, and is so still. It does not point to some past act of sin alone as the aorist would have done, for it takes in the past, and brings it down to the present; and God thus

* See paper, "Perfection Tested."—*Golden Lamp*, vol. iv.

tells us that we are as much sinful now by nature as we were when dead in trespasses and sins.

For all this, however, and for all involved in direct acts of sin, which is what is contemplated in chap. ii. 1 (where the aorist tense is used), we have the assurance of the all-sufficient advocacy before the throne of our holy Paraclete, Jesus the Advocate, who is with the Father, and always there on our behalf. He pleads our cause, not according to our knowledge of our sins or need, but according to the measure of His knowledge whose eyes are as a flame of fire, but who yet is a merciful and faithful High Priest—Godwards, in all pertaining to God and His glory; and manwards, in all pertaining to his sins and need, securing for us the right to draw near evermore.

Thus we conclude that the believer's relation to sin is that of having it as an indwelling law, from which, while judicially, in the cross of Christ, he is *absolutely free* (as we read in Romans viii. 2, of which we shall speak hereafter), nevertheless he will not be *personally* free till resurrection consummates what the Holy Ghost has sealed to faith in the cross of Christ.

We have still to consider the double effect of sin, and the double remedy provided for it. H. G.

(To be continued, D. V.)

COMPARISONS AND CONTRASTS.

MATTHEW AND LUKE.—The genealogy in Matthew proves Jesus to be Abraham's son and David's, therefore fitted to be Messiah of Israel. Luke proves Him son of Adam, with grace for all mankind. The one is Jewish, the other universal. Matthew groups his facts for purposes of special instruction. Luke gives details in chronological order.

MATTHEW AND JOHN.—In Matthew Messiah is seen presenting Himself to Israel for their acceptance, and finally rejected. In John He is seen rejected from the

beginning, and as a result grace is proclaimed to "who-soever" will believe, no matter what his nationality. In this respect John begins where Matthew ends.

MATTHEW AND THE PROPHETS.—In Matthew especially prophecy is shown to be fulfilled.

MARK AND JOHN agree in giving no genealogy, but for different reasons. Mark's purpose was to tell of Jesus' ministry, and with it he begins. John has to tell of the Son of God, and begins before the world was.

JOHN AND GENESIS.—John is to the new creation what Genesis i. is to the old.

JOHN AND ROMANS.—John's doctrine of life is new birth; Paul's doctrine of life is resurrection from death.

JOHN AND THE EPISTLES.—John contains in seed or embryo the doctrines on which the epistles enlarge.

"IN His relationships to the world which was around Him 'we see Jesus' at once a *conqueror*, a *sufferer*, a *benefactor*.

"What mortal glories can shine in such an assemblage? He *overcame* the world, refusing all its attractions. He suffered from it, bearing witness against its whole course. He blessed it, dispensing the fruit of His grace and power incessantly. Its temptations only made Him a *Conqueror*; its pollutions and enmities a *Sufferer*; its miseries only a *Benefactor*."

"Pain and suffering, looking to Him, were at once relieved. Sorrow, tracking His footsteps, got sympathy and comfort. Sin, crouching at His feet, was not spurned away with a harsh rebuke, but met with compassion and words of acquittal. Death itself had to yield up its power in His presence, who was Himself the resurrection and the life.

"Such was JESUS—"the man Christ Jesus"—who is now glorified at God's right hand, but with the same ear, the same heart, the same love, unchanged as in the days of His humiliation, all engaged on His people's behalf."

G. F. T.

SOME HELP AS TO THE TRUE GROUND OF THE ASSEMBLY OF GOD.

A most important lesson may be learnt from the contrast between "the golden lamp," as in the tabernacle and in the temple of old, with the seven golden candlesticks, among which the Lord has been seen walking, as described in Revelation i. But before we draw this contrast, let us briefly show that this contrast is designed of the Lord.

The ground-plan of the book of Revelation is a sacred chamber, like to the tabernacle of old. Every piece of furniture to be found in the one is to be discerned as alluded to in the other, with the significant exception that there is no veil. The seer discerns all that is going on from end to end thereof. Nothing else, however, is wanting, though much is in most perfect and beautiful contrast.

The High Priest and the Sacrifice are there, but seen as one; viz., a Lamb slain. (Chap. v.)

The priests, His sons, are there (not a few of them only), and officiating. No. The Sacrifice is regarded as complete, and the priests in their twenty-four courses are beheld *all* there, habited in their priestly vestments, but crowned and enthroned all of them. The allusion is perfectly evident to the arrangement of the priesthood by King David. (See 1 Chron. xxiv.) The throne of God is there; but scarcely now a mercy seat: *it* is in the course of transformation to a throne of judgment.

The cherubim are there—and after chapter iv. no longer are these the angels—in chapter v., and subsequently, they are the Church of God in heavenly service and rule.

Before the throne there is a sea of glass, in contradistinction with the brazen laver of old. For

once on a time the priests needed to have their feet washed ere they worshipped. But the new, the royal priesthood, once there, have done with impurity for ever. Though quite close to the throne of God, they have no need of washing there. No, not even as to their feet or walk. Hence this anti-typical laver is no longer of water, to cleanse; but of glass, to exhibit purity. As if our wonderment were such at being sanctified wholly and for ever, and eternally fit for the presence of God, that there was still use for this something like a laver; namely, that we might gaze therein to behold how very clean we are. And for this cause doubtless it is removed to a new position. No longer outside the tabernacle, but in the holiest of all, hard by the throne of God—before the throne. (Rev. iv. 4.)

The altar of incense is to be discerned in the temple chamber of Revelation. (See chap. viii. 3.)

The altar of burnt offering is there. (See chap. vi. 9.)

The table of shewbread, with its twelve loaves, representing the twelve tribes of Israel, is certainly alluded to in the reference to those twelve tribes in chapter vii. For Israel, still before God, is seen in her ideal completeness as “twelve tribes.” (See James i. 1; Acts xxvi. 7.) Hence it is, I think, that the number of each tribe there seated is stated to be “twelve thousand.” The words “thousand” and “prince” will be found to be used interchangeably by comparing Micah v. 2 with Matt. ii. 6. And the number of thousands of each being exactly “twelve” makes the allusion perfectly obvious.

There remains only the golden lamp as of old, with the seven golden candlesticks in the Revelation. Is there any glance back to the typical account in the description on Revelation?

It is denied by certain teachers that there is the remotest thought back to the past in this picture of things that are now. A certain well-known teacher of the Plymouth Brethren has, in a letter intended

for the eye of the writer, distinctly denied all reference; "*no, not even in contrast,*" to use his own words. The proof he gives is that whereas of old the candlestick was *inside* the holy place; here it is admittedly outside, for testimony. He adds the further thought, that as the seven candlesticks or churches historically represent the *SUCCESSIONAL* state of things throughout the present dispensation, there cannot possibly be any designed contrast; for here in Revelation the candlesticks or churches are all beheld together. But, indeed, this latter position is exceedingly weak; for though it is true that the phases of the church's career are thus successionaly represented, yet it is also true that the literal churches of Ephesus and Smyrna actually existed at the time that the book of Revelation was written. And, further, it is also true that those seven churches then existing were selected by the Lord as specimens of assemblies, with ecclesiastical evils in them similar in kind to those in the seven phases of the entire professing church in her career down the stream of time.

But then the other objection, that the candlestick is removed to a new place, and put outside the holy place for testimony, is nothing wonderful. So the brazen laver, or that which stands for it, the sea of glass, as we have seen, occupies a new place. Nay, more; the removal of the laver from outside the holy place into the holiest of all is a greater remove than that of the candlestick.

It will be perfectly obvious, upon the slightest reflection, why some opposition is made to the view of designed contrast between the seven golden candlesticks of the Revelation with the one lamp of the tabernacle. The very opposition itself made to this view, which is surely clear enough, goes to prove that if this view for which I am contending be the mind of the Lord, then the peculiar ecclesiastical organization by which, amongst a little party, oneness

is attempted to be shown and enforced—that this organization is not the divine method. The thing, oneness itself, is good and beautiful and scriptural; but the *modus operandi* is a *failure* and a blunder. For now behold the contrast!

Of old there were six lights grouped around a centre stem, which centre stem was a visible one; now, on the other hand, there are seven distinct candlesticks, but connected together really, divinely, by a living Person, the High Priest, our Lord Himself. Could aught be more striking or instructive?

The oneness is to be maintained most undoubtedly, but in a new way; viz., by clinging close to an invisible Christ and His written word. As assemblies cease to come together solely unto His name or presence, and as they slant away from obedience to His word, so will they appear, yea, and be divided, and even in conflict probably with each other; in other words, so will they appear as seven. But let Him be the sole Centre, actually present, though invisibly, round Whom His people congregate. Thus are they blended into one, and thus only.*

And the above is found to be a fact. When of late, as on the bank holidays, divers assemblies that gather to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and whose members are sound in the faith and holy in their walk, have come together to sit before the Lord, and to worship Him in spirit and in truth, have not their HEARTS become fused into one, and themselves drawn closer not only to the Lord, but to each other? So what the Lord teaches in the picture is found, when believed and acted on, to be His pure truth.

Alas! that men should spoil it by their traditions, their human organizations, and party mechanism; and

* See my paper on *The Great Lesson of the Transfiguration—Jesus only—in its application to individual believers in Matt. xvi. and to assemblies in Matt. xviii.*," in the *Golden Lamp* for August, 1873.

not only so, but reverse God's order, by seeking to work from outward to inward, instead of from inward to outward—spirit first, then soul, then body.

It would appear from the previous picture in Revelation that the way of the Lord with an individual soul in its salvation and peace, and His way with an assembly of two or three and upwards, and His way with several assemblies, whether seven or more or less—that in all these three cases that way of His is one and the same. I mean that the individual soul, and the single assembly, and the various assemblies, must each and all begin with Himself immediately. Contact with Himself is the divine *sine qua non* of good being obtained.

Firstly. If a soul, instead of coming to Christ for salvation, comes to any body or to any thing, all is in vain.

Secondly, if a few believers, instead of being gathered unto His name or presence, allow some body or some thing else to take His place, it is not, according to Matt. xviii., an assembly of God.

Thirdly, if assemblies crave for union, as they do and must do if they have the Spirit of God, here is God's teaching as to His own way by which this is to be attempted and obtained. But, as Christ Himself says, "He that gathereth not with ME scattereth."

Substitute some mechanism, however elaborate or however simple, for God's one and perfect mode of union, viz., a living Christ alone, and then you have a sect, a party, or almost anything you please, but not the Church of God. Where the Queen lives is a palace; where Christ is there is the church. *Ubi christus; ibi ecclesia.*

But there is somewhat more even yet in this picture in Rev. i. ii. iii. For who is "the angel of the church," of whom we read here, and who yet figures nowhere else? Now here I do urge the reader to get at the actual teaching, which will be found most

valuable and intimately bearing upon what we are contending for.

The angel is, of course, translated the messenger. Hence it is suggested that the church that has one to whom the word is applicable, "the angel;" that church has got away from Christ Himself. The term implies that that church is not in His own presence, and that that church, if it is to have a communication from its Lord, has need of a messenger. I care not at all as to whom you prove this angel to be, whether a literal angel, an official corresponding to one in the Jewish synagogue, or to "the one man Pastor," the edge of the lesson is identical—that church has got away from Christ Himself. Nay, more; even that angel is not all he purports to be, even he is not in Christ's presence; HE HAS TO BE WRITTEN TO. "To the angel of the church, write." Profession is one thing, reality is another.

Here also compare the word that is used of the action of Christ Himself. He is represented as "walking amid the seven golden candlesticks." There would be no need and no scope for this walking on the part of the Lord Jesus, had those churches abode in Him and in His love. Hence that "walking" of His that we read of here is *judgment*. The number of steps which He has to take marks what that judgment is—marks it, dear reader, ponder—marks His judgment—betrays how far that church has got away from Him.

Thus the picture, the more it is studied, the more emphatic is its lesson found to be as to God's mode of union. Give up this for anything else, however specious, and that union is not divine.

Here I had intended to compare the teaching in the Acts of the Apostles, which is the inspired book of the church at the beginning, but my paper already is long enough. I will merely, therefore, in conclusion, cite a few Scriptures thence, with a line of explanation.

Turn first to Acts ii. 47. The common reading there

is—"The Lord added to THE CHURCH daily such as should be saved." How wonderful it is that uninspired men cannot touch God's word without marring it. The words "to the church" have been added by copyists. The correct reading is, "The Lord added *together* such as should be saved!" (See Alford *in loco*.)

That the above is the true Scripture is corroborated by Acts v. 14, where we are informed how the believers were put together—"Believers were the more added *to the Lord*." Thus, you see, the copyists had, in their ignorance, or in their wilfulness, put the church, in Acts ii. 47, for the church's Lord and true centre stem. If a believer is to be received into fellowship, behold the warrant for that reception in Acts ix. 27.

Again, if evangelists go forth to preach, and are instrumental in saving sinners, mark the true action of the assembly towards that work of theirs in Acts xi. 21-24. Barnabas, beholding the work of God, has no thought of attempting to break it up, because they "follow not with us." No, indeed; quite the contrary. Because he is a good man, he can, amid much failure probably, yet behold the true work of God. And he rejoices at it.

But suppose, when a servant of God has been blest in his work, he yet is called elsewhere to labour, what is he to do with those souls that have believed? Is he to join them to some coterie, to some sect? or is the Lord enough? Acts xiv. 23 furnishes the answer—"They committed them to THE LORD, on whom they had believed." So likewise in Acts xx. 32—"I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace." Spirituality and obedience for themselves is all that seemed to enter the apostle's mind. "JOINING," a favourite word with many now-a-days, Paul does not seem to have contemplated.

The writer of this paper was once asked by an ex-clergyman, quickly after that one's secession, to pray for him as to whom he should "join." He could not

pray such a prayer, there being no Scripture to warrant it. But the result in the case of the individual who made this request was quickly seen. He "joined" a certain party shortly after. Why? His polestar was not Christ alone.

Lastly, I read in Acts xvi. 5, "So were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily." Now I ask the ingenuous reader, Does it strike his mind that these assemblies obtained the permission of some central synod ere they came together corporately *εν εκκλησια*? Does not the word "daily" negative the idea altogether? Does not the verse imply how spontaneous and free was the coming together of the Christians as assemblies? Then, to break bread together, the warrant of the Lord's command was AMPLE. Now-a-days it is not so with some. If you seek to obey Him, and would tremble at the thought of receiving man's permit in order to that obedience, you are "setting up another table," you are "on the wrong ground," &c.

And so some weak-minded ones, fearing these denunciations, but living too far off from where there is one of these authorized tables, never—it is a fact—never break bread at all in a company of two or three or more together. If this is not making void the commandment of God to keep our own tradition, I know not what is. Is not the Lord Jesus enough? Is He dead? Is He not our centre still, our only one?

W. LINCOLN.

A FEW WORDS ON EVIL SPEAKING.

How solemn the word!—"He that loveth not his brother" "is not of God," but "abideth in death." And can we love our brother and speak evil of him? There is, perhaps, no sin into which the Christian is more liable to fall, or of which he takes so little account, as that of evil speaking; and yet by our

blessed Lord "evil thoughts" and "evil speaking" are classed along with "*murders, adulteries, and thefts.*" What a horror, then, should Christians have of this sin!

There are three considerations which should lead to greater watchfulness:

1. "Evil speaking" and "blasphemy" are identical. They are only different translations of the same original word. In common parlance blasphemy is only used of evil speaking in reference to *the Lord*; but it is not so in Scripture. It is there used, in like manner, in reference to *men*. He who speaks evil of his brother wrongfully, is *literally* and *scripturally* guilty of *blasphemy*. He who without a warrant attributes blasphemy to another, is himself a *blasphemer*.

2. Satan is "the accuser of the brethren," and from his so acting, he is called *διάβολος* (*diabolus*), "an accuser, a slanderer" (Parkhurst). To falsely accuse the brethren is, therefore, to be an imitator of Satan, and to act in a "*diabolical*" manner. False accusation is *literally and scripturally* "*diabolical.*"

3. He who sins against his brother, "sins against Christ." (1 Cor. viii. 12.) "Why persecutest thou *me*?" "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these *my brethren*, ye have done it unto *me.*"

Would it not be for Christ's glory, and would it not contribute amazingly to the peace of the Church, were Christians to bear in mind these three short hints?—

1. Never condemn another on hearsay, without having learned what he has to say for himself.

2. Never repeat an evil report, without having ascertained whether it be true, and even then, not without considering whether it would be for "the glory of God."

3. When speaking of others, never make use of a word which you would not utter, were God visibly present.

Sins of ignorance are sins against God, and need the

atoning blood. Amongst men we cannot circulate a libel with impunity. Ignorance is not a valid plea which exonerates from guilt. We should have inquired into facts. So before God. "Evil thoughts" and "evil speaking" are a source of personal defilement. (Matt. xv.) How great, then, must be our defilement if we allow ourselves to speak evil of our brethren: and how needful, if we would cleanse God's house, that we should first purge ourselves! How sad, too, the results. We cannot connect the presence of God with evil. It must hinder communion with Him, and prevent blessing; and, if unconfessed, will it not be found, in the day of Christ, amongst "the things done in the body," which will be to our certain and eternal loss?

SIN;

ITS DOUBLE EFFECT AND ITS DOUBLE REMEDY.

(Continued from page 55.)

WE have seen already what sin is, and what its relation is to the believer. We have now to contemplate its *effects*,—and these are principally twofold—

(i) As affecting his relation to God, and involving guilt.

(ii) As affecting the sinning one, and its consequences on him, involving corruption spiritual, moral, and physical.

These two effects are met by God's double *remedy*—

(1) The cross and death of Christ, which meets the utmost claims of God's holiness.

(2) The life of Christ and the advent of the Holy Ghost, whose indwelling power meets all our need, changing corruption into incorruption and mortality to immortality.

I. THE EFFECT OF SIN AS AFFECTING GOD'S RELATION TO THE SINNER, AND THE REMEDY.

The claims of God against the sinner must always

have precedence of all considerations of sin as affecting the being and condition of the sinner. Man is ever prone to disregard this; and because the human side of sin engrosses all his thoughts, the main question is put so far in the background that sinners, and, alas! but too often believers too, have to be aroused to the contemplation of sin as *against God*, and *His* law, and *His* holiness; and hence the necessity of the execution of His eternal decree—that death and judgment must follow all sin.

The effect of sin in man is threefold: he is *imputatively* a sinner in Adam, as we read in Rom. v. 12–21; he is *generatively* a sinner in his birth, having the seeds of all corruption lying within him—an unclean thing coming out of the unclean; and *actually* a sinner in his life, because indwelling sin has been developing itself into sin in act, in word, and in thought.

God meets this terrible condition of helpless and hopeless sinfulness by a remedy that is as much greater than the disease as the Restorer, the divine Christ, is greater than the sinner, the earth-made Adam. But these conditions of sin need to be pondered over before any adequate conception can be formed of the magnitude and terribleness of the work which the Blessed One accomplished when on the cross He poured out His soul unto death, and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

The work on the cross was a work of substitution, and therefore of imputation. God “made Him sin, who knew no sin; that we might become (*γινωμεθα*) the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Cor. v. 21.) He takes the sinner’s place, fathoms sin’s utmost depth, goes down into its abyss, bears it on the tree, and then cries, as the conqueror of sin, of Satan, and of death, “IT IS FINISHED.”

Christ Jesus measured the infinite holiness of God and measured the infinite demerit of sin, and having adequately measured both, He was able to say, “I

have finished the work thou gavest me to do." He came as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world; and as the Lamb of God He took it away—away not from the world, but from the presence of the world's righteous Judge, from the presence of God. He took it so completely away that the question of sin need no more interfere with the sinner's salvation. God has provided the Lamb, and the Lamb has met all the utmost requirements of God and of His righteousness.

Thus Christ meets the claims of God on account of sin; He has made "reconciliation for iniquity," and brought in an "everlasting righteousness," and this quite irrespective of its reception or of its rejection at the hand of man. The reconciliation is made, and the righteousness is brought in, whether man will hear or whether he will forbear.

This is the gospel. God has set forth Jesus, His propitiatory (His mercy-seat, *ἱλαστηριον**), to declare His righteousness in offering forgiveness to the sinner, and He remains the just God while He justifies the ungodly sinner. (Read carefully Rom. iii. 21-26.)

This has been accomplished, and man's salvation hangs simply on man's believing the witness of God, and accepting as an individual and personal truth God's record of His Son. God provided the Lamb in the incarnation of His Son. God laid Him on the altar, bound by the cords of an eternal love. God accepts the sacrifice, and gives the witness of it in that He raised Him from the dead. God, lastly, presents Him to a sinful world, and says, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

All this God does; and because He has so done He sends salvation's message to lost sinners, and bids those who receive it to cry, "Be ye reconciled to God, for

* This word is used in the Greek version of the Old Testament for the mercy-seat—or atonement-seat, as the word in the Hebrew strictly signifies.

God is reconciled to you." For we read, "God was reconciling the world unto Himself in Christ." (2 Cor. v. 19.) Christ is God's centre, to which He is gathering.

Thus the position of the righteous God toward the sinner is altered, and God's loving lament over dying men is, "Why will ye die?"

This first and all-absorbing aspect of the death of Christ is pointed out in the significant fact, that when the High Priest went in with blood to make reconciliation and atonement, He went in His garments of fine twined linen, pure and white. There was no breast-plate to call Israel to remembrance, no vestments of blue, purple, and scarlet to bring man to remembrance. God was occupied exclusively with the claims of His holiness. God, not man, was the sole consideration then, and the High Priest went in to deal with the requirements of God, so to say, apart from the necessities of man. It was not till all this was done, and God could occupy for another year the mercy-seat, that the High Priest came before God again in His priestly robes as His people's representative, bearing their names on His heart and on His shoulder before their God.

He went in first *for God*. He goes in again *for us*. Oh, if God occupied His right place in our hearts and thoughts we should not go so far astray in our thoughts of the person and work of Christ! Christ first meets *God's* need, and afterwards meets all *our* need. This is God's order; and when it is remembered we shall find order, when otherwise we see confusion, and man's disorder will no longer hinder our vision of the simplicity of God's truth.

Thus far we have contemplated the work of Christ as God's opening of the way for the outflow of His mercy on fallen, guilty man. We have now to consider its inflow into the heart of the individual sinner, and the way in which the efficacy is secured, the substitution effected, and the individual imputation realized.

To God's universal offer God has attached one condition, and that condition is its acceptance by the sinner. This acceptance is faith. Hence it is said that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth* in Him should not perish." And the result of receiving Christ is that he who so receives Him is born again, and becomes the child of God.

There are two *musts* in John iii., God's "must," which is that Christ must be lifted up on the cross, and man's "must," which is, "Ye must be born again." God's love meets the one, and the sinner's faith receives the other. God and the believing sinner meet at the cross of Christ. The sinner there dies with Christ, is buried with Christ, and rises with Christ; for he is quickened together, raised up together, and enthroned together with Christ.

Substitution *for* and union *in* must not be separated in our minds in the death of Christ. We see Him dying under the penalty of sin and the judgment of God, as the sin-offering burnt up *outside the camp*, and here we get substitution. We also see the sacrifice *at the altar*, its blood poured out at the bottom of the altar, and the offering itself going up as incense to God, a symbol of resurrection-life; and here we have by imputation union with Christ in His death and in His resurrection, which once and for ever secures our standing before God. *In Him* we are complete, and *in Him* there is no condemnation.

There is no measure here but the measure of an absolute and perfect Christ, imputed to all who believe. We are not only forgiven, but infinitely more—we are justified from all things; for "he that is dead is freed from sin." (Rom. vi. 7.) He has paid the debt, and has therefore met his obligation.

The first effect of sin, as affecting man's relation to God, is thus met, and met absolutely and for ever, in the death of Christ. This precious truth is illustrated

in the altar and the sacrifices at the Jewish tabernacle. Thus the question of sin in its guiltiness as against God is settled for ever. There are no measures and degrees; all is infinite and full. Less than a whole, Christ would leave the soul incomplete; and the moment Christ is received by faith, He makes the sinner "immediately" and "perfectly" whole. There is no progression, no advance; all is absolute. And as on the cross Jesus cried, "It is finished," so the believer, the moment he believes, can say, "It is finished."

II. THE EFFECT OF SIN AS AFFECTING THE CONDITION OF THE SINNER, AND THE REMEDY.

We have now to consider the second point, and to see what the effect of sin in relation to the condition of the sinner himself is, and what is the remedy appointed by God to meet it. The *standing* of the believer, as soon as he believes, is perfect; but not so his *condition*, and this has also to be met by the power of God. That which has been imputed has still to be communicated or imparted, so that the imputed standing may become an imparted condition of being.

Paul describes the condition of the sinner by three distinct characteristics in Romans v., and these are (1) weakness, (2) wickedness, and (3) enmity.

These are met by regeneration; that is, the divine power and grace, whereby "the divine nature" is communicated to the believer in Christ.

The *weakness*, the feebleness, the helplessness of the natural man is met by the *power of God*; so that he who could do nothing through the impotency of the flesh can say, "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me." The *sinfulness*, the ungodliness of the heart, is met by the *righteousness of God*, communicated by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, as well as imputed in the person of the Son of God; and lastly, the *enmity* and alienation of the heart to

God is overcome by "the *love of God*, shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."

Thus *regeneration* meets the necessities of our fallen condition, as the *atonement* met the need of our fallen position.

This truth is beautifully illustrated in the laver in the tabernacle, which stood between the altar and the "door of the tent." We read in Titus iii. of the laver (better than 'washing;' so Alford) of regeneration, and of the renewing of the Holy Ghost. This explains what the type signifies. It is the place of the communication of the renewing power of the Holy Ghost in the new birth, whereby the believer is created anew, becomes a child of God, and, as begotten of Him, has fulfilled in himself the seven characteristic marks of one who is born of God, as given in the first epistle of John, which are as follows:

- 1st. He doeth righteousness. (ii. 29.)
- 2nd. He lives not in sin. (iii. 9; v. 19.)
- 3rd. He loves. (iv. 7.)
- 4th. He believes in Christ. (v. 1.)
- 5th. He gains the victory over the world. (v. 4.)
- 6th. He keepeth himself. (v. 18.)
- 7th. The wicked one toucheth him not. (v. 18.)

These show the effect of the indwelling of the Spirit, which results from the being baptized by Christ in or with the Holy Ghost. Christ baptizes, and when we baptize in water, we but symbolize what Christ has done; and hence the laver is the place of the "putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ: buried with Him in baptism, wherein we are raised with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who raised Him from the dead." (Col. ii. 11, 12.)

Thus, our condition as sinners, under the power of corruption and death, is "much more abundantly" restored, compared with what it was in Paradise, for earth has been exchanged for heaven, and human innocence

for divine righteousness, and "the Lord from heaven" has taken the place of him who was of the earth earthy.

The question now arises, What is the character of this inworking of the Holy Ghost in its normal condition in the heart and life of the believer?

We have already seen that the effect of the work of Christ towards the believer in Him is as absolute and perfect *now* as it will be hereafter in glory. Is this true in regard to the power of the Holy Ghost over the believer? Unhesitatingly we say, No. It is not the design of God that it should be. It would not have been well for us had it been so.

As God's children, growth is needed, development is called for; and for this growth and development the school needed is that in which the world, the flesh, and the devil are met with. We have often to mourn over the presence of these things; but the enlightened soul will have to thank God for them, even though it may be with many tears.

The Spirit's work is progressive. The command is, "Be ye filled with the Spirit." The vessel needs enlarging every day, and this is the result of all the dealings of God, and of all the discipline through which we are brought. God would ever enlarge His measure towards us, and His word to us is, "Be ye also enlarged."

Hence also it is said, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom (εἰς ᾧ) ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." God "has sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." (2 Cor. i. 22.) As yet He is but an earnest, an earnest of the fulness to be received hereafter. Christ is not given as an earnest of something further to be given, for we possess Christ—I do not say *enjoy* Him—but we *possess* Him as much now as ever. It is not so in the gift of the Holy Ghost. We possess Him in the measure of our capacity, not in the measure of His fulness; but

we possess Christ in the measure of His fulness, and not in the little measure of our capability, and hence we are complete, filled up in Him, and eternity will but reveal what that is.

The spirit has to meet the antagonism of the flesh, as we have already intimated (p. 53); and this antagonism is as needful to the growth of the divine life as are any of the other conditions in which it is found, and he who fails to see it fails to know what *sin* really is. What is *sin* but the world, the flesh, and the devil in their antagonism to God, which for 6,000 years have been allowed to resist God and His truth that in the end it may be seen that truth is mightier than falsehood, and light stronger than darkness?

This has to be learnt in the world's history, and we have to learn it, often weeping amidst our conflict and our temptation; for which, if we have learnt Paul's lesson in 2 Cor. xii., we shall say with him, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities," &c. They have lessons to teach of pride to be humbled, of self-exaltation to be conquered, of unbelief to be cast out, for which the wise in heart will thank God now and evermore.

Some have asked, Is it not the will of God that we should be perfect here? We answer, No.* We are going on unto perfection and growing up into Christ, but cannot be perfect till we see Him as He is.

Herein, then, lies the deeply-important distinction between the work of Christ and the work of the Spirit; or, to speak more exactly, the work of Christ at the altar and the work of Christ at the laver.

The *one* is a progression, and not an attainment; a development, and not a perfection; an earnest, and not a consummation. The *other* is an attainment, and not

* Lest any should refer to 2 Cor. xiii. 9, 11 in refutation of this, we would remind them that the word there used in the Greek is rather "restoration" than perfection. See *καταρτις* and *καταρτιζω* in Greek lexicon.

a progression; a perfection, and not a development; a consummation, and not an earnest. The missing of this distinction has resulted in a vast amount of misinterpretation of Scripture; and the result has been that the sense of the perfectness of Christ's work has been marred by the felt consciousness of the imperfectness of the work of the Holy Spirit—an imperfectness designed of God to teach what we should never have known had it been otherwise. But, thanks be to God, the earnest of the Spirit will give place soon to the full possession; and our place as children, often tossed about, but not necessarily so, will be exchanged for the perfected condition of those who stand before the throne.

Of the many passages of Scripture misapplied in the manner alluded to, we would direct attention to Rom. viii. 2, which is made to signify that the believer is practically made free from the law of sin and death, and therefore has absolute power over sin and death.

The passage teaches no such doctrine. It shows what the law of the Spirit of life did. *It set the believer free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.** On the cross the Son absolutely and completely made free all who believe, and now the Spirit of God is working out this freedom against all the obstacles that the natural heart and the old nature raise against it.

In conclusion, we would again refer to the laver, and observe that while the altar was measured exactly in every particular, the laver had no measurement, implying that the measure in regeneration is the measure of the receptivity of faith, a conditioned measure, and not an absolute one; an earnest, and not a consummation.

* The word is not properly "hath made me free," as if it were the perfect tense; but the aorist, a historic tense, is used, which points back to the cross of Christ, and shows us what took place there.

Truly we may say with Paul, when contemplating sin and unbelief as bringing to light the righteousness and mercy of God, "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." H. G.

A TITLE-PAGE FOR THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

GALATIANS.—Paul having received a special commission from *Jesus Christ* Himself, which enables him to act independently of those who were apostles before him, contends against the teachers of the LAW and circumcision for the GOSPEL of CHRIST (for which he suffers persecution), wherein GRACE outstepping LAW, which can bring neither LIFE, RIGHTEOUSNESS, BLESSING, LIBERTY, nor the SPIRIT, reaches back to the PROMISE which was made 430 years before Abraham, and introduces JEW and GENTILE alike by FAITH to the blessing obtained by the CROSS and DEATH of CHRIST. He exhorts to steadfastness in THE TRUTH, and a WALK in the SPIRIT, as consistent with GRACE, and prompted by LOVE.

G. F. T.

A TITLE-PAGE FOR THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

PHILIPPIANS.—The individual experience of the servant of God; his object in SERVICE and in WALK; his POWER; his MODEL (chap. ii. 5-11); his FELLOWS and FELLOWSHIP in the GOSPEL; his JOY in the Lord, in service, and in the saints; his DEVOTION; his VICTORY by faith over OPPOSITION and SUFFERING; his HOPE and CONTENTMENT.

G. F. T.

BETHANY AND ITS LESSONS.

MARK xi. 1-25; JOHN xi. xii. 8; LUKE xxiv. 50, 51.

God has been pleased to make His truth connect itself with *places* as well as with persons. Abraham, Moses, David, and Paul, are names rich to us all, with priceless instruction; and who can think of Bethel, Jericho, Jordan, or Jerusalem, without getting lessons from them of holiest and deepest meaning?

Guided and encouraged by this way of God in His word, let us trace the Scriptures as to Bethany. Considering them in the order of instruction, rather than of time, let us begin with Mark xi. 1-25.

In these verses we read of three entrances of Jesus from Bethany to Jerusalem, on the first three days of His last passover week, each conveying its own special lesson. The first is from v. 1 to 11, and shows us how full His blessed mind was of the "Scriptures of the prophets," which He was livingly to obey and fulfil. It was His last journey to Jerusalem, and, halting at Bethany, He remembers the Zechariah prophecy (chap. ix. 9), that Zion's king should come to her, "*lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass,*" and sends two of His disciples to a neighbouring village to bring Him one. He knows God will cause them to find such an ass and colt, and will make the owner willing that they should be brought. He is learning God's will from His word, and is loving it and *doing* it, just as on a previous occasion, in Galilee, He knew that Peter would find the tribute money in the fish's mouth.

How precious are the lowly and obedient thoughts, and words, and ways of Jesus! What a blessed object He is for our soul's view, as we see Him thus riding along the village street, over the brow of mount Olivet and down the Kedron valley! Had He wished to

please gay, guilty, religious Jerusalem, He would have entered it with outward earthly pomp. They wanted such a Christ, one that would "come in His own name" (see John v. 43), and such an one they would "receive;" but Jesus could not be this. His mind and heart were too full of the law of His God, which He loved, for Him to forget any of it, or turn aside from any "jot or tittle" of it, because of what obeying it would cost Him; and on He rode into that city which, being "a den of thieves" by its robberies of God (see Mal. iii. 8), was also a nest of murderers, by its hatred of *Him*, God's obedient one.

He entered the city and the temple, and "looked round about upon all things," and at eventide left again for Bethany. The "looking" that day could give Him no rest, it only showed Him the deep need of the work He had come for, and moved Him with compassion (blessed be His name!) to carry it out, as He elsewhere said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." (Luke xii. 50.)

Thus we learn, as our first lesson at Bethany, Jesus as the sinless and *perfectly obedient One* in all His steps and ways. Well may we say, with the dying thief, "This man hath done nothing amiss." And only on this can we rest our confidence in the value of His blessed *death*. The passover lamb was set apart on the tenth day of the month, though not slain till the fourteenth, that all who were about to rest beneath the shelter of its blood might clearly see that it was a lamb without blemish. Hence the value to us of the *life* of Jesus in the gospels, and especially of His last three years and a half of public testimony.

This first lesson prepares us for the second. We get that from v. 12-19.

He had passed the night in the open air; for so the word used in Matt. xxi. 17, and Luke xxi. 37 (*ἀνῆλθοναι*) implies; and who that knows Him can wonder at this,

after the sights of sorrow He had witnessed that day at Jerusalem. He knew the curse of God hung over every transgressor against the Sinai law, and that death was the sentence on all mankind; and this awful reality filled His soul. This curse he knew must be borne for them, for *their* redemption (Gal. iii. 13), and also that "blessing might come on the Gentiles."

Before entering the curse-deserving city this second day, He inflicts the curse on another object in its stead—He curses the fig tree! How mild the action—only on a tree—but how instructive! At Marah, in Exod. xv., a tree had been cut down for that nation, in its early history, to save their natural lives in a desert, and give them water they could drink; but now a deeper truth is taught. The curse must be borne that it may not come on them; and their barren state is depicted in the tree's *barrenness*. (See Hosea x. 1.)

Warranted by the pledge thus given of His own bearing of the curse in the nation's stead, He enters the city and the temple again, not to look round merely, but to serve them for their good. He casts out the buyers and sellers, and checks their wickedness, and quotes Isaiah lvi. 7, His blessed mind being filled with thoughts of the day when the nation, brought under the blessings of His redemption, will have their temple as "a house of prayer for all nations." But they only hate Him for His patient and gracious service to them, and seek how they may "destroy Him;" and He leaves for Bethany again.

Another night in the open air—apparently from Luke xxi. 37—and the same road is trodden the next day from Bethany to Jerusalem. The fig tree is found by the roadside, "dried up from the roots," and Jesus teaches a lesson from it—not of the curse due to the nation as we might have expected He would, but of the sureness of God's word—in order to strengthen the souls of His disciples (see *vv.* 22–25), for He knew they would want such strengthening.

As Himself the bearer of the wrath and curse due to sin, He had fully understood all that lay before Him. In His Jordan baptism, in His *breaking* the loaves and feeding the multitudes with bread, in the bringing up of the "*ransom*" money—the "*didrachma*," or "*half-shekel*"—from the depth of the sea, He had again and again set forth by symbolic actions, as he also had by plain words, His expectation of His death, and His knowledge of what a death it would be. *His* faith was perfect, and therefore His patience also. But we, like His disciples, are, oh, how weak! God's cursing of the fig tree in answer to His words is therefore designed to help our feeble faith.

This fig tree, withered before their eyes, was to teach them that their words would have like power with God when, with nights spent like His in believing prayer (see *v.* 24), they walked in His footsteps of grace and patience (see *v.* 25); that "*mountains*" of difficulty, however great, would be "*removed*" for them, and "*cast into the sea.*" Much more should *our* faith triumph over all obstacles, that would hinder us from walking in the meekness and forgivingness of Christ, since we have before *our* view God's faithfulness in the matter of the curse-bearing *cross of Christ* itself. Should we not say with Paul, "*He surely, (see Greek), that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*" (Rom. viii. 32.)

But we must turn to the Gospel by John for our next Bethany lesson. We get it in the well-known scene of the death, burial, and raising again of Lazarus. (Chaps. xi. xii.) Among the "*all things*" freely given us by our blessed God, in Christ, is even death itself; and as the withering of the fig tree on the Bethany road is a lesson for our faith, as God's living witnesses in a religious but hostile world, so this death-stroke in the Bethany family is a 23rd Psalm lesson for us in our times of sickness and sorrow and death. More

familiar to God's children than most of the Bethany scenes, it need not now be dwelt upon. God's loved ones are in a death-smitten, weeping world, and are exposed to all its woes; but by the help of such a Bethany scene of Jesus' love and Jesus' power as that portrayed in John xi. xii., they go through this "valley of Baca," making it "a well," and rejoicing in "rain that fills the pools." (See Ps. lxxxiv.)

We may also cheer *each other*, and get fellowship with *each other* in this love and these riches of Christ for us, not only in any one house, but also, as in the early church, "*from house to house.*" Simon the leper's house was in Bethany, as well as the much-loved dwelling of Martha and Mary and Lazarus; and by comparing John xii. 1-8 with Matthew xxvi. 6-13, it would appear that it was in Simon's house, and not in their own, that Martha and Mary and Lazarus are found gratefully loving and worshipping the mighty One of Bethany, who had so shown Himself to be "the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls."

This is very precious. Blest by His common care of them, they all alike loved Him. Simon, cleansed probably from his leprosy by Jesus, was now in a state, both of body and soul, to have all the little band at his house. Martha, warned against fretting, no longer murmured at "serving," even in another house. Mary, adding actions to her previous listening at Jesus' feet, filled Simon's house with the fragrance of her ointment. Jesus was the lover of them all; and Lazarus had used his newly-recovered power of walking to link house with house for Christ.

How precious is the *fellowship* of saints, as well as their resurrection joy and triumph, taught us at Bethany.

But there is yet another scene at Bethany. We get it in Luke xxiv. 50.

It is to Bethany that the risen Jesus leads out His disciples; and there it is that, as He is lifting up His

hands to bless them, He is "parted from them, and carried up into heaven." Surely Bethany was of special interest to Him! He had given them His final commands in "the city;" but He preferred to part with His saints, and finally leave for heaven from mount Olivet (see Acts i. 12) and Bethany. As if He would teach us, that the small village "twos and threes" of His flock are as precious to Him, and as little forgotten by Him, as those in towns and crowded cities.

How fitting, too, that the spot of His last nights of sleepless communion with God before His death—the spot also of His latest victory over the power of the grave in the person of His "friend Lazarus"—should be the place of His last footsteps below, and of His joyful ascension! *There* also those mighty hands, which had been clasped there, and on mount Olivet, in such fervent prayer, were last lifted to bless—those hands which had been nailed to the "tree," where He was made a curse for us; of which nailing and curse-bearing they then bore the mark, and, blessed be God, they do so still.

Such, then, is Bethany in the past; but we are guided to it in the *future* by the "sure word of prophecy." It was on "mount Olivet," when they were thus "led out as far as to Bethany," that the angels said (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." And Zechariah (chap. xiv. 4) adds to this, that it is at *that same place* He will first touch the earth again. "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the *mount of Olives*, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south."

Upon mount Olivet Christ will descend to judgment,

and therefore at or near Bethany. But not then with nights of prayer, and "strong crying, and tears," not with 'sin-offering any longer; but He will come as Zion's king, "mighty to save."

The very mount of Olives itself will quake at *His* touch, and be rent apart in apparently four opposite directions at *His* presence, who once in a small garden on the side of it was in an agony, as He anticipated the bearing of our sins on the cross, "and His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood." How natural this linking of the very *locality* of His obedient sorrow with the planting on earth of his reigning power.

Risen saints will then reign with Him over this earth, and mount Olivet and Bethany will then be to Peter, and James, and John, and to Lazarus, and his sisters, as fragrant with the memory of mercies to them here below in their pilgrim days, as Bethel to Jacob, or Bethlehem to David.

H. D.

EXTRACTS.

Num. vii. 13. The silver was of great value, the golden spoon was costly; but the children of Israel did not offer these simply. The silver bowl was filled with flour, the golden spoon with incense. The flour was in itself worth not a penny, nor was the incense worth much more; but these gave the gold and silver their acceptance. Thus our ordinances, the wording of our prayers, the manner and matter of our teaching, the music of our hymns, the regularity of our observances, all may be perfect and highly esteemed in our eyes; but if they be not filled with *Christ* and fragrant with true worship as the outflow of full hearts, they are not acceptable in heaven.

The children of Israel were found in this position:
 EGYPT *behind* them, with the RED SEA *between*;
 CANAAN *before* them in the distance;

THE WILDERNESS all round them,
THEY THEMSELVES *looking up* for the supply of all
their need.

This is a true picture of our proper position.

2 Cor. viii. 2. We here see most wonderfully the triumph of Christianity over circumstances. The utterance seems to overflow with accumulated wealth of words. "The grace of God" gives "abundance" of joy at the very time of their "great trial of affliction," and even in the straits of "deep poverty" their liberality is "rich" and "abundant."

It is the experience in others of Paul's own language—poor, yet making many rich; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing—apparently irreconcilable anomalies.

G. F. T.

"PEACE, BE STILL."

Lord, we do thank Thee that Thy loving hand
Is potent still,
As when the winds and waves heard Thy command—
"Peace, peace, be still."

Oh, when our souls are tossed in sad unrest,
Foreboding ill,
Calm Thou the heaving of each troubled breast
With "Peace, be still!"

Distrusting self, we pray Thee yet again,
Lord, curb our will;
Increase our faith, and cause Thy peace to reign
In each heart still.

Thy word is faithful, and Thy promises
Thou wilt fulfil;
Though storms may rage around, Thy gift of peace
Abideth still.

Amid life's quicksands now, as in the past,
Guide Thou, until
We anchor in Thy haven at the last,
Where all is still.

THE ALMOND-TREE; OR, WATCHFULNESS.

A SPRING-TIME SCRIPTURE STUDY.

IN a paper last month on "Bethany and its Lessons" it was remarked that God graciously for our help links His truth with both places and persons. He also links it with all the variety of creation around us. The heavens, the earth, and all the objects in them, from the greatest to the least, are, by His perfect love and wisdom, enlisted in the service of instructing our souls.

The thirty-sixth Psalm is a beautiful instance of this. The psalmist turns his eyes away from the "transgression of the wicked," so painful to him, and compares the attributes of his God to "*the heavens*," "*the clouds*," "*the great mountains*," "*the great deep*," and speaks of "*the river*" of His pleasures, and of "*the fountain*" of life; and brightens up the landscape which his soul thus gazes on with that crowning word, "In thy *light* shall we see light." It has been well called "The Landscape Psalm"—a landscape which the believing one may enjoy at all seasons of the year, by night as well as by day, and may have it before his soul's view amidst the din of the workshop or in the stillness of the darkened sick-chamber.

The smaller and more quickly changing and fading beauties of God's creation are His lesson-book to us also. We teach our children the verse—

"There's not a little flower that blows,
The daisy, lily, or the rose,
But doth a sermon preach;
Each blade of grass, *each spreading tree*,
Has got a voice for you and me,
And may some lesson teach."

And no Christian would wish to slight Cowper's godly line—

"Teach me,
E'en by the simple sermon of a flower,
To live to Thee."

The *trees* of the Bible are many, and their uses beautiful and rich with meaning. The present spring-time of the year brings to mind the stirring and awakening lessons of the almond-tree.

“Almond-tree” (אֲמֹנִי), says Calmet, “from a root which signifies to *watch*; for, in fact, the almond-tree is one of the first trees that blossom in the spring, and, as it were, *awakes*, while most are asleep by reason of winter. . . . The almond-tree in Judea blossoms in January, and by March has fruit.”

With the thought thus supplied by the meaning of the word itself, let us trace some of its uses in Scripture.

With the exception of a casual mention of “almonds” as part of the “little present” sent by Jacob unknowingly to his own son Joseph in Egypt (Gen. xliii. 11), the first significant use of this tree in Scripture is the pattern which its flowers and swelling fruit supplied for the beautiful and golden “candlestick,” or lampstand, of the tabernacle.

This lampstand was, perhaps, the most elaborately and delicately formed of either of the three vessels that stood in the first holy place of that tabernacle.* Our present object is only with the *pattern* it presented to the eyes of the priests, as they went in daily “accomplishing the service,” and supplied the oil, and trimmed the wicks, of this most useful and beautiful vessel.

Throughout its central stem and all its six branches they saw before them the lesson of the *almond-tree*. (See Exod. xxv. 31–40.) Three times is it repeated in those verses that the bowls of that lamp were to be “*made like unto almonds*.” Surely the pattern thus used taught them the same lesson as the snowdrop and crocus teach us, that the death-sleep of winter was

* For a description of its form, its uses, and its lessons, we may well refer the reader to that excellent work, *The Holy Vessels and Furniture of the Tabernacle*, by H. W. SOLTAU.—YAPP & HAWKINS.

past, and the awakening of spring had come. All the vessels of that sanctuary taught *resurrection* lessons, and this almond pattern of the candlestick taught the same.

The *risen* Lord Jesus, *waked* by God for us from the "deep sleep" of death, reveals, as did that golden lampstand, the richness and beauty of all around. He only is or can be our "light of life" in God's presence. This vessel is, therefore, in this particular a type of *Him*.

Those "bowls like unto almonds" had only been made so by the same "beaten work" (see verse 31) that had fashioned the vessel throughout. Anvil and hammer, with heavy blows, and doubtless the heated furnace also, had shaped it. Heavy work, and skilful too, there must have been, ever to have made such a vessel out of "one beaten work." What blow after blow of the hammer to reduce its thickness to the slender almond-flower stalk, and then to swell it again to the "knops" and to the "bowls" for the oil!

Who is not reminded of Him who was made "perfect (*i.e.* in resurrection) through *sufferings*," that He might be the Captain of our salvation; who by His cross slept for us the sleep of death, that He might be *wakened* for us by God's resurrection power, and be in His presence for us as "the firstborn from the dead" (Col. i. 18), "the firstfruits of them that sleep"? (1/Cor. xv. 20; see Greek.)

But the vessels of the tabernacle were types of *experiences* of our souls, as well as types of things accomplished in Christ—experiences wrought in us by the Spirit, the Spirit of Him who has raised up Jesus from the dead.

And surely the almond pattern in the lampstand was meant to bring about and to maintain soul-stirring and *wakenings* of thought and heart in Aaron and his sons of good things that were to come, and to guard them against death-like sleep and dulness. Every time they fed and trimmed the lamps they necessarily

looked upon the almond pattern of the lampstand, and every thought it suggested would warn them against "sleeping as do others." Priests were "night-servants" (see Psalm cxxxiv.), and it is in service by night that we most need helps to keeping awake.

In a former paper in this publication* it was shown from Psalm cxxxiv. that service "by night" was to be aided in the Israel of God by the fellowship of saints together. But we also learn that the same watchfulness for night service was to be aided both by the work of lamp-trimming to be done in the sanctuary, and by the sight of the almond pattern of the vessel before them.

Oh, the constant mindfulness of God of the state of the soul of His servants! Jacob, we are told (Gen. xxx. 37), skilfully "piled the rods," and put them *before the eyes* of the flocks, that what they *saw* might take effect on them, and thus bring him earthly gain, and it succeeded; but when God graciously puts objects of instruction before our eyes, how slow we are! He bids us "*consider* the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, JESUS;" but earthliness, with its lusts or its cares, too soon dims our eyes, and we pass our days in spiritual dulness.

Let us turn next to Numbers xvii., and the teaching of the almond-tree comes again in connection with the priests and their sanctuary work.

Israel had rebelled in chapter xvi., and the princes of the congregation had denied God's right to choose who should approach to Him. They boastingly said, "All the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them;" and terribly did God show that He was among them by consuming the rebels with fire from His own sanctuary.

And now God will show whom He *does* choose, and who *are* His priests. The twelve rods, one for each tribe, are placed before the ark; and in a single night

* See "Fellowship of Saints."—*Golden Lamp*, Sept., 1873.

the rod for the tribe of Levi, marked with Aaron's name, buds and blossoms, and yields almonds: a wondrous work of God's own doing surely!

The first and greatest lesson is obvious. When Moses brings them out to the congregation in the morning, eleven of the dead sticks were dead sticks still; but one was a living and fruit-bearing bough! What a dividing between the living and the dead! and what an answer to the murmurings of the people! They were but as dry sticks—even the best of them, the princes, mere “brands” for the burning; but God's sovereign grace had made one, as it were, to pass “from death unto life.” Not for any merit or goodness in the name of “Aaron” that was on that stick, more than in the names that were on the other sticks; for the name of Aaron might remind of his guilt and weakness in making the golden calf (Exod. xxxii.); but it reminded also of the *sin-offering*, by which he had been made a “priest to God” at the first (Lev. viii.), and *because* of this twofold mercy—God having chosen him, and his having approached by God's own way of the sin-offering—*he* and *his house* are represented by a living bough among the dead sticks.

This is a solemn and needed lesson for the days we are living in of religious pretensions and blasphemy!

But it was “*almonds*” the stick bore; not grapes, not figs, but almonds. Any other fruit would have taught the lesson of *life* as opposed to *death*; but when Aaron and his sons saw their name on an *almond* bough, it took back their thoughts to their *sanctuary* work, and to the lessons so constantly taught them by the almond pattern of the lampstand. It as much as said to them, ‘Keep bright the lamp of your testimony before ME, and be you as a family and “a household of faith,” *wakeful* and *watchful* for the good things to come.’

Thus while the miracle declared them to be the blessed ones whom God had chosen, and had caused to approach to Him (Psalm lxxv. 4) as against all adver-

saries, it also most speakingly exhorted them to think and act worthily of their calling, and be as night servants who must not slumber, but be *watching* for the morning.

And so with us. We are exhorted (Heb. xiii.) to go "outside the camp" unto Jesus, "bearing His reproach" as those who have no continuing city here, but who "seek the one that is to come."

The Israel camp of old refused to learn the humbling lessons of its "day of atonement" set before it in Lev. xvi., and so fell into the blasphemy and awful punishment of Numbers xvi.

And man's religion in our day may make itself not merely a "camp," but build itself a "city," as Cain did after his vain worship; and "their inward thought may be, that their houses shall continue for ever." (Psalm xlix.) But as they have never "afflicted their souls" under a sense of sin, nor valued the blood of atonement, or the scapegoat of God's providing, so are they surely hastening on to a day of religious pride and blasphemy worse than that of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and which will end in a doom more terrible than theirs. "Woe unto them!" says Jude, "for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core."

Nothing, alas! will stay, or even check, man in his guilty, downward progress. Men around us are as the two thousand swine on the Galilean mountain side, who when possessed by the demons "ran violently" downward to the abyss, and perished. The name of Jesus and the word of God is made to minister in our days to man's music and his sensuality. But it remains God's word still, and He will terribly vindicate it ere long, and the insulted name of Jesus also.

The almond-pattern lampstand, which had been too little understood and valued by Israel, is taken from them at last by Nebuchadnezzar, with all the other

vessels; and impious Belshazzar brings it out to adorn the walls of his godless banquet-hall, while he and his thousand lords drink wine from the other sacred vessels.

But the "Watcher and the Holy One" who had dealt leniently with his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, and had watched over him for good, was still true to the character which the almond pattern of that pure lampstand implied, and was "watching" the impious grandson for his doom. The heavenly "Man," by whom we worship in the sanctuary, who is our light and our incense-altar there, is also the Son of man to whom all judgment is committed, and will be as "watchful" to bring down God's wrath upon the impenitent at the day "appointed" (see Acts xvii. 31) as He now is, blessed be His name! to present the feeblest worship of His saints. As the risen *Man*, He is our ever living and ever watchful High Priest; and it was the "fingers of a *man's* hand" that wrote Belshazzar's doom upon the wall of his palace, and *he was made to read it in the light of the lamps of God's own lampstand!*

Such is the doom of the ungodly, and such is the guilty infatuation that leads man on to it!

What need, then, that *we* who are Christ's *own* should *watch* and pray, and should be diligent in using spiritually that knowledge of Jesus' name and of God's word which men around us are religiously yet sensually abusing to their own eternal ruin!

"Being of the favoured number
Whom the Saviour calls His own,
It is not meet that we should slumber,
Nothing should be left undone;
This should be His people's aim,
Still to glorify His name."

But the almond-tree occurs in the visions of the prophets of Israel, as well as in the sanctuary work of Israel's priests. In Jeremiah i. 11, 12, we find the

waking, and as it were *watching* earliness of the almond referred to. No sooner had Jeremiah seen "the rod of an almond-tree" in his vision, than the Lord says to him, "Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten (or "I am watching over") my word to perform it," or more literally, "I will *almond* my word to perform it," the word rendered hasten, or watching, being the Hebrew word for almond. What an awakening and cheering assurance to Jeremiah!

Nor is it only at this outset of Jeremiah's prophecies that it occurs. It is used as the assurance of God's watchfulness over His prophetic word, whichever it be, mercy or judgment. The same Hebrew word occurs in chapter v. 6, where God's judgments shall "*watch over* their cities" as a fierce leopard for their punishment. Yet not for ever, as though He had "cast away His people whom He foreknew;" for when Jeremiah awaked from his refreshing sleep in chapter xxxi. 26, it was to hear Jehovah say, "Like as I have watched over (almond-ed) them, to pluck up, and to break down; . . . so will I watch over (almond) them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord."

This was a blessed assurance for Jeremiah concerning the nation in the time of their scattering, and for us also in our day, as we mourn over their still deepening darkness and almost Antichrist state of hardness and spiritual desolation. We have before our eyes how God's almond watchfulness has been and is being fulfilled against them for their punishment; but amidst it all He is waiting "that He may be gracious" to them, and will ere long equally be as the almond to them for their national blessing.

Dark days may have to intervene, and will: Jeremiah saw this in his time. In chapter xliv. 27, God once more uses the significant "almond" word. He is speaking of all Judah that fled to Egypt, and made its Gentile fleshpots their refuge and their choice, and He says of them, "Behold, I will watch over (almond)

them for evil, and not for good, until there be an end of them." "Yet," says verse 28, "a small number . . . shall return out of the land of Egypt into the land of Judah;" a little remnant, whom God's almond-watchfulness shall "build and plant" in that land according to chapter xxxi. 28, already quoted, and shall fulfil to them the blessings of the new covenant there promised.

All this will God do to them for *His* dear sake, who once as the lonely almond blossom in this evil world said (Psalm cii. 7): "*I watch*" (it is the same word "almond" in Hebrew), "and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop;" but in whom God so delighted, that He not only said (v. 27), "Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end," but also promised Him (v. 28), "The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee."

Thus the almond passages from the prophets, like those from the vessels of the sanctuary, teach lessons both of mercy and of judgment.

There are other places in Scripture where this significant almond word is used, but these are enough to convey to us much awakening and cheering instruction.

H. D.

THE FATHER'S EYE.

"Thou hast heard my voice: hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry."
LAM. iii. 56.

It is most difficult at times for the child of God to realize the truth that a Father's eye is watching over him, and that *his* individual care is *especially* regarded by the great and glorious One who inhabiteth eternity, and who directs the concerns of the universe. Satan knows well how to ply his temptations, and to urge upon the tried and suffering believer that it is presumption in him to suppose that *his* aching head or sorrowing heart, can call forth the particular care or sympathy of Jehovah Himself.

If we permit our minds to dwell upon what takes place among men, and attempt to compare spiritual things with natural, we shall have just cause to fear lest our petty cares and trials should be overlooked by God. We know it is so among men, and that he who directs the destinies of empires and the affairs of kingdoms, has neither inclination, nor ability, to give his attention to the every-day concerns, of each of the persons composing the vast multitude, who inhabit those empires or kingdoms.

God, however, has assured us in His holy word that it is not so with Him; and He has been pleased to bring together in a very remarkable manner in that word the vastness of His power and the individuality of His care. As an instance of this, read Psalm cxlvii., especially the third and fourth verses—"He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Here is His particular, especial care for a poor sufferer, unknown, it may be, and unheeded of his fellow-men; and then observe what follows: "He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names." Here is the vastness of His power.

Many similar passages might be brought forward; but leaving these for private search and meditation, I would draw attention to a fact in the natural world which has struck me as being illustrative of the subject before us. The sun in the heavens enlightens the whole world; his bright beams cheer and illumine every quarter of the globe, and diffuse light and fertility all around; but while extending over continents and oceans, he does not neglect the poorest cottage or the humblest home. Not a chink or a cranny is unvisited by his beams; and if it be but a few inches in the casement left open, while all the rest is stuffed with rags, the sun's bright beams instantly search out the opening, and send brightness and warmth within. Nay, if it be but a crack in the shutter or the key-

hole of the door, the tiny ray will shine in and make itself known.

Just so the Sun of righteousness, while shedding forth life and joy over a ruined world, deigns to dwell also with him that is of a humble and contrite spirit, and cheers and supports such a one, as if His beams were for him alone. "There is *nothing* hid from the heat thereof," is wonderfully true of the glorious luminary whose "going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it;" and it is spiritually true of Him who says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee." "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

T. H. H.

SALVATION'S THREEFOLD CORD, AND OUR THREEFOLD BOAST.

Thoughts on ROM. v. 1-11.

ALMOST all our misapprehensions and misconceptions in truth arise from a one-sided regard to one particular aspect of it. In nothing is this more perceptible than in our thoughts regarding the relation between *the work of Christ*, which faith immediately realises, and *the work of the Spirit*, which is gradually developed, from measure to measure, from grace to grace, from glory to glory. To illustrate this relation, around which, as a mighty paradox, hang so many apparently discordant and yet most blessedly harmonized truths, we would draw attention to the fifth of Romans, and may the simplicity of God's truth not be marred by our want of simplicity in the presentation of it.

The unity of thought in these verses has been broken by the same Greek word (*καυχασμαι*) being rendered by three different words in the places where it occurs. In verse 2 it is rendered "rejoice;" in verse 3, "glory;"

and in verse 11, "joy." In all these places, and elsewhere generally, we would use the word *boast** as conveying a more distinctive meaning.

The chapter begins with the results of faith to the believer in Christ Jesus; viz., *justification* before God, *peace* with God, and *access* to God; all of which are the *immediate* results of faith. By faith also we are brought into the grace of God, and out of it we can at all times draw; for out of Christ's fulness have all we received grace upon grace; grace flowing on as wave upon wave from the sea of God's infinite love.

The first two verses have to do with our standing in Christ, as the apostle writes, "in which we stand" (*ἑστῆκαμεν*); that is, wherein we have stood, and do always stand; for we are herein pointed back to the cross, and onward to the glory; our standing being in grace from first to last.

The result of this is that we have three successive causes of boasting; and we say *successive*, because there is a divine order in the relative position they occupy, which we must not lose sight of. We will now take them up in the order in which they are laid before us:

I. The pathway of faith "*through our Lord Jesus Christ,*" whereby a sinner is able at once to make his boast "in hope of the glory of God." (v. 2.) There are no steps here, there are no measures; all is absolute, and all is perfect. From the horrible pit and the miry clay he is at once put on the Rock, and sings the new song that has been put into his mouth by his God, as we read in Ps. xl. 1-3, and are taught in Hannah's song when she sings, "He raiseth the poor out of the

* It is so rendered frequently: see Rom. ii. 17, 23; 2 Cor. vii. 14; ix. 2; x. 8, 13, 15, 16, &c.; and it might be thus translated in other passages, such as 1 Cor. i. 29, 31; 2 Cor. xii. 1, 5, 6, 9, 11; Gal. vi. 13, 14, where it is rendered "glory," and thereby confounded with *δοξα* and its derivatives; words of very different significance.

dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dung-hill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory."

There is but one step from the dust to the throne; from the dust into which sin and Satan brought us to the throne up to which God has taken all who believe in Christ. This is God's first lesson—a complete and perfect salvation, wrought out for all who are "in Christ Jesus," with whom they have been *quicken*ed, *raised up*, and *made to sit* in heavenly places. (Eph. ii. 5, 6.) It is that one step that seals for eternity, a step out of Adam, out of self, out of the flesh into Christ, the last Adam, the quickening Spirit; and therefore it places the Christian, by virtue of the divine union subsisting between him and his glorified Head, in heavenly places in Christ.

Thus, then, can the weakest believer make his boast in Christ, in hope of the glory of God; a hope that hangs not on himself for its fulfilment and realization, but on Christ, in whom it is fulfilled already; for he who believes is *saved already*,* even as he who rejects Christ is *condemned already*, "because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John iii. 18.)

This, then, is faith's starting-point. He who believes is justified, and therefore forgiven; he is saved, and therefore has peace; he has access to God, and is called to stand firm in the grace by which he has been brought nigh. All this he has *already*, irrespective of personal feelings and individual experiences.

II. We have now to trace the pathway of faith *by the Holy Ghost*, and His mighty power inworking in

* In Eph. ii. 5, 8, as elsewhere, it is the *perfect* tense (*σῳσμενοι*) which is used regarding those who believe; and this tells of a salvation which was accomplished on the cross, and which is brought down to the present moment—we have been saved, are so still, and ever will be.

all who believe. Living faith works, and real faith has its experiences. That which has been given to us in Christ as an inheritance that never fails, has to be brought out in the believer as a personal realization.

This is the subject of verses 3, 4, and 5, in which we find steps and stages that rise higher and higher, showing a progressive development of the divine life. This process is the very opposite of that which we have been contemplating as the first subject of boasting of those who, like the little children in John's epistle, rejoice in the knowledge of the forgiveness of sin, and therein see clearly their pathway to the glory secured in Christ.

The verses are as follows: "And not only so, but we boast in *tribulations* also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

The boasting here is the result of the indwelling of the Spirit of God, in whom we have been baptised into one body, and who is now working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. The steps in the pathway of faith here given are four: tribulation, patience, experience, and hope, thus ending where the former pathway ended; but how different the course! It is this difference that we desire to mark so as to help some who, failing to see it, are apt wrongly to estimate their position, by either setting aside the fact of the finished work of Christ for them, or by forgetting the progressive attainment realized by the inworking of the Holy Ghost.

The result of the former is to shake the believer's hold on the "It is finished" of the Son of God; and the result of the latter is either practical Antinomianism or a delusive belief in an immediate attainment, without the steps necessary and appointed for its realization. This is the king's highway of consecration, the royal

road along which all have walked who have become truly set apart for God. This was the path Joseph trod, and in which Job, Moses, David, Daniel, and Paul, walked. There is no exception; there can be none; and this was the pathway of the Son of God Himself, who learned obedience by the things that He suffered, wherein He, the spotless One, has left us sinners an example that we should tread in His steps.

We notice in verse 3 that tribulations are boasted in and gloried over, not because of what they are in themselves, being not joyous but grievous, but because they work out patience or endurance. The tried one learns to endure; but tribulation implies a process of sorrow and of suffering to which there is attached an "afterward," when the "peaceable fruits of righteousness" are realized by them who are exercised thereby. (Heb. xii. 11.) The gold is put into the crucible again and again, before it comes forth meet for the refiner's use. The wine has to be emptied from vessel to vessel, before it becomes fit for the master's service.

These tribulations meet us in all variety of ways, from the world, from the flesh, and from the devil; but however they come, faith can glory, and take up the language of Paul when there was given unto him "a thorn in the flesh," "the messenger of Satan," to buffet him. He felt the needs-be of the thorn; he knew the danger he was in; he was content with the mighty promise given, "My grace is sufficient for thee;" and he was able to say, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory (or boast) in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Thus Paul realized in his own experience what he wrote to the Romans, and tribulation wrought endurance under the all-sufficiency of the promise that attaches to our whole life—"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." He who in 2 Cor. xii. could boast in visions and revelations, had boasted before in chapter xi. of sufferings and perils, of watchings and fastings,

that came on him in the path of endurance as a vessel consecrated to the service of his Lord.

Thus endurance or patience is not fruitless; it works out *experience* or proof; a twofold experience, first of God, and then of ourselves.

The trials of the way when borne in patience lead to an acquaintance with God, that were otherwise impossible. "Acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace," expressed a needed counsel to tried Job; for as ignorance of God is the secret of all our failings, so acquaintance with Him is the secret of all our peace and rest.

But tribulations lead likewise to an acquaintance with our own hearts, not necessarily at all by failings or outward breakings down, but by that acquaintance with self and with the inworkings of a sinful nature that needs ever to be kept down and brought into forcible subjection, at the cost of pain and suffering to him who would so run as to obtain, and so strive as to win the incorruptible crown. These are dark and bitter experiences, the agonies of mortal conflict, that made the life of those worthies of Scripture a battle and a victory. Our experience should be of victory and not of defeat, albeit a victory attained in a war both costly and bloody, wherein many a cherished thing, near and dear as a right hand, a right eye, or a right foot, has to be cut off and cast away.

If the gate is strait by which we enter, the path is narrow along which we have to walk; as one of old, in giving his experience of the path, says, "In all things commending ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in affliction, in necessities, in distresses, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, in (*εἰ* as before) pureness, in knowledge, in longsuffering, in kindness, in the Holy Ghost, in love unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God."

These were the conditions and the elements *in* which

his path was trod, and he further adds the means by which the path was maintained—"By the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report"—all equally the means of commending the blessed man of God as His servant. The apostle sums all up with those paradoxes that to faith are so intelligible, and which yet are so difficult to reconcile in the experience of Christians, leading some to deny one side of the paradox and some to deny the other: "As deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

Such were the experiences of him whose life was a real consecration to God; but it was not a short and easy path, and all he could say four years later was, "Not as though I had *already* attained." In Christ he was complete already, but in himself he was not yet complete, for he was *not* "*already* perfected," nor would he be till he had put off the body of death.

But again, Are these experiences fruitless? Far otherwise; they work out *hope*. They bring the experienced soul to a hope realized in his own conviction. That which came to him *in Christ*, in all the fulness of a salvation that was "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that which is within the veil" (Heb. vi. 19), now comes as the result of the love of God, having been and still being day by day "shed abroad"* or poured forth in the heart by means of the Holy Ghost, who is given unto us.

The reference to the Holy Spirit here deserves special notice, and contrasts remarkably with the words, "by our Lord Jesus Christ," in verse 1. As we have already

* Observe *εκκεχυται*, the perfect tense, pointing to the abiding power and presence of the Spirit.

noticed, this cause of our boasting has to do with the work and the power of the Spirit, leading all who have come to Christ for salvation to the working out* of the same salvation in themselves, and thus what was imputed in Christ is now imparted by the Holy Ghost in the new nature and in the new life that flows out of it, as in Rom. vi. 4.

In the cross we see the infinite love of God, forgiving us all our sins, justifying us in Christ, and making us heirs of His glory; but in the Spirit sent down by the risen Saviour we have the witness of a present love, the seal of a present anointing, whereby the sweet fragrance of Christ is effected in us, an earnest of that ultimate conformity to the image of Christ which is the personal destiny and hope of every child of God.

The Spirit is the earnest of an as yet uncommunicable glory; the liberty of the glory of the children of God; and although we have "the first fruit" of it, we groan still, for we are saved by hope; that is (in the aspect under contemplation by the apostle), our salvation is a matter of hope, and therefore in the future; for what a man sees and possesses he does not hope for. (Rom. viii. 21-24.)

III. We have lastly to notice the third ground of the believer's boasting, and that is, GOD HIMSELF. This we find in verse 11, where we read, "And not only so, but we also boast in God by our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." (See margin.)

This is the highest attainment of the child of God; he has learned to know God; and this will be the joy to be known fully hereafter only, when God will be revealed to our delighted sight, not as a stranger, but as the God who called and chose us in Christ, and who

* Observe *κατεργάζεται* in Rom. v. 3, and in Phil. ii. 12.

by His Spirit walked with us, carrying us, watching over us, and making Himself known to us every step of our way. What we need is to be found in the condition to get this present revelation. That condition is *obedience*. "If any man love me," says the Lord, "he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him."

It is to this point that all the pathway through which we are being led is tending, and into which an ungrieved Spirit will ever lead the obedient, waiting soul. The Spirit never leaves; but the Spirit can only lead our spirits into the conscious fellowship of the Father and of the Son when we are walking in the light as He is in the light: then have we fellowship one with another; and John says, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." This is our proper fellowship, and let us make its realization a possibility by walking in the light.

We cannot now further dwell on this glorious theme, but let us seek to abide in this path wherein faith's songs can be sung with holy exultation, and we can say, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

These three sources of boasting and of triumphant joy to the child of God form that threefold cord of covenant grace and glory in our triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that secure to God and to us the ultimate fulfilment of all that has been promised, sealed to us by Christ in the blood and in the Spirit. May we not miss in our conceptions of truth any one of the strands of this divine cord of saving grace, or we shall mar its beauty and dim the bright light of God's truth upon our own souls.

H. G.

THE CHURCH: HER CALLING, AND CONSEQUENT POSITION AND OFFICE.

IN ancient time it pleased God to form a nation apart from the nations, and to establish it in greatness and honour. That nation, however, abiding not in righteousness, fell under judgment. It has passed then, for a season, aside; and God has turned unto us “sinners of the Gentiles.”

Beloved brethren, fellow-heirs of the kingdom! God has contradistinguished us from that nation by peculiar designations—by a special destination or *calling unto*, and a special election or *calling out of*—by a personal description-roll and a particular directory—by a remarkable appointment and allotment—and by certain appropriate revelations and promises.

Is it indeed so? Did God so honour Israel of old as to separate them from the peoples, and to set Himself as a wall of fire round about them and the glory in the midst of them; and has God now exalted a *gathering out* of the Gentiles unto an honour and a glory contradistinguishing them from Israel?—has God indeed so set us in *contradistinction* and *contrasted position*? Blessed then we if we recognize this appointment, and walk worthily of the gracious intent of it! Let us accordingly, and with very collected and solemnized spirit, consider certain of the Scriptures declaring it: and let us begin by contemplating

THE CHURCH'S DESIGNATIONS

by which we are characterized.

“Regenerate or re-born men—new-born babes—new creatures in Christ—children of the resurrection—spiritual men—sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty—children of the light, of the day, of the truth, of the true God—imitators of God—household of God—church of the living God—partakers of the divine holiness and

of the divine nature—holy brotherhood, partakers of the heavenly calling—habitation of God through the Spirit—members of Christ, the body of Christ, the bride of Christ—one spirit with the Lord Christ—living epistles of Christ—bearers of and reflectors of the image and the glory of Christ—heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ—heirs of the glory to be revealed—citizens of heaven—kings and priests unto God the Father—spiritual house, or temple of the Holy Ghost—the light of the world—the salt of the earth—the city set upon a hill.”

Prepared by designations so significant and indicative, let us contemplate

OUR DESTINATION.

God hath called us unto His kingdom and glory. God hath made us partakers of the heavenly calling. God hath chosen us and called us unto the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. God hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children to Himself; hath given us an inheritance in Christ; and hath sealed us with that Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance. God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places:—He hath *quickened us*; hath *raised us up*; and hath *made us sit in heavenly places*, together with Christ.

We are of the household of God, and our citizenship is in heaven. The Father hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. We are elect (at present or whilst on earth) *unto obedience*, and begotten (through resurrection) *unto a living hope*—*unto an inheritance reserved in heaven*: we are kept unto a salvation *to be revealed in the last time*: and in *that* we rejoice, although *now* we are in heaviness through manifold trials.

We bear love to all the saints on account of the *hope which is laid up for us in heaven*. We seek a city to come, and are receivers of a kingdom which cannot be

moved: and we stand in that faith in which all the elders died, not having received the promises, but desiring a better country, even a *heavenly*. Our DESTINATION then or *calling unto* is HEAVEN.

OUR CALLING.

But read further. Christ gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world. We are not of the world, but Christ hath chosen us out of the world. Love not the world, neither the things of the world. We are sons of God, but unknown by the world, and unmanifested—waiting for the manifestation of Christ: and, being sons, we groan in this present creation, waiting for the adoption, *i.e.* our resurrection out of it. By Christ the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world. Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world. We are not to look at things which are seen, but at things not seen. We are strangers and pilgrims upon the earth: we have here no continuing city: let us go forth, therefore, without the camp, bearing the reproach of Jesus. We are here foreigners and sojourners, children of *the promise*, rejoicers *in hope*, walkers *by faith*, lookers for and waiters for *the glory to come*. Our ELECTION then is a *calling out of and away* from EARTH.

OUR DESCRIPTION AND DIRECTORY.

Read further. Saints—elect or called saints! Elect of God through sanctification of the Spirit! Chosen generation! Royal priesthood! Holy nation! Peculiar people! People of God! Living stones!—built up a SPIRITUAL HOUSE to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable unto God!

Because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. We are not servants, but sons, and thus heirs of God through Christ. We are saints or separated ones unto God, and risen ones with Christ: *therefore* we are to

set our affections on things above, not on things of the earth. We *have died*, and our life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ our life shall appear, then shall we appear with Him in glory: *therefore* we are to mortify our members which are upon the earth. We are sons of God, living upon the hope of being like unto Christ when Christ shall appear: *therefore* we are to purify ourselves. We have put off the old man, and have put on the new man: *therefore* we are to put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing and forgiving one another in love.

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual; for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against wicked spirits. Our loins are to be girded about and our lights to be burning, and we ourselves are to be like unto men that wait for their Lord. It is not to be *among us* as among the nations: *we* are not to exercise lordship or authority; but *among us* he that will be great must be a servant. We may not avenge ourselves. We are to recompense to no man evil for evil; but are to overcome evil by good. We are to be patient in tribulation and instant in prayer. Forasmuch as Christ has suffered in the flesh, we are to arm ourselves with the same mind.

We are not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. We are not to be yoked together with unbelievers, for *we* are the temple of the living God: *wherefore* we are to come out from among them and be separate. They that are Christ's have crucified (set upon the cross) the flesh with its affections and lusts. We may not be partakers with the children of disobedience; but are to walk as children of the light, and to hold no fellowship with the works of darkness.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, the merciful, the persecuted for righteousness' sake. Suppress anger and all passion and lust in the

very heart: swear not at all: resist not evil: give to every one that asketh: love and bless and pray for all that hate and curse and despitefully use you: for *your* righteousness and *your* love is to excel that of *men*; and *ye* are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Lay not up treasures upon earth, and take no thought for what ye shall eat or drink or put on; after all these things do *the nations* seek. "HE THAT SAITH HE ABIDETH IN HIM OUGHT HIMSELF TO WALK EVEN AS HE WALKED." This is our DESCRIPTION and our DIRECTORY—the lineaments and features of our character, and the laws and principles of our walk and life and being.

OUR PRESENT PORTION AND OUR EXPECTATION.

Read further. All that is in the world is not of the Father. The world passeth away, and the lust thereof. The fashion of this world passeth away. Life on earth is even as a vapour. As the grass withereth, and as the grace of the fashion of it perisheth, so shall the rich man fade and pass away; for all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of life. Endure therefore hardness as good soldiers. The whole world lieth in the wicked one. Because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you. The world knoweth you not, because it knew Him not. If the world hate you, it before hated Christ Jesus; and if it persecuted Him, it will also persecute you. Whoso killeth you will think that he doeth God a service. As then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him born after the Spirit, so it is now.

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me: for whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath, and hateth not even his own life,

he cannot be my disciple. Blessed are ye when men shall revile and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. When the bridegroom is taken from them, then shall the children of the bridechamber fast and mourn. For the present ye shall weep and lament and be sorrowful, but the world shall rejoice. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me, peace. Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad with exceeding joy. Now ye are in heaviness through manifold trials; but rejoice in the salvation ready to be revealed. Ye are appointed unto afflictions, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. Ye must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God.

May ye be strengthened with all might—*unto all longsuffering and patience*: and may God strengthen, stablish, settle you—*after ye have suffered*. Beloved! for manfully running the race, for fighting the good fight, and for keeping the faith, there is laid up for you a CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS: for hearty, diligent, and self-denying labour in the church, a CROWN OF GLORY: for enduring temptation, and for faithfulness unto death, a CROWN OF LIFE. These passages both show the character of earth and earthly men, and declare our present ALLOTMENT and PORTION: they express the EXPECTATIONS we are to entertain from it and them, and exhibit the nature and the aspect of the promises made to us.

FURTHER PROMISES.

Read yet further. God sent forth His Son to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons. I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. God hath predestinated us to be con-

formed unto the image of His Son. We are the workmanship of God created in Christ Jesus unto good works. We have fellowship with the Father and with the Son. Our old man is crucified that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Our light affliction worketh out for us an exceeding weight of glory. We are to count it all joy when we fall into trials, for the trial of our faith worketh patience. The trial of our faith is in order to its being found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus. God purgeth the branches which bear fruit, that they may bear more fruit. God chastens us to make us partakers of His holiness.

We are to love our enemies and persecutors, that we may be the children of our Father which is in heaven. In being reproached for the name of Christ, happy are we: for thus the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon us. God condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. God hath made us dead to the law, that we should be married to another, even to Christ raised: that we should bring forth fruit, and that we should not serve in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit. These open out the mind of our God and Father respecting us, and afford the *reason* of His wondrous precepts and directions unto us.

Beloved! These Scriptures might be doubled and quadrupled, and yet further multiplied. They are *not* as the Scriptures addressed to the Jews. They are *not*, manifestly *not*, addressed to men in the flesh or Adam-nature: and if they be so received and read, they are then not vital, not practical, not intelligible. They demand the concentrated attention, and the most energetic acting of our minds and soul. Render this, brethren, and we shall discover

THAT WE DIFFER FROM THAT ANCIENT NATION: that we differ from it—

1st. In our CALLING; for that is, not unto earthly greatness and honour, but into heaven.

2nd. In our ALLOTMENT UPON EARTH; for that is, not pleasure and enjoyment and ease, but tribulation.

3rd. In our RELATION UNTO GOD; for that is, not of subjects and servants, but of children.

4th. In our RELATION TO THE WORLD; for that is, not of membership as a fellow polity or people, but of strangers and sojourners and foreigners.

5th. In the SPIRIT OF OUR AFFECTIONS AND MIND, AND IN THE PRINCIPLE OF OUR ACTING AND BEARING; for that is, not the seeking and desiring, however moderately and temperately, of present possessions, and not the maintaining and defending, however calmly, mildly, and legally, of property or of personal dignity or immunity, but weanedness, mortifiedness, submissiveness, non-resistance of evil and hearty forgiveness of the evil-doer, together with calm and patient expectancy of things yet to come.

6th. In the ESTIMATE WE ARE TO FORM OF EARTH, AND THE EXPECTATIONS WE ARE TO HOLD FROM IT; for that is, not as of a thing of which God does now give the good, in reward and in token of favour, but as of a "desert land, and a waste howling wilderness."

7th. In our APPREHENSION AND REGARD OF THE PROMISES; for these are, not of long life, victory over enemies, grandeur, riches, &c., but of spiritual blessings in heavenly places—*i.e.* not of present reward, but of present *support* and *solace*.

We DIFFER THEN FROM THAT ANCIENT NATION, not in measure, manner, or in certain particulars and respects, but totally and absolutely: we stand against it in OPPOSITION AND CONTRAST.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

“DRAW ME, WE WILL RUN AFTER THEE.”

It pleased the Father that in Christ should all fulness dwell. All our springs are in Him. He is our fountain, from whence we receive all. We need to be led into more real communion with our beloved Lord to learn what He is in Himself, that we may be constrained to cleave to Him with full purpose of heart.

In proportion as we enjoy this real communion with Him, we shall go on from strength to strength, saying, “I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath dealt bountifully with me.” We should go on all the way to heaven, singing to His glorious name, and making His praise glorious. This is crowning Him as our Saviour. In so doing, we glorify Him; for whoso offereth praise doth glorify Him.

The more we praise Christ Jesus, the more cause He will give us for so doing. He will shine more and more upon us; He will shine more and more within us; and thus He will fulfil His promise in us, and unto us: “The path of the just is as a shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

Every fresh shine from Him creates a new heaven in our hearts. Every fresh discovery He makes of Himself to us conveys to our minds fresh conceptions of His glory. And every fresh view and interview with Him so far exceeds the former that we are able to say with a dear saint who has long since passed away, “I find my Christ a new Christ every day.” He is truly such to all His beloved ones, who are not only alive to Him, but are breathing, and following after Him.

Such is His beauty, such is His fulness, that He will satisfy every spiritual faculty and desire for ever and ever. Oh, may our souls even now be so entranced and satisfied with Him, that nothing may have any power to attract or draw us from Him!

CHRISTIANITY: THE NEW WINE AND THE NEW BOTTLE.

How profound the answers given by the Lord to all the questions that were propounded to Him! To do as those have done who belonged to another dispensation has been the rock on which Christianity in the hands of man has made shipwreck.

The disciples of John and of the Pharisees had a common basis—they belonged to the old order; but John's disciples had lost sight of the main feature of their teacher's instruction. He especially set forth the winding-up of the old dispensation of law as administered to man in the flesh (*i.e.* unconverted man), and the coming in of a dispensation whereof the characteristic features were to be *Spirit* and *fire*, representing a new principle of life that necessitated a new form also.

These disciples had their legal *fastings* and their *made prayers*, all belonging to ordinances and to a ritual that were to pass away, like shadows before the rising sun. In Christ's answer to the question put to Him upon this point, He enunciates a principle of such deep importance that it may be well to contemplate it for a little; for perhaps there is no principle we are more prone to forget.

As the children of the bridechamber, the disciples of Christ have passed out of all that which connected them with the old, and have entered into a new relationship to Christ as the new Man, the last Adam, in whom all things have become new. To prove His assertion, that there can be no amalgamation between the old and the new, the Lord uses two parables, the one of the old and new garment, and the other of the old and new bottle; but as the truth we seek to dwell upon is perhaps more fully brought out in the latter parable, we will confine our attention to it.

We read in Luke v. 37-39 as follows :

“No man putteth new wine into old bottles;* else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new : for he saith, The old is better.”

Christ had come to wind up the *old* as the last of the Adam family, meeting its condemnation and its death in His own body on the tree, that in resurrection He might bring life and immortality to light, and become the *new* Head of a *new* and redeemed family, to whom by faith all who believe are united. Of this headship the baptism with the Holy Ghost was the proof and the realization, which under the figure of the new wine is here brought to our notice.

The characteristics of these two opposing principles are continually alluded to in the word of God. That which belongs to our condition as under the first Adam, on the side of the natural life, is placed in contrast with that which belongs to our condition in the last Adam, the second Man, on the side of the spiritual life. These contrasts need to be prayerfully studied; for much that belongs to the one is taken up as belonging to the other; and hence the confusion that arises in many minds, and that heterogeneous amalgamation of new and old, of spirit and flesh, of inward and outward, of substance and shadow, that has made Christianity a Babel of confused opinions and of incongruous doctrines which really neutralize one another, to God's dishonour and Satan's triumph.

Truly our Lord remarks, that no man puts the new wine into the old bottles in natural things; but “the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light,” and therefore the world's wisdom in its own concerns is to be a model to us in

* The bottles were made of skin, which was liable to crack as they got old.

those infinitely higher and holier things which belong to us as sons of God in a world of moral darkness and death.

There are two distinct spheres of spiritual life to which we desire to draw attention, in both of which we are in danger of the great folly and the greater sin of attempting in our self-will to force the spirit of the new into the outward form of the old. Thereby we make what must necessarily prove an unsuccessful attempt to blend what God has separated, and, shall we say, to wed at the same time the old husband of the past dispensation and the new husband, the Risen One? To do this is to commit spiritual adultery; for until the old husband is dead we have no right to the new, and the old will surely avenge himself on us for our infidelity. Is not this the history of many a sorrowing Christian's life?

The two spheres are the *personal* and the *ecclesiastical*. They are both of deep importance, if we would know in them the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

If we have found Christ on the cross at the Passover, let us now seek to find Christ in His glory at the Pentecost, when the new wine, under the symbol of the rushing mighty wind and the tongues of fire, shook the place where the disciples were assembled, and filled each and rested on each, making the aggregate of power the result of the individual power of each.

First, then, as to the *personal* sphere.

Here the question to be answered is, What is the new bottle that is necessary to hold the new wine? This question our Lord answers to Nicodemus when He propounds to him the startling truth: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." What a terrible come-down for "the ruler of the Jews" — "the teacher of Israel!" (ὁ διδασκαλος του Ισραηλ). Was *he* to come down to the nothingness of the unborn child, and be born again? Was all his position of no

avail? Was all his learning nothing? Was all his age and experience a thing of nought?

To such questions, as they arose in the mind of the honest but proud man, Christ had but one answer: "All goes for nothing; you must begin all over again; or rather, God must begin all over again with you. You must be born again." Yes, God must make a new thing altogether. A new creation has to be commenced, in which we are as helpless as was chaos, death, and darkness at the creation to work itself into beauty, life, and light.

Paul tells the backsliding Galatians, that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." And he adds, "To as many as walk according to this rule," that is, the rule of the new life, "peace be on them, and on the Israel of God."

This new thing, this new creation in Christ Jesus, is the new man created by the Holy Ghost, into which, as into a new bottle, God pours the new wine of the Spirit, which manifests itself in the new life of him who has been raised out of death and judgment in fellowship with Christ his Head. Like the priest of old, he has his ear, his hand, and his foot touched with the blood of the altar and with the holy anointing oil, the symbols of death and of life. He hears the voice of God, and obeys as one crucified and risen; he does the service of his God, and walks through the world of sin and through the courts of heaven as one who has learned the mystery of death and life at the grave of his Lord and Master. Henceforth earth is home no more; the parentage is heavenly, and the home is in heaven. The cross of Christ has made him a pilgrim and stranger where he was once at home, and a foreigner where he was once a citizen.

The result of this new life received, as seen in John iii., is that we advance from that to John iv., and there the secret of our communion with God is unfolded.

The eternal life is not only an indwelling reality in the new birth, but is also in him who is born again "a fountain (πηγη) of water springing up unto everlasting life." It springs up to the source whence it came. It can stop short of nothing but God, and therefore possesses a power of continued progress heavenward and Godward. Thus the eternal life in the believer is continually springing up unto the eternal life which is in God.

But while John iv. teaches us our communion with God, we have yet to go a step further; and John vii. shows what the communicating grace of God in the believer is, so that "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Here the figure is not rising up to God, but flowing forth for God, so that the believer becomes the channel of blessing to all around—a channel along which the heavenly streams of divine grace and plenty may flow to meet the need of a sorrowing church and a sin-sick world.

This opens up a little of what the new bottle is appointed for, even to be a vessel to contain the new wine that is to gladden the heart of God and man. We are told, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." It is no wonder if Pentecostal power makes the church seem drunk or mad. So seemed the apostles drunk to Jerusalem sinners; and so did Paul seem mad when in earnestness of language and power of words he spoke for Christ before the worldly-minded Felix. So was it with the Lord Himself. He was so terribly in earnest that His friends thought Him mad, and said, "He is beside Himself." (Mark iii. 21.) May God so fill us all with His Spirit, that if we are beside ourselves it may be indeed for God.

In the second place, let us consider what this parable teaches *ecclesiastically*—what it unfolds of our church relationship. While we regard our personal relation to God as fundamental, we are not to forget that God

is not gathering units to heaven, but a "holy nation," an aggregate of all the saved units in a "joint heirship" (*συγκληρονομα*), "a joint body" (*συσσωμα*), and as "joint partakers of the promises" (*συμμετοχα*). (Read Eph. iii. 6; iv. 4; and v. 27.)

Now, as the new life in the individual believer needs a new embodiment for its reception, its manifestation, and its ministry, wherein the members of the body, hands, eyes, feet, &c., are yielded up to the power of the new life and new spirit, so does the collective life of the collective body, which embraces all Christians, need a new organization for its healthful development.

This new organization, "the church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of the truth" (1 Tim. iii. 15), is *heavenly* in its character, *spiritual* in its construction, and *divine* in its appointments and constitution; and the moment the heavenly becomes earthly, the spiritual natural, and the divine human, the church of the living God, as such, no longer exists. There may be living stones, but the living building is wanting.

Primarily we have to contemplate the church as the general assembly and church of the firstborn ones written in heaven. The church can only exist in its entirety where Christ is; and as He is in heaven, the church can only be fully manifested there; for where the Head is, there is the body; and where the foundation is in the heavenly "mount Zion," there is built the temple of God and the holy city of the saints. (Heb. xii. 22.)

We can look to the future with unfeigned thankfulness; for we know that God's loving promises will be fulfilled. We can look back, and from the grave of Jesus see arise with Him, in the purpose of God, all His believing people, and say, "We are raised up together with Him." The past is realized to our faith, and we thank God; the future is presented to our hope, and we rejoice with exceeding joy. But the

reality of the *present* often crosses the mind as a terrible nightmare, that seems to belie the purpose of God, and to frustrate our hopes for the future.

Now, it is to this present condition of the Church of God, as seen on earth, that we would direct our thoughts, and seek to ascertain how the realities of the future are to be manifested here. Or, to return to our Lord's parable, what is the new bottle that is to contain the church life and church power of this new thing that God has created as "a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"? (1 Peter ii. 5.)

As individuals we are saved, each one by one; but the moment we are saved we are baptized in the Holy Ghost into one body, and this involves corporate responsibilities. How are these to be fulfilled, so that the new wine may be preserved, a blessing to the world outside, a power to the church herself, and a joy to God, the acceptable sacrifice collectively offered?

To this Paul gives an answer in 1 Cor. xii. xiii. xiv. The first of these chapters shows the *fellowship* of the body; the second, the *bond of love* as the secret of the harmony of the body; and the third shows us how *the ministry* of the body is to be carried on. The apostle is speaking to the church in Corinth, and sets before them, and before every assembly now that claims to be a church of Christ, the model of the heavenly body—the one body into which all are baptized; "for as the body (*i.e.* the human body) is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body are one body; so also is Christ." The whole body is Christ, of which the Lord is Head; for God has prepared a body for Christ, and "God has set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him." (Chap. xiv. 12, 18.)

Paul presents the church in the heavenlies, the Bride of Christ, the temple of God, as the model after which each church is to develop itself. It should grow

and be compacted together, not by a self-willed imitation of anything else, whether gathered from the Jew or the Greek; but by a collective growing up into Christ it should become in its measure a perfect representation of what the Church of God eventually will be.

The lineaments of the Church of Christ are brought before us under a vast variety of figures in the Bible: didactically and prophetically in the New Testament; typically and illustratively in the Old Testament. Our assemblies, be they large or small, should be in the measure of each what the great whole will be. The very failings and weaknesses of the present teach us lessons of untold value, and the want of harmony and unity makes all saints feel more acutely than anything else could how beautiful is that unity which really exists, and will soon be manifested.

Man's folly has been that, instead of taking for his guide God's model of the heavenly body, or His pattern given to us in the apostolic churches of the Acts and Epistles, he has gone to the Jewish history, the Jewish ritual, the Jewish temple, and the Jewish priesthood, and borrowed fragments of the old bottle, out of which to construct a vessel to contain the new wine. The result is that, whenever the spirit of life and power comes in, the vessel is rent, or, to prevent it rending, the wine is mixed with water, and stagnation and death follows.

Indeed, in much of the church organization of the day there is such a complete going back to the old, in principle and in practice, such undisguised return to Old Testament forms, and such jubilant rejoicings at the harmony produced, that truly it has come to be only old wine in old bottles; albeit the name of Christ and not of Moses is attached to it; and all goes on quietly and peaceably. The old wine is not spilled, and the old bottle is not broken; but it is forgotten that the quiet is that of the tomb, and the sleep is that of death.

Well do the Romanists say, "The Bible is a dangerous book;" for it is light, and discerns between light and darkness, and separates between soul and spirit, *i.e.* between the natural and the spiritual. The word of God is "living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing," "dividing asunder," and is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Before it "all is manifest;" for it is the word of Him "before whom all things are naked and open," and "with Him is our account" (*προς ὃν ἡμῶν ὁ λογος*). Let us ponder over these verses (Heb. iv. 11-13); for it is with Him we have to do, and with no other; and let us give diligence lest any fall after Israel's example of disobedience.

There are many who are not Romanists who fear to bring their ecclesiastical position to the test of the Word, and think it a matter of little importance, if only they are saved. There is, however, more of God's honour, and more of His dishonour, hanging on our church life and church fellowships than many are at all aware of.

In conclusion, we would just notice our Lord's closing words: "No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new; for he saith, The old is better."*

Hence arises God's difficulty with us; all our journey through the taste is ever going back to the old, and He who said "straightway," or "immediately," knew full well the tendencies of our hearts. Yet is He very pitiful, and of tender mercy, and is ever sounding in our ears, "O taste and see that the Lord is good!" Yes, the new is after all infinitely better than the old.

It was said of Moab, "Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath

* Some read, "No man having drunk old wine desires new; for he says the old is good (enough)." In either case the meaning is not materially altered.

not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed." Many an emptying is needed, ere we have the taste changed, so as to say in all the spheres of our Christian experience, "The new is better."

May we learn that "the new wine" is indeed better, and by the daily renewings of the Holy Ghost may the bottle be kept new to hold the wine, and the new wine of the kingdom be ever poured into it from above, so that in our personal fellowship with God, and in our church relationships to Him and to one another, we may be able to manifest the glorious truth, that if new wine be put into new bottles, *both* are preserved, and thereby God's purpose in us is fulfilled.

The ramifications of these principles are deep and wide, but we leave the subject for the present, and may God in His infinite grace give wisdom to all His people amidst the specious forms of error abounding on all sides. Let us remember that these varied forms of error and corruption are all old, though arrayed in a new garb to meet the tastes of the day and the tendencies of this age, and that God has furnished us with abundant warnings of them in His word.

We append a few of the contrasts of which we have been writing for the help of the careful reader, who can add to this list almost indefinitely from the written word.

CONTRASTS.

The old bottle and old garment.	The new bottle and new garment.
The old wine.	The new wine.
Jerusalem worship.	Worship in Spirit and in truth.
A worldly sanctuary.	Heaven itself.
The old covenant.	The new covenant.
The shadow.	The substance.
The earthly priesthood.	The heavenly and Melchisedek priesthood.
Ishmael and Hagar.	Isaac and Sarah.
Sinai.	Mount Zion.

Jerusalem below in bondage.	New Jerusalem, city of the free.
The assembly at the foot of the mount, who had to stand afar off, and could not endure what was commanded.	The general assembly and church of the firstborn ones written in heaven, who draw near to God, and delight in the law of God.
Moses the lawgiver, who trembled.	Jesus the Mediator, whose blood speaks peace.
The flesh and the letter.	The Spirit and the life.
Divine service performed.	Spiritual worship rendered.
Far off.	Brought nigh.

H. G.

THE PRECIOUSNESS OF CHRIST.

Remarks on 1 PET. ii. 7.

BY THE LATE S. W. G.

It is not man as God created him, but man as sin destroyed him, whose condition throws light on the preciousness of Christ. Well, indeed, was that Just One suited to be the Judge of man. Our sin might have been left in all the hideous forms of corruption and perdition to illustrate the fulness of God's everlasting judgment; but in unspeakable goodness He ordained that thereby Christ should become a key to unlock the treasures of His mercy; an interpreter to explain the wonders of His revelation; a lamp to shine on the suitableness of His grace; and a scale to weigh its worth.

It was man as a reasonable, moral, immortal being,—"who was lost," that the Son of God "came to seek and to save." It is the manifold ruin of man, unfolding to our sight such a variety of wretchedness, which causes Him of whom this verse speaks to be more "precious" to the believer than all things else; which constrains him to join with St. Paul in counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, and makes him willing to suffer the loss of all things that he may win Christ.

To man as *an intelligence in ruins* Christ is the Light of life, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

To man as *a moral being*, in a state of defilement and malediction, Christ is the power of holiness and blessing; He is the staff of his weakness, the guide of his blindness, the comfort in all his trouble, the riches in all his poverty, the robe of glory to hide away all his reproach; and in all the estrangement from God of his fallen spirit, Jesus is the bond of his reconciliation, the way of his return, the maker of his peace, the holy place of his fellowship with God.

To man as *an immortal being*, dead in trespasses, Jesus is the renewal of spiritual life, the restoration of the image of God by virtue of His resurrection, and by the operation of His grace changing within the soul of man an eternity of living death into an immortality of redeemed life, and turning the hell of a most wretched fellowship with Satan into the paradise of a most blessed communion with God.

In a word, there is not a faculty in fallen man that the Son of God does not turn into a mine of the purest gold, adapted to receive His image. He is the Wisdom of God to his mind, the Peace of God to his conscience, the Love of God to his heart, the Kingdom of God to his will; He is the forgiveness of God to his penitence, the check of God to his passions, the promise of God to his hope, the calm of God to his fears, the pity of God to his frailty, the pattern of God to his manners, the voice of God to his ears, the pledge of God to his faith, the beauty of God to his sight, the pleasure of God to his joy. He is the health and incorruption of God in reserve for his body, and the everlasting presence of God to his soul.

THE DAY OF THE CRUCIFIXION.

THE testimony of the three first evangelists is very clear and decisive as to the day of the week on which the crucifixion took place; the fourth presents some questions which I shall consider.

MATTHEW says that on "the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?" (Matt. xxvi. 17.) On comparison with the institution of the feast (Exod. xiv. 18), we find that this was the fourteenth day of Nisan, when the paschal lamb must be killed between the two evenings; that is between three and six o'clock. The disciples made ready the passover, "*as Jesus had appointed them;*" and "when the even was come, He sat down with the twelve" (Matt. xxvi. 19, 20), and as Himself the true Paschal Lamb, gave them to feed upon the very substance of the passover; for He "took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body." (Matt. xxvi. 26.)

It must be remembered, in connection with this His sacrifice, that "a very great multitude" of Israel (Matt. xxi. 8) had, though unconsciously to themselves, accepted Him on the tenth day of Nisan as at once their King, "just and having salvation" (just and saving He! See Zech. ix. 9, Heb.), and as the One who by the blood of His covenant would send forth the prisoners out of the pit wherein was no water. They cried, "Hosannah!" (that is to say, Save now!) according to Ps. cxviii. 25: "Save *now*, I beseech thee, O Jehovah: O Jehovah, I beseech thee, send now prosperity." (It is not possible to translate with the force of the original, and with the emphatic "*Just now*" of the entreaty.)

But all this could not *then* be, since there was *no*

welcome to Him from the leaders of the people, who should have said, as in the following verse: "Blessed be He that cometh in the name of Jehovah: we have blessed you *out of the house of Jehovah.*" The chief priests and scribes definitely rejected Him (Matt. xxi. 15, 16); the fig tree was cursed (vv. 19, 20); their house was left unto them desolate (xxiii. 38); and the Christ declared unto them, "Ye shall not see me henceforth, *TILL ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Jehovah.*"*

The Paschal Lamb chosen and sealed by the Father (but rejected by the whole congregation of Israel as misled by their rulers) must be slain between the declining and the setting sun, and the mystery of redemption by the blood of the covenant must be wrought out. This great transaction was accomplished on the fifteenth of Nisan. It was on the day of "*preparation,*" as is inferred by Matthew (xxvii. 62) and expressly stated by the others.

The testimony of MARK is most emphatic that on the first day of unleavened bread, when *according to the ordinary ritual* "they killed the passover," the disciples said to the Lord, "Where wilt thou that we go and *prepare* that thou mayest eat the passover?" (xiv. 12.) He is equally to be cited as a witness that the crucifixion was on the day of "*preparation*" (but surely not the same day); and as it drew near the evening of that day (xv. 42, 43), Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus, in order that it might be decently interred before the sabbath hours should prevent any work being done. The remaining portion of that day counts thus as one day in the tomb, the sabbath being another, and the resurrection-day the third.

* The next first day of the week was the opening of the eternal day; it was the *Lord's* day. We can scarcely be wrong in quoting in its connection the heavenly welcome, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the *King of glory* shall come in."

LUKE's account is exactly the same. He says (xxii. 7): "Then came the day of unleavened bread, *when the passover must be killed*" (viz., fourteenth Nisan). Then follows his account of the remaining transactions in the same order as the other evangelists—the passover; then the day of the crucifixion, concerning which he tells us "that day was *the preparation*, and the *sabbath* drew on." The next day was the sabbath, with its accustomed rest, and immediately following, the resurrection, the first day of a new week, or rather the eighth day, the commencement of a state of things beyond this present seven days' experience. On that day Jesus rose again from the dead, and for the first time as a risen Man conversed with His disciples. Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself, causing their hearts to *burn within them* while He talked with them by the way. The walk to Emmaus presents a striking contrast to that scene in Eden when the voice of the Lord was heard walking in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Jehovah-Elohim among the trees of the garden, because (as guilty ones) their hearts *fainted within them*. (Gen. iii. 8.)

I now come to the gospel of JOHN, and here I find the most striking accord with the other evangelists in the statement that the day of crucifixion was the "*preparation*," which circumstance he mentions three several times in chapter xix. (vv. 13, 31, 42.)

It remains, then, that we should fully understand what the meaning of the word *παρασκευή* in reference to the customs of the Jews is, and the whole question is settled. The harmonious statement of the evangelists (*all four*) will be seen to be that our Lord eat the passover with His disciples at the same time as the rest of the nation (indeed it is obvious that He could not do it otherwise), that He was crucified on the next

day, which was the Preparation, and that His body was consigned to the tomb before sundown on that day; rested there through the Jewish Sabbath, and that He rose "early the first day of the week." (Mark xvi. 9.)

What then is the meaning of the apostle when he says that "they (the Jews) went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled; *but that they might eat the passover*"? (John xviii. 28.)

I reply distinctly that the meaning of the passage is wholly different from that which a careless reader would derive from it. But let us examine this supposition from the point of view of those who would say "the passover" can only have one meaning.

In the first place, then, it is clear that the supposed defilement would be contracted early in the morning (*ἤνυ δὲ πρωία*) of the day of preparation—the day, according to Jewish reckoning, having begun after sunset the preceding evening; and the defilement would last till the sun was down again, according to the law, "And when the sun is down, he shall be clean, *and afterwards eat holy things.*" (Lev. xxii. 7; Deut. xxiii. 11.)

The uncleanness might then have been removed by washing in water, and by the expiration of the "evening-morning day;" and they might have eaten the passover at their leisure in the following night, had this been otherwise possible.

In the next place, the supposed eating of the passover could not have taken place, since that ensuing twenty-four hours, beginning at sunset, was the Sabbath.

Lastly, we read in John xiii. 29 that whilst eating *the passover* Judas went out, and some of the disciples thought that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against *the feast* (*i.e.* the Hagigah).

In order to present this more clearly before the mind of the reader, I will endeavour to tabulate that eventful week as follows:

YEAR OF THE CRUCIFIXION. A.D. 29.

In the Consulship of the two Gemini. See authorities, 1st and 2nd Century.

At the end of VII.+LXII. hebdomads of years (Dan. ix. 25), beginning with the commandment to restore and build again Jerusalem, in the month Nisan, in the XX. year of Artaxerxes. See Nehemiah ii. For date of this year, see modern researches.

NISAN, the Passover month. <i>See Ex. xii.</i> Evening or 6 p.m.*	MARCH. Mid- night.*	Week.	Days.	Days of un- leavened bread.	Jesus comes to Bethany VI. days before the Passover.	REMARKS.
8		6	Friday		1	
9		7	Saturday		2	
10		1	Sunday		3	{ Supper at Bethany after sundown.†
11		2	Monday		4	Christ enters Jerusalem.
12		3	Tuesday		5	The fig-tree cursed.
13		4	Wednes.		6	
14	17th, Moon full. ○	5	Thursd'y	1		{ The lamb <i>must be slain</i> be- tween 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.‡ Christ eats the Passover with His disciples between 6 p.m. and midnight.
15		6	Friday	2		{ The Crucifixion.** Christ laid in the tomb be- fore 6 p.m.††
16		7	Saturday	3		Sabbath.
17		1	Lord's Day	4		Resurrection.‡‡
18		2	Monday	5		
19		3	Tuesday	6		
20		4	Wednes.	7		
21						

NOTES.

* The Jewish days beginning at sunset are marked thus

Those commencing at midnight, thus

† "It was their sabbath-day at night when He had this supper, a time that they used to have extraordinary cheer."—*Lightfoot's Works*, iii. 129.

"Nisan 9, the sabbath, six days before the passover, Jesus sups with Lazarus at the going out of the sabbath, when according to the custom of that country their suppers were more liberal [*lautiores*].—See *Maimon. Schabb*, cap. 29; xii. 359.

‡ τῆ πρώτῃ ἡμέρᾳ τῶν ἀζύμων, ὅτε τὸ πάσχα ἔθουον. (Mark xiv. 12.)

ἐν ᾗ ἔδει θύεσθαι τὸ πάσχα. (Luke xxii. 7.)

The above expressions distinctly prove "the first day of unleavened bread" to have been the XIV Nisan. It is not so clear when the days ended. The customary observance seems rather traditional than scriptural; for "at the coming in of this [*Wednesday*] night the whole nation apply themselves to put away all leaven."

"The Jews, to meet with this command that was so exceeding strict, and to make sure to provide for its observance soon enough, did on the XIV. day, while yet there was some light, make search for leaven by the light of a candle. Thus is the tradition in which, by 'the light of the XIV. day,' their glossaries tell us we must understand the XIII. day at even when it began to be duskish and candle-lighting. No one might eat leaven after noon on the XIV. day of Nisan."—*Lightfoot's Works*, ix. 132, &c.

** This day was the παρασκευή, that is the προσάββατον. (Mark xv. 42.)

†† ὀψίλας γενομένης, 'the latter part of the day.'—See *Lex*. (Mark xv. 42.)

‡‡ Ὀψὲ δὲ σαββάτων, τῆ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ εἰς μίαν σαββάτων. (Matt. xxviii. 1.)

διαγενομένου τοῦ σαββάτου . . . λίαν πρωτῶ. (Mark xvi. 1, 2.)

Τῆ μιᾶ τῶν σαββάτων, ὄρθρου βαθέος. (Luke xxiv. 1.)

Τῆ μιᾶ τῶν σαββάτων . . . πρωτῶ, σκοτίας ἔτι ὄσης. (John xx. 1.)

But what then, after all, was it that the Jews meant by "eating the passover" in the text above quoted?

I reply, Not to eat the paschal lamb, but to eat the appointed sacrifices of the feast, which were held to be solemnly obligatory on the Jews. By the words,

“Ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord,” it was held that they were commanded to bring peace-offerings, and these peace-offerings being mainly restored to the offerer were to be eaten with rejoicing, from whence arose the term *Hagigah*, implying the festive character of the celebration.

There were also burnt sacrifices to be offered, called by a term implying the *appearance* of the worshippers before the Lord; but these might be offered on any day of the feast. Not so the *Hagigah*, which was tied to the first day of the feast (Lightfoot, *Hor. Heb. &c.*, vol. xi. p. 444), so that the Jewish rulers could not, according to their tradition, have eaten the *Hagigah* *after sundown* on that preparation day.

The Scriptural authority for this was found by the Jews in Deut. xvi. 2, where it is said, “Thou shalt sacrifice the *passover* to the Lord, of thy flocks and of thy herds.” ‘Of thy flocks;’ this, indeed, by virtue of that precept, Exodus xii. 3; but what have we to do with herds? ‘Of thy herds,’ says Rabbi Solomon, for the *Hagigah*. And Aben Ezra saith, ‘Of thy flocks,’ according to the duty of the *passover*; ‘of thy herds,’ for the peace-offerings, and produceth 2 Chron. xxx. 24; xxxv. 8. The Targum of Jonathan writes: “Ye shall kill the *passover* before the Lord your God, between the evenings, and your sheep and oxen on the *MORROW*, *in that very day, in joy of the feast.*”

“So that John said nothing strange to the ears of Jews when he said, ‘They went not into the judgment-hall lest they might be polluted, but that they might eat the *passover*,’ pointing with his finger to the *Hagigah*, and not to the lamb eaten indeed the day before.” (*Id.* p. 448.)

It would have seemed difficult to understand the eagerness of the Jewish rulers to eat the paschal lamb, which presented the bitter herbs mingled along with it; but the peace-offerings were a joyous feast which they would most unwillingly have foregone; moreover, for

this feast the preparation of a good conscience was held by no means necessary. At all events, the sinful woman in Proverbs says, "I have peace-offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows." (Prov. vii. 14.)

There were different preparation days in the Jewish service—the preparation of Pentecost, the preparation of the feast of tabernacles, and the preparation of the passover—that is the day and manner of preparing food for the following mirth of the feast. (Lightfoot.)

I think, then, that little more need to be said to show the meaning of the word; but it does not seem to have been noticed that our blessed Lord, by giving Himself for us, provided all the material for the joy of that gospel feast, which marks, indeed, the gospel days of unleavened bread. That was the grand *preparation* day. "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast (margin, *holy day*), not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Cor. v. 8.)

JOHN ELIOT HOWARD.

THE CHURCH: HER CALLING, AND CONSEQUENT POSITION AND OFFICE.

(Continued from page 111.)

BELoved BRETHREN,—Our designation, "PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING," is not a light designation. It is great and lofty, of immense significance, of intense interest, and of strong and holy influence. Most calculated is it to arouse and fix your attention, and most worthy is it to obtain your intentest study; for it pours a very flood of light upon the darkest and most astounding principles of our heavenly Master's law. Your attention to it and your intent study of it is earnestly pressed upon you; for through the Church's very criminal overlooking of it, or accommodating explanation of it, the grossest ignorance and the most

grievous misconception of her present position and relations has prevailed, and incalculable loss of spiritual power and spiritual blessedness has been sustained. Contemplating then this illustrious DESIGNATION, let us take up and bring to the light of it certain of our dear Master's "hard" and "astonishing" sayings. But first suffer a word of admonition.

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL CONTRASTED.

The law came by Moses, but by Jesus Christ came GRACE. It is good to be established, not with meats, but with grace. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Meat commendeth us not unto God. Observance of days commendeth us not. Bodily exercise profiteth not. Obedience in the letter serveth not. And the spirit which we have received is not of bondage or of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Let us then for a moment consider "The ministration of death written and engraven upon stones;" and let us note the absolute contrast betwixt it and "The ministration of the Spirit."

The LAW is addressed to man's *old* nature; the GOSPEL to man's *new* nature. The LAW respects a nature prone, both in doing and in omitting, to *disobedience*; the GOSPEL respects a nature inclined to *obedience*. The law accordingly is a system of commands and prohibitions, "Thou shalt, Thou shalt not;" having for its sanction or enforcement, "Good if thou obey, Evil if thou disobey;" whereas the GOSPEL is a body of exhibitions or displays of God—of declarations of God's doings for us, and of God's gifts and promises to us—of revelations of God's mind and will—of great facts, and of principles and truths—of LIFE and MOTIVE and POWER. Its language therefore is, not "Thou shalt, thou shalt not," but "Thus and thus is Christ or God thy Father, thus and thus is His manifested mind;" and its sanction or

enforcement is—Nothing; for to a nature and a will allowing and inclining with the will of God, not law and its sanction, not command and its enforcement, are appropriate, but simply and singly declaration of that will.*

The LAW speaks to *servants* or *subjects*; the GOSPEL speaks to *sons*. Of the first, therefore, the brief but full description is, "Do and live;" of the second, "Since you live, do."

The LAW as it universally opposes, so necessarily irritates and exasperates our *old* nature—it manifests and confirms DEATH, the moral death which is man's nature derived from Adam; whilst the GOSPEL, as it universally accords with and approves itself unto, so is, with like necessity, the aliment for the growth and maturation and consummate development of our *new* nature—it manifests and perfects LIFE, the spiritual life which is man's nature hidden or inherent in Christ. Let us then, beloved, *obey*, and let us *do* the sayings of our Master; but, oh, let us obey and do in the liberty and life of our new and spiritual nature!

Thus admonished and cautioned, we may proceed to examine, in the light of the heavenly calling, Luke vi. 31: "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

Of this precept the one unvaried and universally allowed explanation is, "As ye think it *just* and *reasonable* that men should do unto you, so do ye unto them." Now could the true and plain and glaring meaning of it have possibly been missed and lost but through darkness and carnal deadness as to "The heavenly calling"? Dear brethren, the Lord is not enjoining

* It is not forgotten that in the gospel *reward is promised according to the work*. True; but here the promise of reward, as well as the requirement of work, presupposes LIFE—is addressed to the affections and intelligence of QUICKENED SUBJECTS, opened therefore to a pure stimulus, and susceptible of a holy excitement.

something *just* and *reasonable*—even love to them which love you, good to them which do good to you, lending to them of whom ye hope to receive: He is enjoining love, and doing of good, and lending—to *enemies, to the unthankful, and to the evil*—*i.e.* something *unreasonable, something beyond and above justice, something more than others.*

Next view in this light Luke xii. 33: "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves treasure in the heavens." Of this direction it is said that it must be understood as confined to the apostolic times. Certainly, if only the Christians of those times were comprehended under the designation "Little flock, inheritors of the kingdom," and were concerned in the injunction and admonition to wait and watch for it—if only *those* Christians were privileged to forego present enjoyments and pleasures, and to stand expectant of future glory—if only *those* Christians were required to repress and mortify the lustings of the eye, and of the flesh, and of the proud and honour-seeking mind, and to make themselves and keep themselves poor, low, unentangled with the affairs of life, unencumbered with the weights of the world, and girded and wakeful and watchful for the return of their Lord. Beloved! Here again it is only the knowledge of the "heavenly calling" that gives us the Lord's mind; but, oh, how glowingly does *this* give it!

Next view Matt. xviii. 21, 22: "Then said Peter, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith, I say unto thee, not until seven times, but until seventy times seven." Now what one commentator, or expounder, or preacher of the marvellous gospel of the grace of God, not discerning the church's "heavenly calling," has received and delivered this precept in its single, simple, natural, and (almost) unmisconceivable meaning? What one such has understood and taught that most literally and strictly all manner and all measure

of trespass and offence is to be forgiven by the Christian to his fellow-man? Yet the Lord most expressly and most emphatically says so; frames the whole narrative, from *v.* 23 to *v.* 34, to exhibit and establish His meaning; and adds the solemn intimation in *v.* 35 to confirm and enforce it.

Beloved, your attention to the fact that these and all such Scriptures have been softened and smoothed down into kindly accommodation with the fondly and firmly cherished tenet of the church's earthly and fleshly and natural standing, and that they must *necessarily* have been so accommodated by men rejecting the heavenly and spiritual calling of the church, is very earnestly and affectionately demanded. We need not then cite the whole of the New Testament Scriptures.

Just survey Matt. *v.* 39-41: "Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law," &c.

Matt. *v.* 33-37: "Lay not up treasure upon earth, but lay up treasure in heaven. And take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. And take no thought for the morrow."

Matt. *xvi.* 24, 25; Luke *xiv.* 26, 27: "If any one will come after me, let him take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it. If any one come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and hate not his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

Matt. *xxiii.* 8-11: "Be not ye called Rabbi, and neither be ye called Master, and call ye no man Father: for all ye are brethren; and he that is greatest among you shall be your servant."

Matt. *xx.* 25-28: "The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion and authority; but it shall not be

so *among you* :”—together with other Scriptures which will occur to you ; and then, having well seen and observed that these Scriptures *never have been*, and well considered that they *could not possibly have been*, interpreted aright by a Christian viewing himself as a member of the world’s citizenship and polity, and as such bound or warranted to engage in its legislation, government, and warring, to partake of its titles and honours and fleshly remunerations, and to act prudently and wisely in providing a stock against want, in protecting his stock against assault, and in maintaining his dignity and defending his person against aggression or insult—take notice and bear in remembrance that they are most justly interpreted, and most brilliantly manifested to be the radical and essential and vital principles of the Christian code, by this all-opening and all-harmonizing truth, “THE CHURCH’S HEAVENLY CALLING.”

Here, dear brethren, again suffer the word of admonition. On opening your eyes to such injunctions and instructions from your beloved Master, you may promptly exclaim, “Good is that which the Lord hath said ; all that the Lord hath spoken we will do, and be obedient.”

Be not hasty. This was the prompt exclamation of the children of Israel on receiving the law of Sinai—a law so holy, just, and good that, verily, “if a law could be given which could give life,” it would be this law, and comprising commandments “which indeed, if a man do, he shall live by them ;” yet this was not given that man *should* obey it and *should* live by it ; it was given to show that man *could not* obey it and *could not* have life through it. “It entered that the offence might abound ;” it came to test and prove and manifest man’s fleshly nature, to evince and establish that in the flesh there is no strength, no stability, no soundness, that “there dwelleth no good thing.”*

* Though the law has indeed *established* the impotency of

And observe that the gospel, in delivering precepts and principles as high above the law as the heavens are high above the earth, proclaims still more loudly the impotence and the worthlessness of man's flesh, the inability of man under the ruin of the fall to obey and please God. If then you have failed in learning from the law, yet learn, oh learn from the gospel, that as men, as natural men, you "*cannot do what the Lord hath spoken.*"

Pause and deeply ponder over these sublime and unearthly directions, and well settle it that you are not to receive them in the forwardness and foolhardiness and vain-gloriousness of the flesh. They *are* hard to the flesh, they are *superlatively and insuperably* hard to the flesh; and they are so *designedly and declaratively*.

Thus they show you *yourselves* as ruined and dead; but they tell you of JESUS the eternal life. They declare the necessity of your birth anew and into a new nature; but they come to you from the quickener of the dead and the imparter of the life and power of the resurrection. They express, and that emphatically, your incapacity of obedience, and they are designed to express it, and to convince you of it, and to abase and repress and silence you under the sense of it; but they are designed also to express the all-sufficient capacity of your new nature in Christ, and to incite you to act and walk in that nature, and to follow and press on in the track of Jesus unto the holiness and perfectness of the highest heavens.

Whilst then you notice that these directions, in their very sublimity and unearthliness, proclaim their impracticableness to the flesh, and thus that they are not addressed to the flesh, fail not to notice also that they, as proceeding from the Son of God unto sons in resurrection-life, proclaim, not simply that they are practicable to the flesh, it could not *discover* it but unto us, the subjects of the new birth, the possessors of the spiritual nature.

licable, but that they are appropriate and apt, even the bright manifestations of the divine mind unto beings called to be conformed unto and to exhibit and declare that mind.

Noticing these two great truths, forbear, oh, forbear to set about obeying the heavenly lawgiver in the vain bustling and presumptuous energy of the flesh! Yet fear not and slack not to receive and do His “astonishing sayings” in the life and power of the spiritual nature and the indwelling Spirit.

(To be continued.)

“THAT I MAY KNOW HIM.”

WHO is like unto Jesus our Lord and God? He is beyond all words to declare; all conceptions fail. His worth is ineffable, His love incomprehensible.

He so loves that He blesses us, visits us, and keeps His court in our souls. He visits us morning by morning, that He may perfume our minds with His love, and cause the sweet savour of it to rest upon us all through the day. He knocks at the door of our hearts, desiring to enter in and sup with us, that He may enrich and gladden us. He prepares and spreads a table for us, a feast of fat things, and bids us eat and drink abundantly.

He is a most faithful friend, a most wonderful counsellor, a wise manager of us and of all our concerns, if we will but listen to His counsel. Oh, that our hearts were constantly enjoying His love! and then our mouths would be perpetually filled with His praise.

We should seek after an increasing knowledge of the Lord Jesus, and for freer and fuller communion with Him. On His part, He is quite free; He is wholly without reserve, He is very easy of access, He is quite familiar; He draws near, and admits His beloved ones into special communion, so as to open all His heart,

and speaks it out in such a manner as to assure and satisfy them as to His love and friendship for them.

Those who are continually admitted into His company, and are accustomed to fellowship with Him, find time hangs very heavily on their hands when they are not visiting Him, or visited by Him. Life would be a most miserable drudgery to such, were they not indulged again and again with His life-giving presence. Blessed be the Lord for what He is to us, for what He hath done for us, and for what He will for ever be to us, as our everlasting light and our everlasting glory!

It is very blessed to look wholly out and off ourselves to the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus. Indeed, we can have no confidence in the Lord except as we trust in Him alone. When we look *within*, there is nothing to be seen and found there but sin and misery; but Christ is the antidote to it all. His efficacious stripes are our balsam; His wounds are our health and cure; His blood produces everlasting purity; His righteousness is our everlasting perfection; His death and resurrection are our eternal security. Jesus is all fulness to supply with all grace and glory.

The Lord Jesus cannot love us beyond what He does. He cannot save us more completely than He has already done. He has put all our sins out of the sight of law and justice by the sacrifice of Himself. He has brought in everlasting righteousness, and justified us from all things in the high court of heaven. He has loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.

When we see Jesus in His own light, and in some feeble measure apprehend what He is, it puts down all on earth; yea, it puts down all in heaven. He is the heaven of heavens, the brightness of glory, the image of the invisible God, the Lord of glory, the King of glory, the bright and morning Star, the Sun of righteousness. He is His Father's ALL; He is His church's ALL.

LESSONS FOR THE BELIEVER FROM PETER'S EXPERIENCE.

I HEARD lately some thoughts with reference to the lessons taught us by Peter's experience, which I desire to share with my fellow-readers. I shall not attempt any consecutive review of the apostle's history; but rather indicate a few salient points which especially bear on the needs of the believers of to-day.

Let us first turn to Luke v. Without pausing over the beautiful teaching of the second, fifth, and sixth verses, let us fix our thoughts on the eleventh: "*And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed Him.*"

"Forsook *all*." The "all" here was no trifle. Diligent fishermen as they may have been, such a goodly haul of fish was no every-day event. Poor as they doubtless were, it must have promised a store of money greater than perhaps days of hard toiling in the common order of things. And yet it was at this moment when to the eye of sense success seemed to have dawned on them, when even real faith, unconsciously alloyed, might have laid a firm hold on the gift, coming as it did undoubtedly from God, and called it ingratitude not to use it to the utmost; it was at this very moment that the call came to leave all and follow Jesus—"Come ye after me."

"*They forsook all, and followed Him.*" (Mark i. 18.) Let us give full weight to the act thus so simply recorded. It took place at the very opening of our Lord's ministry. Simon and his companions had had very slight opportunity for judging of Him for whose sake they so unhesitatingly gave up their worldly all. The miracle in Peter's family had no doubt done its part, and the list of cases in Luke iv. 40 would have deepened the impression; yet to those who knew what poverty was, that draught of fishes must have been a

keen temptation to cling to the old ships, the familiar way of life, the nets which, now that they had once been so blessed, might be so again and again. Had the call come half an hour earlier, when, weary and dispirited with the long night's toil, the fishermen had gone out of their boats and were washing their nets, we can well understand what a willing hearing it might have found; but the fish! to relinquish that goodly spoil! that must have been quite another thing.

And *we*—what is the lesson for us? What question does the incident bring home to us? What have *we* given up for Christ? What goodly haul, no matter of what kind, have we forsaken to follow our Master unimpeded?

Paul's answer would have been ready. His position, his prospects, his all, in a worldly sense. "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. . . . for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Very real these sacrifices, given up too with no lingering, no half-regretful back-lookings.

Ah, dear fellow-believers, what have *we* given up for Christ thus?—at His bidding I mean; for it must be at *His bidding* and for His sake, or self-denial, self-sacrifice, will be wrong at the core. I am addressing believers. Let us each ask ourselves what our following of Jesus *has* cost us, what it *is* costing us at this moment? Have we really forsaken *all*? Or are we toiling afar off after our Lord? Following Him; but oh, how heavily! so unlike what He would have us—bowed down under a heavy burden of the fish which we are disposing of as we go along, trying with one hand, as it were, to cling to Him, but with the other holding on to the earth!

Does conscience tell us, that more or less closely this picture represents our experience? Do not let us shrink from recognizing the truth, and if we find the baskets occupying our hearts, let us drop them resolutely, "forsake all" forthwith. "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." (2 Tim. ii. 4.) "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Peter ii. 11, 12.)

"*Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. . . . But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.*" (Matt. xiv. 28, 30.) How wide the difference between this incident and the one we have been considering. The one a task set by the Lord, and obediently performed; the other a task taken up in human strength, with no bidding from the Master (the "come" indicates surely simple permission), and left half done by failing heart and sinking feet, taught by sharp experience how feeble both were.

"Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me." (Ps. cxxxi. 1.) "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." (Rom. xii. 3.)

What a lesson is contained in 1 Cor. xii. 12-30, one so needed to be learnt by the Church in the present day; for is not much of the imperfect service over which we have to mourn, the unfruitful ministry, the misdirected effort which has nothing to recommend it

save the appearance of zeal, owing to the want of a humble reception of, a close walking according to, the clear meaning of the passage referred to above?

But perhaps the present instance, Peter's failure in the performance of his self-imposed task, points, strictly speaking, rather to lack of power, in other words lack of faith—faith being in the believer the great animating principle for all service. Had the Lord set him his work, and had he entered into it in simple obedience, supplies equal to his need would have been surely his. It is not given to us to search into the recesses of our fellow-sinner's soul, and the narrative tells us nothing directly of his motives, and we may well content ourselves with the fact—a fact with parallels to which our own experience can surely supply us—that the task was a rash one, and that the sharp lesson which failure taught must have been needed, or the pitying heart of Him whose eye foresaw the end, even before the presumptuous request came from the eager lips, and whose ready hand was outstretched in such instant succour of the sinking one, would have found some means of sparing the pain and humiliation, which, however deserved, He never delights in seeing His disciples suffer.

In connection with this subject an anecdote was related, which so aptly illustrates the frequent experiences of God's children in this respect that I cannot omit it, simple as it is. A gentleman, a friend of the speaker's, was engaged one day in removing the contents of his library to a room on an upper story. The job was a long one, and his daughter, a little girl of some six years of age, watching its progress, wished to give her help. She asked her father for a load to carry up, and he, willing to gratify her, gave her a book suited to her tiny strength, with which she trotted off well pleased. But her ideas of her own powers were not satisfied with such a light weight, and she asked for a larger load next time, which her father wisely refused.

Disconcerted, but not willing to be baffled, the child took the matter into her own hands. She had seen her father carrying large folios, and book after book heaped up into what looked to her a mighty pile, and her ambition rose: she wanted to give real help—what use was there in carrying one small article at a time?—and, slipping down to the room, she possessed herself of a full-grown dictionary, which really *was* worth taking up. Delighted with her prize, she marched off; but before the top stair was reached the little knees had begun to totter under the weight, the little hands to ache and fail, and a piteous cry of “Father! father!” was heard. Her father had, unknown to her, been watching his dear little loving, self-willed, foolish child, and, hurrying to her, caught up all—frightened, weary child and heavy book—in his strong, tender arms, and carried them together up stairs. No rebuke was needed; the ready tears were very near overflowing, the little heart, so lately triumphant, was sore. The knowledge of her own weakness and of her father's wisdom had been dearly gained, and would not soon be forgotten.

Ah, how often we too have to cry out for help, as our self-appointed tasks nearly overwhelm us! Oh what a Father clasps us, His wayward children, in His close, loving arms, when our pitiful appeal reaches His ever-listening ear!

But do not other temptations besides that to unsanctified activity beset God's people? Have none been found sleeping at a post appointed by the Master Himself? “*Simon, Simon, couldest thou not watch one hour?*” How often this very failure is a prelude to that other evil of which I have just been speaking! The heavy senses steeped in slumber, the idle hands hanging down, the motionless feet forgetting their duty, and then the sudden, startled waking, the keen consciousness of fault, the stinging shame, mingled with real anxiety for the Master's cause, the eager, unbidden rush forward, the

smitten ear, and then the rebuke instead of the "well done," and the quiet undoing of the hasty act.

What reality there is in work done by those who watch! what abiding blessing rests upon it! how widely different from the crude results, the evanescence of that devised by the wisdom, undertaken in the strength of man!

"And Peter followed afar off." (Luke xxii. 54.) Followed afar off! What significance there is in these words thus connected! A disciple, but secretly; and this failure in testimony soon led him into the palace, placed him beside the fire, in close companionship with those who hated his Lord, and drew him on and on until with oaths and curses he had denied that Lord to whom but a few hours before he had promised such unswerving allegiance, whom in his feeble, impulsive heart he yet loved so truly!

"Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." (Ps. xvii. 5.) Well may this prayer be often on the lips of God's children. "If any man serve me, let him follow me." (John xii. 26.) "Follow thou me." (John xxi. 22.) How constant and emphatic is our Lord's command to His disciples, "Follow me!"

How well has the experience of every disciple, no matter how widely different circumstances and surroundings may have been, testified to the loving-kindness and wisdom that thus so strenuously pointed out the only way of safety! How happy has it been for those who humbly accepted, faithfully obeyed the precept, and ordered all their goings by the chart left them by their Master, to guide their steps through the wilderness!

The Christian's path is hedged about with the Word. Once pass outside those boundaries, take a single step not authorized by the Scripture, and the stumbling feet of the believer are out of the narrow path in which alone safety is to be found, amid thorns and briars and

stones, which will wound and injure him sorely; and the return is sadly difficult, often far more so than the outgoing was. "By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." (Ps. xvii. 4.) "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Ps. cxix. 105.) The Psalms are rich in such expressions. I might multiply quotations from them, all teaching the same great truths; but they must be familiar to all.

"He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." (1 John ii. 6.) How can this be unless the believer be in close communion with his Lord, keeping very near Him, taking heed to His word, not theoretical only, but every-day practical heed; not choosing his own way, but letting the Master lead, and being content to follow? The path is often not the one that human wisdom would choose. There are few short cuts about it—those short cuts that are so dear to the hasty, impatient heart of man—but the path is ordered aright in every particular, as those who have faith to follow it will in the end have abundant cause to confess. Avoiding seen and unseen dangers, it will guide the humble-hearted traveller to an "abundant entrance" into his desired end.

A beautiful illustration of this part of the subject will fitly close this brief sketch. There is in California a lofty mountain, covered to the top with a thick growth of brushwood. At a distance no path is discernible, but close examination shows a track which the Indians have made, and constantly use when ascending the height. To a stranger it seems a strangely winding route, much more likely to waste time than to use it well; but those who make the attempt find that to endeavour to climb the mountain by a straighter path is both unwise and dangerous. Stones and rocks and brushwood make the effort almost vain, and the rash traveller is only too glad to give up his own plans and get into the beaten road. But the Indians are not

content with knowing that the track is there, and at hazard finding it out. It is, of course, liable to be overgrown or obscured more or less, and they like certainty. When a party sets out, let us say, of five hundred men, they put the chief, the cleverest man of the tribe, foremost, and he leads the way, all the rest obediently following in his track, and not merely following, but actually setting their feet in his very foot-marks, so that when the five hundred have reached the top there is all along the way only the print of two feet regularly impressed on the path. Not one diverging footstep, not one self-asserting attempt at finding an easier or safer track! What a lesson for us! Shall we be slow to learn and act upon it? "FOLLOW THOU ME!"

A LABOURER'S SONG.

Oh to be empty, empty,
 Empty just to be filled—
 Filled with the fulness of boundless love
 That dwells in my risen Lord above,
 Even as God hath willed!

Oh to be loving, loving,
 Loving that faithful Lord—
 That one whose heart beat so true to me,
 When He bore my sins on the blood-stained tree,
 Of His own accord!

Oh to be living, living,
 Living with Him all day;
 Companion with Him, the rejected One,
 Round whose path the halo of suffering shone
 With a glory ray!

Oh to be waiting, waiting,
 Waiting with longing heart—
 Waiting that coming Lord to greet;
 Waiting with joy Himself to meet,
 Never again to part!

Oh to be working, working,
 Working this little while;
 With the love-flame burning bright in my soul,
 His own sweet presence illuming the whole
 With approving smile!

H. A. M.

THE NARROW WAY, AND THE LARGE HEART.

THE paradoxes of Scripture often sorely try our faithfulness to God. There is much that seems so antagonistic in the extremes presented to us, that we are in danger of seeking a compromise in truth, and thereby really neutralizing it, altogether taking away the saltiness from the salt, and making it unfit either for the land or for the dunghill.

This is peculiarly true in the connection in which the conscience and the heart stand relatively to one another.

The path we are called to tread is a narrow one, and our conscience should in all strictness walk in it, turning aside neither to the one side nor to the other. On the other hand a largeness of heart and breadth of spiritual sympathy should be cultivated, not narrower than the heart of God, nor less forbearing than His love.

The highest attainment in the Christian life is to walk with a very large heart in a very narrow path; but, alas! from our one-sidedness, the desire to walk in the narrow path too often leads to a narrow heartedness; and the seeking after large heartedness leads to a widening of the path and a broadening of the way, which is destructive to real obedience. This great practical difficulty will have presented itself to all who have seriously contemplated and compared the rigid strictness of the *truth* with the largeness and freeness of the *spirit* of the gospel; yet in the combined realization of the truth of Christ and of the Spirit of Christ, real worship consists; and wherein we fail in each or both of these, we come short in that worship which will be rendered hereafter, and which should be aimed at now. But, blessed be God, He has made provision for this failure in our "Great High Priest," who has "*holi-*

ness to the Lord" inscribed on His mitre, that He may bear the iniquity of our holy things in all our offerings, and in all our worship. (See Exodus xxix.)

When our Lord enunciates the principles of His kingdom in the sermon on the mount, He says, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat: because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it." Again, in that most solemn portion of our Lord's history in Cæsarea Philippi, when for the first time He announced His death to His disciples, before He revealed to them His glory in the holy mount, "He said unto them all, If any man desires* to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever desires to save his life shall lose it: but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, or suffer loss?" (ἢ ζημιωθεις, not "be a castaway," which is comprehended in the previous clause. Luke ix. 23-25.)

How solemnly the Lord addresses His word to *all*. He knew how deeply the spirit that led Peter to rebuke his Master, and to say, "Pity thyself, Lord, this shall not be unto thee," dwells in all. The way is too narrow, the path too rough for us by nature, and the thoughts of the natural heart find expression in Peter's words.

But though the path of obedience is a narrow one, yet it leads to life, as we read elsewhere. "Bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the

* It is of importance not to lose sight of the Greek *θελει* by rendering it "will," as *if* it were a future tense; it implies a purpose followed, an object pursued, and therefore while the saving life must not be the object, so neither must the object be to lose life; and hence the difference in the two clauses which is lost sight of in the English version.

life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body." (2 Cor. iv. 10.)

Paul was content to lose his life, to die daily, that he might enter into life daily, and realize the life that is hid with Christ in God, and make it a manifested life in his own person. He would not allow himself to be a loser in the day of the kingdom, by seeking gain here. To gain or win Christ (Phil. iii. 8), and not to gain the world, was the object of his life; for he began with the recognition of the great axiom of Christian experience, "Ye cannot serve *two* masters." He had counted the cost, and not in the general only, but in every particular. He had taken Christ for his Master, the one in whose footsteps he was content to follow, so that he could appeal to all, and say, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1 Cor. ii. 1.) His object was to walk in the narrow way; for he had entered in by the strait gate. He did not desire to make it broader than his Master had made it. He could not make it narrower; for no one ever walked in a path so narrow, or entered in through a gate so strait, as that which God had marked out for His only begotten Son.

In this consciousness Paul writes to the Ephesians about their walk, and after exhorting them to "walk worthy of your vocation" (ch. iv. 1), to "walk not as other Gentiles walk" (v. 17), to "walk in love" (ch. v. 2), to "walk as children of light" (v. 8), he winds all up with "walk *strictly*,"* which word Paul uses (Acts xxvi. 5) to describe his close and strict Pharisaism, when he says, "After the⁷ most straitest (*ακριβεστατην* strictest) sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee."

* *ακριβως* is rather opposed to "circumspectly," which implies a looking round, whereas the thought is rather of one who has a definite line marked out for him, and who walks according to that rule, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left. Ponder James i. 7, 8, and see the secret of success in obedient study of the book given for our meditation day and night.

Paul had not left a strict Judaism for a lax Christianity, but the latter was all the stricter because the foundations on which it rested were more glorious.

The narrowness of the path and the brightness of the overshadowing glory went together, as the mount of transfiguration and its glory, above the brightness of the sun, followed immediately on the narrow path marked out to the followers of Christ at Cæsarea Philippi, to which we have referred. The narrow way and the strict following in the footprints of the Lord were viewed by Paul in connection with the unseen; and the glory of the world to come shone so brightly on the narrow path that its narrowness was forgotten in the glory, and its strictness made light and easy through fellowship with his Lord. Nor did He leave His faithful servant to walk alone, but He was with him in his path, so that the dungeon became a palace, and the light affliction, which was but for a moment, was felt to be not worthy of comparison with what was to be revealed.

Taking faith's estimate, Paul found the yoke easy and the burden light; and so will it ever be; but he found it easy and light, not as made so by the flesh through conformity to the world (which ever seeks to lower God's standard), but as made so by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Every precept left its mark on that man of God. He bore them about upon him as the marks of the Lord Jesus. Those marks showed whose follower he was, and who was his Master; so that the "man in Christ" manifested Christ, and they who knew the servant knew something of the Master.

The preceptive portions of the New Testament, and especially of the gospels, need to be more pondered in these days of easy-going Christianity in which we live, when to be saved in the end is too much the goal that satisfies many, rather than the imitation of Christ. But God is not mocked, and Christians must reap as they sow.

Thus our way is made narrow for us by the wisdom of God, and our walk is required to be in strictest conformity with the ways and precepts of our Lord, so that our conscience needs be as narrow as the way we are called to walk in. But a narrow conscience must not induce a narrow spirit, and the narrow path must not contract that largeness of heart which gives Christ-like beauty to that which otherwise becomes unlovely and schismatic.

But who can blend these apparent contrarieties? who but that God in whom the light and the love shine together, each undimmed by the other; nay, rather each made the more divinely beautiful and glorious by the relation in which they stand one to another?

Holiness is strict, and righteousness can allow of no departure; it is unbending, inexorable. So too must our obedience be; for obedience in us is holiness to God.

Love on the other hand is bending and forbearing, and hence the worthiness of our walk, which consists in its holiness (for we are called with a holy calling), and yet it is to be "with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love." This is the Spirit of Christ, without which we can be none of His—the Spirit that is to animate our love of truth, and to mellow the strictness of our obedience, and to give beauty to the consistency of our walk.

Strict and narrow in our conceptions of what the holiness of God seeks at our hands from ourselves, we should be loving and forbearing in what we expect in our intercourse with others. If the former be wanting we become latitudinarian; if the latter, intolerant; and failing to combine both we oscillate between the one and the other, and incline to the right hand or to the left, as impelled by circumstances or inclination. To judge ourselves strictly and others leniently is that to which we are called.

There is much in Scripture to guide us here. When James and John saw one casting out devils in the name of Jesus, they forbad him, "because he followed not with them." Note the Lord's reply: "Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us." (Luke ix. 49, 50.) He was not against the Lord, and they were to consider him as for *Him*, and for *them* too. He says, "For *us*."

But how different is the rule given to us to judge ourselves by! It is there said, "He that is not with *me* is against *me*; and he that gathereth not with *me* scattereth abroad." (Matt. xii. 30; Luke xi. 23.) We are to measure ourselves by the positive measure of direct obedience; we are to measure others by the negative rule that deals tenderly with another's conscience, and makes not our conscience the rule of his.

But when the disciples were rebuked for forbidding another who cast out devils in their Master's name, were they authorized to *follow him*? By no means. We may leave unforbidden many whom we dare not follow. We can follow only those who follow Christ.

We find something very similar in the spirit of the apostle Paul when surrounded with some who preached Christ, of contention, and of strife. He rejoiced that Christ was preached, by whatever means; yea, he says, "And I will rejoice;" but still he would not have fellowship with them in their work, even though as far as the work was concerned he rejoiced in it. Thus the narrow path of obedience and the large-heartedness of unselfish love went together; for he measured not his love by another's. When Christ, and not self, becomes the centre, harmony is found; for in Him the paradoxes of our life as well as the paradoxes of our creed find their solution.

Divine order seemed violated when Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp; and Joshua in his fleshly zeal says, "My lord Moses, forbid them." To which Moses

replied, "Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets!" (Num. xi. 28, 29.) Self is and ever will be the great antagonism; hence the reiteration of the command to deny self, to disown it, to cast it out. It is the fleshly seed, the mocking Ishmael, the profane Esau, that must be cast out if the seed of faith is to thrive.

Laxity and bigotry are surrounding us on all sides, and unless the eye be very single and the heart very true, we shall be unable to maintain the consistency of our life, which can only be really consistent as God, and not self, rules.

There is much that is specious in the lax charity of the day that centres itself in man and not in God, and which in its God-dishonouring tendencies may well be named "the devil's charity;" and there is much that is none the less specious in the bigoted upholding of creeds and opinions which, under the garb of zeal for truth, may with equal propriety be called "the devil's zeal." Earnestly do we need to pray to be delivered from both alike, as equally leading us out of the narrow path of which God is the maker and in which His Spirit is the guide, keeping the eye looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith.

May zeal for God's house consume us; but in our zeal may we be careful not to consume others. As children of light let us walk in light, and cause our light to shine quietly, steadily, as the light of heaven into the darkness of night; and let us walk in love as the children of the God of love, having our light unsullied with darkness and laxity, and our love unembittered with selfishness and bigotry.

All compromises are wrong. Truth can know no compromise. It must stand immovable, alike in little things as in great things; for he shall be least in the kingdom of heaven who in little things disobeys his Lord. The command is, "Buy the truth, and sell it not;" and however apparently insignificant a matter

may be, it necessarily has a right and a wrong, and love obeys in all things alike, great or small.

Were these broad principles firmly laid hold on we should see a better defined line of Christian action, and right and truth would rule our course where now expediency dishonours God, darkens His truth, and hinders the development of our spiritual life.

H. G.

THE CHURCH: HER CALLING, AND CONSEQUENT POSITION AND OFFICE.

(Continued from page 139.)

DAVID'S prayer was, "Give me a heart to delight in thy commandments." Ah, truly it is hard to delight in commandments of which the sanction is DEATH UPON TRANSGRESSION! To us, beloved, begotten from above—to SONS living in the LIFE which is with Christ in God—it is not hard, but natural and congenial, to delight in the directions and intimations of the Father. Realizing then this LIFE, we may contemplate more closely certain of the Scriptures just cited, and we may bring to the elucidation of them other Scriptures, likewise expressing the principles of the HEAVENLY WALK OF HEAVENLY MEN.

"Lay not up treasure upon earth. Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or drink or put on. Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor." In illustration and enforcement of this instruction from the Heavenly Man, we have Matt. vi. 21-24, 26-32, and xix. 24, Luke xvi. 1-13, and xxi. 1-4, Acts ii. 44, 45, and iv. 32-35, 1 Tim. vi. 17-19.

In Matthew we find the Lord, addressing us as children of the Father, thus graciously expressing the *reason* of His precept. As your heart *must* be with your treasure, so, if it be with treasure upon earth—with mammon—it *cannot* be with your Father, God:

you *cannot* serve God and mammon. If your eye be not single, your whole body *must* be full of darkness. Though with God all things are possible, yet easier is it for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a man having riches to get into the kingdom of God. Moreover, dear children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father feed and clothe *you* than the fowls of the air or the grass of the field? And again, dear children, these are the things which the *nations of the world* seek after: *you* have a Father in heaven.

In Luke we have a parable constructed to recommend to us *the dispensing and dealing out* of mammon. Mammon (*i.e.* riches), though, in the olden time, bestowed by God *in blessing*, is here styled *unrighteous*; and the follower of Jesus is instructed that the right and profitable use of it is *the giving of it away*. It is spoken of as not belonging to the Christian, but as *another man's*—as committed in trust: and this faithfulness in the trust, *viz.*, *wise distribution*, is constituted a ground upon which the Christian is hereafter to receive that which is his own.* And in the case of the widow giving her all, we enjoy the Lord's own comment upon the Lord's commandment. We see a case of close and literal and full obedience, and we hear the Lord's commendation of it; we see a case of self-stripping superlatively improvident, and we see this case approved and admired.

In Acts we see the selling and giving up of their

* See this astonishing Scripture illustrated and confirmed by Matt. xix. 21, Luke xii. 33, and 1 Tim. vi. 17-19; likewise by Matt. vi. 1, in connection with Deut. xxiv. 13, Ps. cxii. 9, Dan. iv. 27, and 2 Cor. ix. 9, 10. Here the giving away of mammon is, however amazingly, made the condition, or, at least, the preliminary and prerequisite of "our getting treasure in heaven," "of our having a reward from our Father in heaven," "of our righteousness remaining for ever," "of our laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come, and of our laying hold of eternal life." Brethren, it is "to the perfect that the Lord speaketh wisdom."

possessions "by all that believed;" and we read that "the whole multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul." We are further informed that the whole body had "singleness of heart," and that "great grace was upon them all."

In Timothy we have one who had himself sacrificed, and renounced all earthly and fleshly things, "charging the rich that they *do good, be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate*, thus laying up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

Beloved, it was not by *precept* or *statute* that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul, and had all things common; selling their houses and lands, their possessions and goods." THEY WERE LIVING IN THE LIFE OF FAITH AND LOVE! It was not *by the virtue of the commandment* that they "laid not up treasure upon earth!" THE HOLY GHOST WAS IN THE CHURCH.

"*Be not YE called Rabbi or Master,*" and "*It shall not be among YOU to exercise dominion or authority.*" Plainly because the Son of man came, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister:" because the rule and reign of the saints is not at present, but in the future, is not whilst their Head is disowned and dishonoured, but when He shall come in His power and glory: because the Church is "to know the fellowship of her Lord's *sufferings*; to be made conformable *unto His death*; and to be perfected in the manner in which *He* was perfected:" because the Church is to be the witness for God of the riches of God's *goodness* and *longsuffering* and *grace*.

Beloved, the citizen of heaven, the heir of God, the witness for Jesus, showing His *HUMILIATION AND DEATH*, and proclaiming His *COMING IN GLORY*, may refuse "the honour which cometh from men," and may decline "to reign without Christ."

Luke vi. 37 with Matt. vi. 12. What mean we in this our constant petition "to be forgiven as we forgive"? Two meanings are possible; viz., forgive me *all* and *absolutely*, for I forgive *all* and *absolutely*: and, forgive me *as* I forgive trespassers against me. As I treat trespassers with calmness and gentleness, with punishment justly proportioned to their desert, and in the strictest legal order and propriety, *so* treat thou *me*—*i.e.* with calmness, and righteousness, and strict equity. But does a sinner AGAINST GOD pray to be treated with *righteousness* and *equity*?

Brethren, this our petition is a plain one. It *must* mean, either that my trespasses be forgiven *wholly, absolutely, without any reserve, qualification, or condition*—as I thus forgive; or that my trespasses be forgiven *partly, restrictedly, with some reserve, qualification, or condition*—as I thus forgive. In other words: either that I be treated altogether in MERCY, or that I be treated with some measure of JUSTICE—with some reference to my *ill desert*—with some of the *righteous wrath* and *indignation* of God. For which character of ANSWER are we looking from God?

Beloved, the sinner forgiven, the lost one saved, the rebel adopted and invested with glory, may spare to judge and to condemn sinners.

Matt. v. 40: "If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." And 1 Cor. vi. 1-7: "Dare any of you go to law before the unjust? Brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because YE GO TO LAW ONE WITH ANOTHER." The Christian then, it is clear, may not appeal to law.

Will it be argued that, though it is indeed clear that "brother may not go to law with brother," it is not so clear that the Christian may not take the law against the unbeliever? Nay, brother. If the clear

and strong word in Matt. v. 40, do not satisfy thee; if thou see not the incongruousness and the indecorousness of THE CHRISTIAN'S proceeding against *the unbeliever*; and if thou see and feel not that the unbeliever, so far from being the fit one to be dealt with in rigour or righteousness, is set as the express and especial object of thy remission and forgiveness and grace, then bow to 1 Thess. v. 15: "See that none render evil for evil *unto any one*; but ever follow that which is good, both towards one another and *towards all*."

Beloved, the partaker of the heavenly calling, the co-heir with Christ of glory, the child of the living God, may refrain from prosecutions at law.

"*Resist not evil.*" This precept, and the principle involved in it, and the Lord's aim in delivering it, viz., Resist not evil, whether offered to thee *lawlessly* or *through the law*, but meet it with all passiveness and submission, with all yielding and compliance, and with *deportment, and acts, and disposition altogether gracious and good*; thus condemning it, thus overcoming it, and thus declaring God the Father, are well expressed in Matt. v. 38-48; but this most practical subject may profitably be considered as it is presented to our consciences and affections in other Scriptures and with other connections. And, oh, may the meek and lowly and forbearing and all-enduring Propounder and Exemplar of it open it, commend it, impress it, and empower and enforce it.

INTRODUCTORILY, let us briefly look over the Scripture before us. (Matt. v. 38-48.) The Lord gives *plain, direct, reiterated, exemplified, and variously expressed* prohibitions of resisting evil. What does He mean? That we resist not evil *passionately, revengefully, implacably, violently, excessively, illegally*? Or, that we resist not evil *absolutely—at all*? The first interpreta-

tion of the prohibitions is precluded—first, by the exemplifications (see v. 39–41); secondly, by the reasons which are stated for them; viz., the character and conduct of God the Father under the present DISPENSATION OF GRACE, and the standing forth of this character and conduct FOR THE CHRISTIAN'S IMITATION. (See v. 45, 48; also Luke vi. 35, 36.)

It remains then that the Lord is prohibiting the resistance of evil *absolutely*, that He is abrogating the very LAW OF EQUITY—the law requiring eye for eye, tooth for tooth, life for life—the law of righteous retribution—the *Lex talionis*. And wherefore? Because God in Christ is now dealing with man, not in equity or righteousness, but in grace, in forbearance, in loud and universal declaration of peace and goodwill and readiness to pardon; and because the divine mind under this gracious dealing is exhibited as the model for the mind of that people who are ordained to be in all things “conformed unto God.”

Ex. xxi. 24, 25; Lev. xxiv. 20; Deut. xix. 21. Though the Lord is, confessedly by all, forbidding retaliation, and, confessedly by all, forbidding the very law of retaliation delivered by God, yet it is stoutly denied that He is forbidding this law to the public judge; and it is maintained that He can be addressing *only His followers*, interdicting this law *only to them*, and propounding a rule *only for them*; for, it is said, how possibly can the Lord be understood as forbidding this most righteous law to “powers ordained by God Himself,” and expressly as “revengers to execute wrath”?

Beloved brethren, most correct and just is this representation! Most truly is it affirmed that the Lord is not interfering with the law for the regulation and ordering of the world, but is simply and singly prohibiting His own dear followers and imitators from having recourse to it. Brethren, note then that it is

the *universal* affirmation or admission of the Church, that *the Christian* is forbidden to appeal to law, even to this equitable, excellent, and divinely-appointed law. Now wherefore? Plainly because this law, however excellent (yea, it is essentially and eternally excellent—it is EQUITY), was not congruous with the new and amazing dispensation of forbearance and grace which it was, in that fulness of time, the pleasure of God to introduce; and in which it was His further good pleasure to permit His own people to imitate Him. This law, well is it said, was not forbidden *to the world*. No! *In the world* it continues, and it will ever continue whilst there is an evil-doer; and for the execution of it God Himself, in His providence, raises up kings and rulers, and to “these ministers of wrath” Christ commands His people to be subject and respectful.

But whilst it continues in the world, it is abrogated *in the Church*, and whether as the law for the Church’s government of her own members, or as a rule for her procedure towards them that are without*—

First, in order that the CHARACTER OF GOD IN CHRIST—viz., a God of grace and love, a God reconciling sinners by not imputing trespasses—might be brilliantly exhibited in the CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH.

Secondly, that the privilege, the high honourableness, the peculiar blessedness, of the Church might be publicly manifested.

Thirdly, because that for every evil-doer in the Church, ejection from her holy pale and delivery over to the world was the special provision.

Of CHRISTIANS then it is the peculiar blessedness and glory to deal with their fellow-men in absolute and unlimited grace, knowing—

* This law is justly said to be abrogated in the Church, notwithstanding that the Church is *the place of righteousness*; for, though her members are disciplined and judged, it is not in recognition of *desert* and in observance of *justice*, but *in order to their good*—it is not in *retribution* or *punishment*, but in *correction* and *chastisement*.

First, that in the wisdom of God it is appointed that, through participation of the sufferings of Christ their Head, they are to be conformed to Christ and perfected.

Secondly, that this their exercise of grace towards the world is one of the methods of the wisdom of God to arrest and draw out from the world His own children.

Thirdly, that this their persisting, unwearied, unwearable forbearance and grace is an absolutely irresistible testimony to the world of its own terrific wickedness and ungodliness; and is thus an exceedingly sweet smelling savour of Christ unto God.

Fourthly, that thus is furnished the amplest vindication of that tremendous judgment which is impending over the pertinacious despisers and rejecters of grace. (See 2 Thess. i. 6-9.)

The view of the *Lex talionis* exhibited above may be exhibited in smaller compass. The undeniable burden of Matt. v. 38-48 is, that retaliation and the law of retaliation is forbidden. Is it then *private retaliation*—is it *excessiveness*—is it *vindictiveness*—is it *rancorousness*—which is forbidden? Nay, for such procedure and such dispositions were not sanctioned by that law. Is it then the *law for the judge* that is forbidden—God's own law for the minister of God's own vengeance? Nay, for "rulers and powers are ordained expressly as revengers, and to be a terror to the evil-doer." What remains then to be the meaning of the Great Lawgiver? Surely this—to put out that law from the circle of His own people—His inoffensive, offence-forgiving, Christ-imitating, God-manifesting, and God's grace-commending "little flock."

Acts xiv. 22, Matt. xvi. 24, 1 Cor. xv. 19, 1 Thess. iii. 3, 2 Tim. iii. 12. Under the Mosaic dispensation the reward promised to obedience was the natural and very reasonable one, BLESSING—blessing in the basket

and in the store, in the city and in the field, in one's person and in one's family : whilst under the Christian dispensation the reward to obedience is the unnatural and apparently unreasonable one, TRIBULATION. And wherefore ? Plainly because the Christian's kingdom is *not in or of the world*. If, says Christ, my kingdom were of the earth, then would my servants fight ; if I were of this world, then would my servants act after the manner of this world. Conversely therefore—as my kingdom is *not* of the earth, therefore my servants are *not* to fight—as I am *not* and my followers are *not* of this world, therefore I and they are *not* to adopt the manner of this world.

Now, if TRIBULATION be the “whereunto we are appointed,” the privilege “to the which we are called,” the condition in which the disciple is to follow and to be conformed unto, and thus to declare and to exhibit his Master, and the condition in which he is to acquire those tempers and graces which all Christianity commends and commands, then are meekness and passiveness and unqualified forgiveness essential to the character of the Christian.

But if APPEAL TO ARMS OR TO LAW, in whatever calmness and soberness and belligerent or forensic order and propriety, and with whatever freedom from vindictiveness and selfishness, and through whatever zeal for the good of society and the rights of man, if APPEAL TO ARMS OR TO LAW be our procedure, then do we declare that the forgiveness enjoined by our Lord is not *actual* and *acted* forgiveness, but forgiveness *in the secret of the heart* : then do we declare that we are dealing with our fellow-sinners in equity and righteousness : then do we declare our hearty consent to be dealt with *in equity and righteousness* by God the Judge !

Oh for a look, *one* look at CHRIST ! Oh what manner of man should he be who would know Christ, who would know the power of the *resurrection* of CHRIST, who would enter into the fellowship of the *sufferings*

of CHRIST, who would be made conformable unto the *death*, and become participant of the *glory* of CHRIST!

Matt. xviii. 21–35. Here there is a detailed account of a question put to the Lord, of the Lord's reply to it, and of the Lord's solemn summing up and application. Briefly—"Lord, how oft shall I forgive my brother? Until seventy times seven. For the kingdom of heaven is thus likened: A king, taking account of his servants, finds one who owed him ten thousand talents. He freely forgives the debt. The man goes out, and lays hands upon a fellow-servant who owed him a hundred pence, and casts him into prison. Then the king says to him, O thou wicked servant! I forgave thee all that debt: shouldst thou not have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, as I had compassion on thee? And the king delivered him to the tormentors until he should pay the whole debt." Now, *what* was the wickedness of this "wicked servant," what did he? Simply this: he lodged a just complaint before a magistrate, and suffered the law to take its course,* he acted in strict righteousness and equity, he went to law. But was this *wickedness*? Yea, brethren: "SO LIKEWISE SHALL MY HEAVENLY FATHER DO ALSO UNTO YOU, IF YE FROM YOUR HEARTS FORGIVE NOT EVERY ONE HIS BROTHER HIS TRESPASSES."

Rom. xii. 12, and xiii. 1–5. Additional to the plain prohibition of the Lord, "Resist not evil," and to the plain grounds and reasons for it which we have been considering, is the prohibition in Rom. xii. 19, and the apostle's explication of it from that verse down to the 5th verse of the following chapter. (Let the unhappy break of chapters xii. and xiii.—one among the causes of the church's grievous missing of her Lord's mind—

* Our warrant for this affirmation is, "He cast the debtor into prison." Now this act was necessarily a legal act, and the official act of the law-officer.

be disregarded, and let the two chapters be read continuously.)

In chap. xii. 19 the apostle says, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but give place unto wrath: for it is written, VENGEANCE IS MINE; I WILL REPAY, saith the Lord." The apostle, after amplifying his prohibition of exacting vengeance, by the injunction to confer benefits, and thus to be superior to and to overcome the opponent's evil (see verses 20, 21), proceeds to apply the Scripture he had quoted, and commands, upon the authority of it, obedience to the rulers and powers set up in the world. "VENGEANCE IS MINE, saith the Lord." Accordingly, saith the apostle, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For all the powers are ordained *by God*, are ministers of *God*, are revengers to execute the wrath of *God*, and are the ministers of *God* to thee for praise and for good."

Should it be argued that this constitution by God of authorities and powers for the punishment of evil, and for the protection and good of God's people and of the well-doer, is, though indeed a reason against *private* and *personal* retaliation, not a reason against, but a reason for, *the Christian's application to those powers* for the reparation or the prevention of injury? Nay, brethren. *To you* the command is, *Avenge not yourselves; the Lord will repay; the Lord hath appointed ministers to execute the Lord's vengeance; the Lord hath taken the cognizance of the evildoer; the Lord hath taken the care of protecting His people, and of punishing the evil or restraining the wrath of the world's rude ones; the Lord and the Lord's own revengers hold and conduct the department of vengeance. Leave ye both vengeance and the ordained ministers of it unto God the Lord; and do ye "recompense to no man evil for evil, but overcome every man's evil with good."*

O brethren! how express is the Scripture—"Vengeance is the Lord's!" How express is the Scripture—

“All powers and rulers are of *God's own ordinance* for the ministration of *God's own wrath!*” How explicit the consequent injunction to the Christian—“Avenge not thyself!” And oh, how blessed to live peaceably with all men, and to lie, self-relinquishingly, in the hands of our God!

(*To be continued.*)

THE LORD OF GLORY.

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.”—1 PETER iv. 12-14.

LORD! I would rise each morning
 In Thy blest path to tread;
 Such light from thence is dawning,
 I cannot be misled;
 That heavenly track pursuing,
 My soul fresh strength will gain;
 That bright example viewing,
 Some likeness will attain.

Each grace, with mild effulgence,
 In Thy demeanour shone:
 Self-pleasing, self-indulgence,
 To Thee were never known;
 'Twas as a man of sorrows
 Thy years were passed below;
 From this the sufferer borrows
 A balm for every woe.

Privation, self-denial,
 Fatigue, reproach, and scorn;
 Each varied form of trial
 By Thee was meekly borne.
 Full oft Thy heart was wounded
 E'en by the chosen few,
 To whom Thy love unbounded
 Nor change nor limit knew.

Whole nights of prayer succeeded
 Thy long laborious day ;
 Thy fervent spirit needed
 No solace but to pray.
 Thine energies seem wasted ;
 But Thine untiring feet
 With ceaseless ardour hasted
 Thy mission to complete.

If life e'er seem appalling,
 O'ercast with pain and gloom,
 Whether past griefs recalling,
 Or fearing woes to come ;
 Be this reproof sufficient,
 What must thy thoughts have been
 When, by Thine eye omniscient,
 Jerusalem was seen !

What anguish there awaited
 The spotless Lamb of God ;
 Who, scorned, blasphemed, and hated,
 Poured out His precious blood !
 There, to ensure my pardon,
 He sorrowed unto death ;
 And, in that mournful garden,
 Fainted my load beneath !

Lord ! I can ne'er unravel
 The mystery of Thy woes,
 Of Thy pure Spirit's travail,
 The agonising throes.
 But, oh ! that cross and passion
 Should check each weak complaint ;
 That direful tribulation
 Should bid me not to faint.

Since Thou hast deigned to suffer,
 I would not dare repine ;
 My path cannot be rougher,
 Nor half so rough as Thine.
 Then, when my soul is sinking,
 May this my cordial be,
 I of that cup am drinking
 To be conformed to Thee.

THE GOD OF JACOB.

“The name of the God of Jacob defend thee.”—Ps. xx. 1.

ALL the children of God must have observed the frequency with which God gives Himself this title in Old Testament Scripture, or causes His saints, by the Holy Ghost, thus to call upon Him—far more frequently than by the name of God of Abraham, or God of Isaac. In the Psalms alone “God of Jacob” occurs some twelve or thirteen times. Not that God did not delight to be known as “the God of Abraham,” and as “the God of Isaac;” for the faith of Abraham, and the quiet godliness of Isaac, were of His own implanting, and He rejoices to acknowledge as His own, the grace which He has Himself given.

But is it not because a special glory is brought to Him as “the God of Jacob” that this title so often occurs, and the life of Jacob is given us in the book of Genesis in such detail? and also because this title is one of such instruction and such cheer to us, and Jacob’s life such a mirror for us, in which to see ourselves, and in which to see also the patience and the riches of “the God of all grace”?

For surely Peter’s expression, “the God of all grace,” is the New Testament equivalent for the Old Testament title we are considering. It was doubtless Peter’s own bitter experience which brought forth from him that unique and rich expression; and may not Peter’s life be in some respects a parallel to Jacob’s, as that of Paul is to Moses, and Daniel to John?

What then is the special glory to God as “the God of Jacob”? and what the special instruction to us? Surely it is the glory of supplying all Jacob’s need, and also illustrating in Jacob all the riches of His grace; for “God of ALL grace” must mean, not only all *fulness* of grace, but also all *variety*.

Let us take, then, four scenes of Jacob’s life to teach

us this; namely, Jacob at Bethel (Gen. xxviii.), at Penuel (Gen. xxxii.), Jacob leaving Canaan (Gen. xlv. 28), and also giving command about his burial. (Gen. xlvi. 29-31.)

At Bethel we see him as the *sinful* one, first reached and blessed by the God of all grace. It was only Luz, but God made it "Bethel" to him. Jacob lay there a guilty fugitive. The smooth skin of his throat and of his hands could convict him of the lies he had uttered, and the deception he had lately practised in his aged and dim-eyed father's chamber. Words and deeds of falsehood were fresh upon him, and the fears that came upon the wicked were driving him now as a leaf before the wind: he was flying for his life from fear of Esau's anger. Nor is there a record in the passage of his even confessing his sin. The darkness forbade his going further that night, and he lay down to sleep.

Guilty and forlorn, and hidden in the darkness, Jacob, as he lies on the ground at Luz, is indeed a picture to us of the *sinner* far from God, and in his sins; the very one in whom "the God of all grace" "might show forth a pattern" of how *able* He is to pardon the guilty, and to make far-off sinners His own! "God Almighty bless thee" had been his father's word upon him, and that word was now fulfilled; for God's delight is to show that His mercy is "high as the heaven is above the earth," and His putting away of sin is "far as the east is from the west."

It is, therefore, over Jacob as the *SINNER* that God lays the foundation, and makes the beginning of His glory as "the God of all grace," and as "the God of Jacob."

But years passed on, and this chosen one of God, this "sinner saved," had served his uncle Laban more than twenty-one years, and had done well for himself

in this life's things; and he comes back to Canaan with family, and flocks, and herds—a man of substance. His life in Syria had called out all his *natural* energies, and Jacob had proved himself quite able to compete with the worldly-minded ones in their own line, and to get on in the world's things quite as successfully as they. Whichever way Laban changed his wages, Jacob still kept his own, and added to it.

Is not this like the life of too many, who nevertheless are sinners "saved by grace," and have been "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has afore prepared that they should *walk in them*"? Paul in his day mourned over such in the church—those who sought "their own things, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. ii. 21)—and he faithfully told the Corinthian saints that they were full, and rich, and reigning as kings before the time. (1 Cor. iv. 8.)

Jacob was not responsible for New Testament light; he had it not; nor is provision for the present need of those belonging to them to be neglected by God's children of any place or any age. But we cannot but see, in Jacob's life at Padan-aram, the plans and energies of *nature* more prominent than dependence on God, and asking counsel and help of Him.

Yet it succeeded, and looked as if it had been wise; but if God's saved ones are to learn in His school, they must become fools that they may be wise. (1 Cor. iii. 18.) Jacob must learn at "Mahanaim" not to look complacently on the "two hosts," but to have it made to him a "Peniel," the place of the countenance of God as his one only object, and his soul's portion.

With heavenly skill and gentleness was the lesson taught him. The anger of Esau was still his dread, which he feared might be wreaked on his children and his property. With the same natural sagacity and promptitude that had marked his years of toil in acquiring the property, he now plans to defend it, and

himself and his family. He first divides the whole "into two bands," that if Esau took one, at any rate the other might escape. And then he spent anxious night hours in so arranging "a present for Esau his brother" that, by means of a space between each drove of it, and the submissive words he instructed each drover to speak, he might add to the pacifying effect of it on Esau's angry mind.

True, prayer mingles with it—precious prayer; for Jacob was indeed God's child through faith, and God's servant; but self-reliance in matters of this life, and all its involuntary clinging to earthly possessions, was still strong in him: the wisdom of the man of this world, with all its plans, was too much Jacob's wisdom.

But God as "the God of Jacob" would teach him a better way, and suffers him to send even his wives, and children, and household, over the ford of Jabbok, that Jacob might be "left alone." Then came the heavenly Wrestler, to show him by withering for him the sinew of his active *natural* strength, that the child of God, who trusts his own plans and wisdom for life here below, is as truly a fool, as he is who trusts his own heart for any goodness.

And Jacob learns the lesson. He gave up all the strength of his sinewy leg and active foot, and with a child-like clinging of arms and hands to the Mighty One he says, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." As if he would say, "I cease now my self-reliance; I no more make myself a surety for anything; not for the safe keeping of my flocks or herds, nor even of the nearest and dearest ones Thou hast given me. The Jabbok stream between me and them teaches me to be 'poured out' and 'emptied' (see 'Jabbok' in Hebrew) of all wisdom of my own and self-sufficiency. I bow under the withering of my own strength, and now put Thee and Thy fulness in the place of it all: I let all go but Thee and Thy blessing."

And Jacob was only an abundant gainer by this giving up. As Abraham had his Isaac so quietly given back to him, when at God's bidding he had placed him on the altar, to be more than the joy of his tent, so Jacob being now "Israel," and having obtained power with *men* as well as with God, he had not to lose one-half of his flocks in order to save the other half, as he had planned to do; for Esau runs to meet him, not as an enemy, but as a brother! Truly trusting God, and making Him our *all*, is heavenly wisdom for God's children; and all unbelieving and earthly care is but as the folly of the fool.

"Why should I ever careful be
 Since such a God is mine?
 He watches o'er me night and day,
 And tells me 'mine is thine.'"

Thus was God, "the God of Jacob," to turn him at Penuel from the folly of his earthly wisdom, as He had before been at Bethel to save him and make him His own.

But though saved as a sinner, and as a fool made wise now to choose, like Mary, the good part, Jacob has next to learn to be in the fullest sense a *pilgrim*.

In chap. xxxiii. 19 we find him *buying* a part of the very land of which God had said at Bethel He would *give* it to him. *Nature* still wrought in him, and anxious for a possession in it, he *buys* it of the Shechemites. True, he built an altar there, and called it "God, the God of Israel;" but God who sees in our hearts clingings to earth, which we don't ourselves perceive, was still "the God of Jacob," and must teach him to be indeed a pilgrim.

In two ways the lesson came. First, his own sons behave so ill to the Shechemites, that Jacob had himself to say, "Arise, go up to Bethel;" and he left the newly-purchased spot, never again to revisit it, for aught we know. How easily can "the God of Jacob"

put wholesome thorns into any pillow, or any bed of earthly ease, we make for ourselves below!

But the same lesson of being but a stranger and a sojourner was to be even more deeply and effectually taught him. He had left "the parcel of the field" at Shechem, and had put away the "strange gods" which had been harboured in his household (see chap. xxxv. 2), and buried the "earrings" beneath the oak; but *living* objects of over fond delight are not so easily nor so summarily got rid of; and in chap. xxxvii. he loves Joseph "more than all his children," for this weak and merely natural reason, "because he was the son of his old age." How soon we make a nest for ourselves of some sweet gift of God to us, a nest in which, like Job (see Job xxix. 18), we think to spend our days below, and may-be one day die! But again, as with eagle's care, "the God of Jacob" stirs up Jacob's nest, that "the Lord alone may lead him," and there may be "no strange god with him." His own children are again the means used, and Jacob is made to feel the pilgrim word, "Arise, this is not your rest: for it is polluted." (Micah ii. 10.)

But "the God of Jacob" delights to teach us the truth of our being pilgrims more by heavenly and loving attractions than by the sharp goad of sorrows. Jacob indeed is the first one that ever in God's word speaks of life as a "pilgrimage," and not a rest; but it is not till he stands before Pharaoh (Gen. xlvii. 9) that he thus speaks. The prospect of seeing once more the face he loved, the face of Joseph, the assurance that "the waggons" sent were to take him where this loved one was, had enabled him joyfully to leave not his purchased spot at Shechem only, but an earthly Canaan altogether; never to see it again till he shall see it from the throne of glory, and shall inherit it with Christ.

No wonder, then, that he felt himself a *pilgrim*. Slowly do any of us learn this lesson, as did the honoured patriarch; but when learned, it lifts God's

Jacobs so much above the Pharaohs of earth, that, like Paul before Agrippa, they can wish kings and nobles of this world were not almost, but altogether such as they, except their afflictions.

And "the God of all grace" delights in having such "pilgrims," and hence takes such pains to get them. They may be poor, and despised by the world, as the aged shepherd would naturally be by the king; but God is "not ashamed" of those who confess themselves "strangers and pilgrims on the earth"—"not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city." (Heb. xi. 16.)

But there was yet another scene of Jacob's life from which God could delight to call Himself "the God of Jacob." It was his gathering up of his feet for departure out of this world, and his commandment about his burial.

Blest and favoured of God as Jacob now was, he still was of the first Adam—"of the earth, earthy"—a *worm* of the dust: of a "flesh and blood" that could no more inherit the kingdom of God than corruption can inherit incorruption. Like Job, he must wait the days of his "appointed time;" but it is only till his wished-for "change" come. Peace and triumph fill him while he owns that deepest lesson—the deepest and most humbling in one sense that any of us shall ever learn below—that he was but a worm of the earth, and must return to his earth again. "If I wait," says Job, "the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness. I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister." (Job xvii. 13, 14.) But Job could view this truth about himself as tranquilly and triumphantly as Jacob; for it is in his next utterance (chap. xix.) that he so blessedly says, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall arise at last over the dust. (See Hebrew.) * * * * Whom I

shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; my reins within me are consumed" (with desire for that day).

Thus Job glorified God his Saviour, when heart and flesh were failing him, and in the same spirit of faith, and of expectation of a blessed resurrection, we find Jacob, in Gen. xlvii. 28-31, and again, Gen. xlix. 29-32, expressly ordering that his sons should not bury him in any of the costly tombs of Egypt, but should lay him alongside of the dust of the righteous in the cave of Machpelah. As if he would say, I am indeed of the dust; the grave is mine house, and I am of the family of corruption and the worm; but God is the God of the living, and not of the dead, and will raise Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the dead in Christ to "see His face with joy" in the blessed resurrection morning.

Thus Jacob yielded up his breath, and willingly sank to the dust, in himself only as a worm of the earth. And as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ is the God that raiseth the dead, and will delight to make Himself known as such at the resurrection of the just ere long, He accepted the worship and trust of dying Jacob; and on this account also delights in being named "the God of Jacob."

May, then, dear reader, "the name of the God of Jacob defend thee." As the sinner, the fool, the pilgrim, and the worm, there was in Jacob all that in which God could glorify Himself, and make His riches known, as "the God of ALL grace." Yea, "grace and glory" from "the Lord God" (see Ps. lxxxiv. 11) could be alike illustrated in one who, as a sinner and as a fool, so needed the grace that pardons and that makes divinely wise; whilst his confession of himself as a pilgrim and as a worm made room for "the God of glory" to give him a home above, and to raise him to it, even from the dust and corruption of the grave,

And do we not *need* this defence of the name of the God of Jacob? The sinner and fool, the pilgrim and worm, is the true description of each of us in ourselves, though God's children. But practically we are often loth to own it. And it is when we cease to see ourselves in these four characters, or are even backward to do so, that we give Satan such advantage over us. Therefore, to see the defence there is for us in "the name of the God of Jacob" and "the God of *all* grace" is to be forearmed against the enemy of our souls, and enables us to own, like Paul, that we are "the chief of sinners;" to confess, like Moses (Exod. xxiii. 12), that we don't of ourselves know which way to take; and, higher still, to tread in His blessed steps who as the perfect Pilgrim had not where to lay His head, and whose confidence as He sank into death and the grave was this, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades. . . . Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. xvi. 10, 11); and thus to be always, and in all things, "more than conquerors through Him that loved us."—H. D.

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION.

2 Cor. v. 14-21; vi. 1-4.

"FOR the love of Christ constraineth us." Having judged thus, having come to this conclusion, that if One—that is Christ—died for all, then it shows that all died, and that they needed one such as HE, the CHRIST OF GOD, to die in their place; that those made alive through Him and in Him should not live to themselves any longer—spending the rest of their time in the flesh to the lusts of men—but should live unto Him who died for them and rose again to be their Lord and Head; that is, being made alive in and by Him, they should live to do the will of God, as His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works,

according to God's foreordaining that they should walk in them.

"Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh;" henceforth, knowing the worthlessness of the flesh, and the virtue and worth of the new creation, we no longer consider men *after the flesh* as capable of being improved and capacitated for good works. We have learned something far better, even God's new way, and we are so satisfied with it that we cannot look at anything as worth a thought in comparison with it, for it fully meets every requirement; indeed it is God's own work, and "His work is perfect."

"Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." Yea, though we have known Christ as living here below, showing forth what a perfect man should be, living before God "without blemish and without spot," living before men so that none could convince Him (*i.e.* convict Him) of any sin, yet now henceforth we do not know Him, or take knowledge of Him *after the flesh*, *i.e.* as the Perfect One showing forth spotless humanity; but we know Him as the Crucified and Risen One, the Imparter of a new life, the Head of the new creation, the First-begotten from the dead, First-born of many brethren.

If we only think of Christ after the flesh, we get no knowledge of God's power to impart newness of life; we only think of Christ as a perfect example, and our hearts sink in despair at the impossibility of ever attaining to His likeness. But when we consider Him, and know Him as the Risen One from the dead, as the Source and Sustenance of the new and risen life to every one who believes in Him, then we recognise God's wondrous power, and wisdom, and prudence in His new creation in Christ Jesus. "The exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead

. . . . and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the *fulness* of Him that filleth all in all."

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Not "let him be a new creature," as some would have it, as if creation was an effort of the will of the creature, but if any man be in Christ—have received Christ as his Saviour—lo! *he is a new creation of God in Christ*, begotten by the word of God through the grace of God's will. He is passed from death to life.

And if he thus be a new creation, even as after the waters of the flood had submerged the earth there appeared a new earth, so now, as dead and buried with Christ (Rom. vi. 3, 4) he—the believing one—is raised with Christ, to walk in newness of life. If thus, I say, a new creation, then surely "old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." No longer can the thus *quicken*ed one (Ephes. ii. 1) live according to the will of man, for he has left the old estate of Adam, and has been made participant of the life and spirit of Christ. He has died, and his life is now hid with Christ in God. The life he now lives, whilst in the flesh on earth, is by the faith of the Son of God, who is the Way, the Truth, the Life. Ushered into a new life, capacitated and endowed, not only to enjoy, but actively to carry out the things of that new life, he shows forth the praises of Him who hath called him out of darkness into His marvellous light.

"And all (these) things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ," that we should be to the praise of the glory of His grace. Having reconciled us to Himself, and having recreated us and imparted to us His own spirit "that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God," He hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to go and make known the riches of His grace to others;

even the glorious tidings, that actually God was "in Christ" (making Himself known in Christ) reconciling the world unto Himself, declaring or manifesting His love in His only begotten Son; and thus, by proving the fulness of His love in giving His Son to die for sinners, showing to the world, not His hatred of them, but His love, thus affording them the means of knowing He was not willing that any should perish, but rather that all should come to repentance.

"Reconciling," "not imputing trespasses;" for "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved." This is the day of God's long-suffering and grace, not of His judgment. The judgment is deferred, and the day of grace lengthened out, that the God of grace may give full proof of His will to save. And now God hath committed to us (even placed in us as depositaries) this ministry of reconciliation (having, as before shown, capacitated us to receive it, by making us who believe *new creatures*). Therefore we go about as ambassadors for Christ; and it is as though God was beseeching men through us, using us as channels, as speaking-trumpets (silver trumpets wrought out of atonement-money): and this is our message, the word we speak to men—We pray them and beseech them, on behalf of our Lord Christ, Oh, be ye reconciled to God! Turn ye; for why will ye die? for God has made Christ, His dear Son, to be sin for us, even Him who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. We therefore, as His fellow-labourers, beseech you also, beloved, that ye thus respond to His desire, and receive not His grace in vain, but seek to live to His glory.

A. O. M.

PERFECTION—WHAT IS IT?*

BY J. DENHAM SMITH.

WE are only happy as we are in the truth, and as the truth brings us into God. God's people need much just now to be helped and guided in the truth.

No doubt the child of God should be in liberty; that is his only true state, as shown in Rom. viii. Rom. vii. shows us how we have got into it; but then, as another has said, "I must first be *in* the seventh of Romans before I can get *out* of it." Many have never been rightly in it. They have never known the true misery and wretchedness of themselves in the light of God's own searching law; never known, or known but too slightly, the "O wretched man that I am!" Others, I believe, have been *in* it for a long time when they ought to have been *out* of it, and who on getting out call it a higher life; whereas *being out of it*, in liberty and joy, is the only true life which God owns as that which is natural to us as Christians.

It is wonderful just now how Scripture is being pressed in a wrong way. Thus, for example, the getting out of Rom. vii. is often used as if it were quite exceptional; whereas triumph and joy are simply elemental to our true life as Christians.

Romans vi. is made to say, that we in ourselves are dead, and that *sin* in us is dead; whereas what it teaches is, we are to *reckon* ourselves dead, that as we *have* died in Christ, sin in us, in Christ's death, received its deserved doom. But nowhere does Scripture teach *sin* to be dead; what it does teach is, that having died to it in Christ, *judicially*, we are to be dead to it *morally*.

The great truth in Rom. vi. is, that we *have* died in

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Christ, and that we are made alive *in Christ* before God. The death and the life are alike *in Christ*. And on these two truths are built corresponding truths, viz., that we are to live as those who have thus died, and who are alive in Christ before God. The doctrine is, that we are not now in a *sin*-state. Sin had dominion over us. We were *in* its dominion where it asserted its right over us. We owed it death; but Christ by dying has paid what we owed, and taken us completely out of it.

Now I must know this if I am to be happy; also how I am related to the "body of sin." To faith the "body of sin" has been judicially annihilated, but in no other sense annihilated: our old man was crucified with Christ when Christ died for us. Now, therefore, let its life be nullified in us. As said by another: "Sin, properly speaking, has no body now to claim as its own; its title to it has been blotted out by the death of Christ. Hence all our members have changed masters." The body is the Lord's; we are the Lord's. We have died with our Substitute. He is raised from the dead, and we are raised up together with Him. Hence also another thing—being one with Him in resurrection, *we are alive in Him before God*. Thus we are to reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin but alive unto God, *both* IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, and *not* in ourselves.

Those words, "*have died*," are most important to know, for they direct our eyes *backwards* on Christ, and not *inwards* upon ourselves. Our teaching on these chapters needs to be very clear and simple, and convincing as to Christ. . . . Their great value is that they unfold *Christ*, and the believer as associated with Him. They indicate the real blessedness there is for us now in Christ, which Paul knew, and which seems for the most part to be gone from many Christians. That blessedness is that our true life is before God in heaven, where Christ now is, and that we are in spirit

where He is; and in standing before God *as He is*, even *Christ*, who is the beginning of the new creation of God.

Romans viii. is not our full blessedness. Full liberty is there; our hope is there; God's purposes and His counselled glories are there. But 1 Cor. xv. shows Christ gone into heaven, *the Heavenly One*; and the believer, as now already there, and as He is, that "HEAVENLY ONE." What more wonderful? "*As is the Heavenly (Christ), so also are they who are heavenly.*" This is perfection truly, *but it is perfection in Christ*—blessedness truly, *but it is all in Christ*. As to our own personal perfection, what is it? Where will it be, and when? Our only true perfection is, that we are to be as Christ *glorified* at His coming. Never till then. For this we have been predestinated, that we may be "*conformed to the image of the Son.*"

We shall attain to it when we awake in His likeness. Never before. Our perfection is to be what He Himself is as very man—GLORIFIED. This is our true goal. It was a *glorified* Christ whom Paul saw. He is to fashion our bodies of humiliation like unto His glorious body—in fact, like unto Himself, as in Rom. viii. 29. Thus it is *there*, beloved friends, your eye is to be directed. There *alone* is our TRUE PERFECTION.

I look up into heaven, and I see the wonderful, glorious Son of the living God—holy, blessed—what words *can* describe Him? I see His person beautiful, radiant with glory. His love—who can tell it? Dear children of God, your thought of what this last blessedness will be depends on what is *now* your sense of Christ. Paul had an ever-attaining sense of it. Overlooking all meaner perfections, like intermediate experiences, he could say, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend (or lay hold of) that for which also I am apprehended (or laid hold) of Christ Jesus." And again, looking beyond all else, all

else either here or in the paradise of God—"If by any means I might attain to the resurrection from among the dead."

As to any *present* perfection; there is a perfection surely. But what is it? Very different from what many are thinking of just now. It was Eve's perfection in Eden's innocency never to know she was unclothed—so little was she to have any thought of herself, being occupied with him with whom she was by God made one, or rather with Him from whom the ineffable blessedness she enjoyed had come. So a saint's present perfection is to be so taken up with Christ that self and all else are lost sight of.

This was how Paul was in the third heaven. He said he did not know if he were in the body or out of it—giving us thus a sweet idea of what is the state of our own disembodied ones. They are absent from the body and present with the Lord, but are doubtless so engaged with Him that, like Paul, they may not know, or for the time feel the absence of the body. Yet they will know when the true perfection comes, for then the *eye* will see Him and be satisfied with seeing—the whole body will be radiant with the beauty and blessedness and glory of the Lord Himself.

Alas, many are not thus looking! It is not at Christ they are looking, but at themselves. Their constant looking at self, or at their own faith, beclouds them of that true perfectness which is now theirs in Christ, and of this glorious personal perfectness which soon awaits them.

Dear friends, we *are* to be personally sanctified. We are to be holy. We are to be ever in the enjoyment of an ever-growing communion with the unclouded face of our Father in heaven. But it is not to be attained by law-keeping, or self-keeping, or by a dozing dreaming of a being satisfied with self. A mere improvement of temper is not enough. Freedom from inordinate cares is not all. The Bible never con-

templates Christians continuing in these. Ours is to be the "unveiled face" of such an one as Paul, looking not at self, or at faith, or at the work of Christ in us, but at Christ HIMSELF in the glory, and so to be "changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." They who do not thus look miss the personal holiness and divine beauty which are the glorious moral effect of such looking.

Dear friends, every *word* of God is of use. It is not a look, or any *one act* of looking, it is "*looking*"—that "*looking*" which becomes a life-long act and habit of the soul, and gives a life-long moral adding of glory to glory to our characters and lives, our words and actions, as living epistles of Christ, known and read of all men.

It is not looking at faith, or self, or at Christ merely as He was here in this world, or on the work of Christ which is in us even—all which is a lowering of the standard, as it is a missing of the blessedness of true Christian life. The true Christian standard is *all* CHRIST; not only Christ here dying for us, that, of course; nor Christ as setting us an example, and living in us, that also, of course; but Christ risen from the dead—A CHRIST IN HEAVEN—completely beyond the level of things here—a Christ such as Paul at his conversion saw—One who is gone up into heaven for us, appearing in the very presence of God—so that we are as much beyond the death that was due to us here as is Christ, and as much freed from the doom of sin as is Christ; as loved and as accepted before God, and as righteous and holy as is Christ. Our *true life* is IN HEAVEN, *before God, in Christ.*

Our standing thus in Christ is not an attainment, not the result of years of soul-striving and toiling, but ours the moment Christ is seen and believed—all rooting in God's love through Christ, which love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us, even the perfect love which casts out fear. Such, in

few words, is the blessedness in Christ of every child of God. And what is called our Christian state here, our personal holiness, comes of faith being occupied, according to our sense of what Christ is and of what we are in and with Christ Himself, who is *in heaven*.

Ah, it is a poor thing to be brought from the low condition of being wretched in self, to be satisfied with self! What I am speaking of is being satisfied with Christ, and the glorious moral transforming power of it over our whole character and lives. Christ is gone up from the world, so in spirit have we. Christ has sanctified Himself, put Himself outside this present evil age. If we have gone to Him outside the camp, we are where He is. His perfection could not link itself with the course of this age—its habits, pastimes, its so-called pleasures, or its tastes—nor can ours. This is the true moral effect of the Christ who is in heaven being formed in us by the power of the Spirit who also is in us; this too is our highest life to be lived on earth—the only one, as I have said, natural to a true child of God.

Many who have been living on the low ground of always being wretched—the law and sin-wretchedness of Rom. vii.—merely hoping they were saved, but who have now got into a sense of God's love to them as saved sinners, and into the enjoyment of a corresponding communion with God, have an advance surely. It is blessed for them to *know* that they *are* saved, that the love of God *is* shed abroad in their hearts, that they have now communion with God, that they have a power against sin which once they had not; all this is truly an advance. But on what? for what they had seems to have been as near to nothing as possible.

This advance is only the normal state of one just out of the seventh and into the eighth of Romans. I know it is blessed truly, but it is not all; the scene in which we are placed gives us to look far higher than

any such attainments or acquirements in ourselves. The work wrought by Christ in me is one thing, but Christ Himself in heaven is quite another.

Oh, think of our being one with Him *there* in all the ineffable sweetness and joy of His own dying, yet undying, love, and in all the sweetness and joy of the Father's love! We are not in heavenly places merely; for as Canaan was the scene for special and often dreadful conflict with the foe, so with us in heavenly places. We are "*made nigh*," where, as with Aaron, *no sin, no conflict, no sorrow can ever come!* And this is our true Christian *place!* We are *holy*. We are *washed*. We are *justified*. We are perfect, or we could not be there. But we have boldness to enter *there* by the blood of Christ. Blessed be His name!

And, beloved friends, we are there where "there is no night." God and the Lamb are there. The precious blood of Christ, and its whole value before God for us is there, telling us of sin gone, and righteousness accepted. What a place! It is only those that in spirit live there who can down here bring with them the *tone* and *spirit* of it, so betraying to others that *practically* "as is the heavenly so also are they that are heavenly." The whole way for all this has been made clear for us by Christ, beginning, as with Aaron, outside the camp—beginning on the cross, but reaching all the way into the holiest of all.

Let us now see how the way has been made good for us. Sin, death, sin in the flesh, all stood therein against us. But Christ came, and the Lord said to our Lord, "If thou art for the sinner, *thou* must die." He did die for *our sins*. What a rock of certainty for salvation is here!

Does He take *sin* on Him—that evil *root* of our sins—sin which has its seat "in the flesh," that carnal mind which is enmity to God, and which is distinct from the sins it has committed or may yet commit? The Lord said "sin in the flesh" must be condemned,

and if thou art instead of the sinner in whom this is, "thou must die." He did die. What a rock again of certainty for the peace of the soul in the presence of this root of sin is here!

Does He take the place of the sinner *himself*—the sinner who has the sins, and in whom is this root—sin in the flesh? The Lord said, "If thou art one with him, having taken his place, thou must die." He did die: Christ was crucified, and the sinner himself crucified with Him, and *buried*. What a rock again for our perfect rest!

On all these accounts we had to come into judgment; but Christ having been judged and executed on the tree, the judgment is now overpast: "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment." Now here ends our *old* creation state. It ends in death, Christ's death; and ours also, as God sees it, transpired in Him. Blessed end! dead and buried; for burial blots out the last visible trace of the dead. Our Adam life, as God views us, continues *buried—forgotten*. Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

But this is only the end of the old. What now is the beginning of the *new* creation? Christ risen and in heaven; not Christ there and His church here. The one simply in heaven, the other on earth. No, but Christ and His church as one. "If any man be in Christ—*New Creation*," not the *old* that was buried made a new creature, but "*new creation*" to which by faith he now belongs, and according to which all he now does is to be regulated. He is to live not according to the first, but the second.

This is what saints do not see; accordingly, their spirit is not in *heaven consciously where Christ is now*; nor do they realize consciously that they are with Christ in the new creation and *as He is*; and accordingly again, though much may be said about risen life

and new creation, it is to many for the most part quite unknown; for what practically is risen life?

As one with Christ—of the *same creation*—the spirit mingles its thoughts and affections with the scene where He is, and longs to be in the same with Him, and like Him who is there.

Had our young Duchess been compelled to remain in Russia after the bridal moment, and the young Duke compelled to return to England, her spirit would have been in England, shall I say pining? yes, pining, *but* for a promise he had made, “I will come and take you to myself.” Her life, one might say, and spirit would thenceforth be not so much where she *was* as where she *loved*.

This is practically risen life. But it is only by abiding in Christ that our joy thus in Him can be full. It is a poor, imperfect simile, but it helps us to understand what our Christ is to us at the right hand of God, and what we are to Him. And what, as belonging to the same “one new man,” our “newness of life” really is, the life natural to such condition *in this world*; all flowing from our being thus identified with Christ, from having the same blessed life, and from being possessed of the same blessed Spirit who dwells within us, and who is the power for filling us, through the truth, out of all the fulness of God which is in Him.

I ask you, dear child of God, with such a Christ, from beginning to end of our course, what room is there for fear or doubt? or for any low platform from which to rise to a higher?

No, indeed! I may know Him *more*, and may enjoy Him *more*, and may live *immeasurably more*, according to *what I know*, but I cannot attain to a greater height in rank, or title, or assurance, or perfectness in Him than I now possess. “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;" and here again this "purifieth himself" means far more than the removal of a few everyday personal defects, as of our tempers, or our cares—it puts its knife to all that is of man which is opposed to God, to the so-called pleasures of the world, to its religion, to its tastes, to all in fact of the old creation that *can* be cut away; so that at His coming we may not be ashamed, having nothing to do, nothing to undo, no evil connections to abandon as to habit or affection, no evil alliances to break with, being not only of, but living according to, the new creation. The old Adam life being left, as it were, *in the grave*.

Here is our practical holiness, our life as saints, our walk on earth—"purifieth himself;" *himself!* for what reason? according to what rule? Oh, looking at Christ! "even as He" (the spotless One) "is pure."

And mark that word, "But we know." Not we think, or we trust, or we hope, but we *know*." This again is our normal intelligence as Christians. We have it as *divine knowledge* from God in His truth. We know—*what?* Why, that we *are now* sons of God, and that Christ *is* to appear in glory, and that we *are to be like Him, then and there*. Oh, these are real *knows*; for they are of God. We know Christ, we know He is ours. "Deep things of God" these, revealed to us by His Spirit. Thus "Christ is mine, and is now before God for me, and will soon come for me," may every child of God confidently say. Melancholy delusion, when Satan persuades to the contrary!

"Dr. Kraws" (a Christian), Luther tells us, "got to believe that Christ was now before the Father *accusing* him. It so shadowed the blessed Christ of God from him, that from very fear and terror of soul he died." Now, any real view of God's love in Christ to him as a sinner would have been a higher life to him surely, but from the first he might have known what belonged to his true life; viz., that the Christ of

God is always "*advocate*" for His own, and never "*accuser*." It was a lie of his old heart still in him, the work of the serpent, who seeks to undo in us the belief of God's truth.

Grandly thus in the new creation does Scripture associate the believer with Christ. But here another thing needs to be stated—What *is* the believer who is so associated? I mean, what is he as to himself? For this also needs to be known. For want of it many are perplexed.

A Christian is both righteous and a sinner. He *is* (is *now*) "the righteousness of God." Glorious "*is!*" because the believer is *now* in Christ. In himself—that is, in his flesh, which has been counted by God as buried—there still dwelleth no good thing; his own righteousness, from his own old heart, is as filthy rags. Nevertheless he is not viewed in Scripture as a child of Adam, having become a child of God; still, till he knows *full deliverance in Christ* (Rom viii. 2) there may be the bitterness of bondage. Hence there is a law in his members warring against the law of his mind. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit. It is the very nature of the flesh to do so. It never can and never will do aught else. Can you wash out this element which lusts? Never. Improve it? Never. Extinguish it? Never. It is its life-work through all time still to *war* against the Spirit, as it is blessedly the work of the Spirit to war against it; which war shows the Spirit is there. No Spirit, no war. And if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

It is *not* knowing this that gives such perplexity to the half-instructed mind. "What," says Satan, "*you* a Christian, and sin in you!" "Yes," says Rom. viii., "*sin in the flesh*." Some vehemently contend that this evil fount may be "cleansed out." Happy thing if it could. Was it ever so cleansed out? Nay, it was *condemned*; a very different thing. It was condemned; yea, had its doom on the cross.

As to its presence, it is in each believer, has its place in the flesh, but will not have any more doom. For "there is now therefore no condemnation (or nothing is a condemnation) to them that are in Christ Jesus." "Sin is truly in me," may a child of God say, "but I dwell in rest and peace under that most enlarged and ample heaven of its having had its doom in Christ."

It is well, beloved friends, to be clear on this; for some have gone so far as to say that the Spirit cannot dwell where sin is. He dwells even where sin is *allowed* by us. But then it is to witness *against* it, to grieve *against* it, to *convict of it*, and to lead to repentance and restored communion.

With such confusion it is no marvel that souls are in bondage and uncertainty. They mean, perhaps, *some* right thing, but they put it in a wrong way. The Spirit of God does dwell in a believer; and sin is in a believer. But this is the truth we should know—the Spirit of God could not dwell in us, if sin in the flesh *had not had its condemnation*. No; one part of my enjoyed communion with God is about this very thing, that God has condemned sin in the flesh, and that now, sinful as I am in myself, through Christ, who is mine, His Spirit does dwell within me.

What bondage if there could be no communion where there is the presence of evil! Men seek to spoil us of this knowledge of Christ. They do not see that Christ hath made *this* also, sin in the flesh, judicially His own, and made an end of it on the cross.

Dear perplexed child of God, it is impossible in this life that thou shouldst have no sin at all *in* thee, that thy flesh should be cleansed out, without spot, for as yet thou hast spot enough. Every thought of thy natural heart is sin. Grace doth restrain the activity of sin, and prevent its practice; but the irrepressible, who can repress? Nothing but the unhindered power of the Spirit of God who dwells in us.

That which has life will seek to assert itself; but I am told (Col. iii. 3) that the old life is gone by the cross, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." And I am not therefore to live that life? Yes, but as sin in the flesh is still in me, it will never cease to seek to revive it again, as in the case of Paul when a thorn in the flesh had to be given him lest he should be exalted above measure, that is, lest he should sin. And this was at a time when, if ever, on having been in the third heaven, he might have considered himself to have been free from sin. But, alas! whilst here, the holiest Christian is prone to a departure from the living God. However holy, there will be still room for that word, "needeth not save to wash *his feet*."

Have I then no liberty, no power against sin? Much in many ways. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." We have in fact a fourfold liberty; we have:—

First, liberty from the condemning power of sin. This is power and peace, to know that sin has had its doom, and can no more condemn us.

Secondly, liberty from the moral dominion of the flesh. What the law could not do through the weakness or sinfulness of the flesh, Christ, in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh, *that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who (are free now to) walk, not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

Thirdly, liberty from the practice of sin. "How shall we who have died to sin live any longer therein?" It is by abiding in Christ through the Spirit that we do not sin. "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not."

Fourthly, liberty from the harassment of the law, which uses sin against us, and would bring us into death. "The law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth." But we who are in Christ do not longer live. Death having ensued in Christ, the law's dominion has ceased. We are freed thus in all these ways that we may serve God acceptably, and that we may yield

ourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

All this liberty we have now ; but there is more to follow—the liberty of the glory—when the creature also (creation) shall be set free from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. Then, in resurrection glory, the sons of God will be manifested—will be glorified together with Christ. Both body and spirit will then enjoy the full heaven of sunlight and joy. As another has said, “A long breath we shall draw in every sense when we are there. What a romance of real life this glorious life will be !”

But what now is to be the result in our own minds of all that we have said ?

This specially, that there are deeper depths of sin and of the flesh than we have yet ever discovered. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.”

This also—to be satisfied with self is to be blind to that deceit, and ignorant of that wickedness. It was a remark of one of the holiest of men, “My soul sickens when I look at myself only for a minute or two.” Bunyan speaks of “that villain self,” showing his estimate of what it is. Job *before* he saw God was well content with himself, but not when self was seen in the light of God. Then he was content with *God*. Peter also, before he saw the glory in Christ, cried out, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.”

’Tis a poor boast this, of not sinning ; and a poor thing to compare ourselves with ourselves ; saying, that at one time we did sin, and that at another “for whole days” we did not sin. Quite new also the boast, “Only one difficulty left—*omissions*.” Did ever Paul speak thus ? No ; the highest as to himself, when he had done all was, I am an unprofitable servant. Did David ? “My sin,” he says, “is ever before me.”

Not surely to condemn him, for he could also say, "Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin," but to remind him what he was, to keep him, as to himself, for ever and for ever humble; yea, self-aborrent before the Lord.

It is a vain thing to commune with our own heart instead of the Lord's. Better for David to have communed only with His truth, for then he had never said, "I shall one day perish at the hand of Saul." Ah, no! self-approval is not holiness; quietness is not holiness. But there may be much holiness with sore conflict. Said Paul, "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." "Without were fightings, and within were fears."

Further, what we have said shows that we have here no perfection that satisfies. No; I see nothing here to satisfy, not even Christ's blessed work *in* or *for* me. Nothing but our seeing the Lord in resurrection, and our being like Him and with Him, will satisfy. I shall be satisfied when I awake in His likeness. We shall be perfected then—satisfied then. God puts nothing less before a believer than absolute and eternal blessedness.

Meanwhile death surely will cause blessing to a believer, for it will put him where death has no more place. But it is not death we are looking for, nor yet heaven. No. Our present and our future are beautifully portrayed in those words of the hymn—

Midst the darkness, storm, and sorrow,

One bright gleam I see;

Well I know the blessed morrow,

Christ will come for me.

Midst the light, and peace, and glory,

Of the Father's home,

Christ for me is watching, waiting—

Waiting till I come.

Long the blessed Guide has led me

By the desert road;

Now I see the golden towers—

City of my God.

There amidst the love and glory,
 He is waiting yet ;
 On His hands a name is graven,
 He can ne'er forget.

There amidst the songs of heaven,
 Sweeter to His ear
 Is the footfall through the desert,
 Ever drawing near.

There made ready are the mansions,
 Glorious, bright, and fair ;
 But the Bride the Father gave Him
 Still is wanting there.

Who is this who comes to meet me
 On the desert way,
 As the morning star foretelling
 God's unclouded day ?

He it is who came to win me,
 On the cross of shame ;
 In His glory well I know Him,
 Evermore the same.

Oh, the blessed joy of meeting—
 All the desert past !
 Oh, the wondrous words of greeting
 He shall speak at last !

He and I together entering
 Those bright courts above ;
 He and I together sharing
 All the Father's love.

*Where no shade nor stain can enter,
 Nor the gold be dim ;
 In that holiness unsullied,
 I shall walk with Him.*

Meet companion then for Jesus,
 From Him, for Him made ;
 Glory of God's grace for ever,
 There in me displayed.

He who in His hour of sorrow
 Bore the curse alone ;
 I who through the lonely desert
 Trod where He had gone.

He and I in that bright glory
 One deep joy shall share ;
*Mine, to be for ever with Him :
 His, that I am there.*

THE PRECEPTS AND THE PROMISES.

It is of the utmost importance to the development of our Christian life, that the mutual relation subsisting between the Precepts and the Promises should be clearly understood and consistently recognized.

We have in the word of God "exceeding great and precious promises," given to us of our God for the encouragement of our obedience and the strengthening of our faith—promises that can never be forgotten without loss, nor disbelieved without weakness; for it is true of each promise, as well as of the "sure word of prophecy," that we do well to take heed to it, "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place." (2 Pet. i. 19.)

Promises are designed to comfort in darkness, and to hold out hopes and consolations, both present and future, for which we can never sufficiently thank God. But there is a danger of promises being allowed to occupy the place of the Promiser; and whenever this is the case, God has lost His right place, and the promise becomes an idol, standing between the soul and God, and hence calling for a discipline that seems to break the promise, in order to replace God upon His throne, and to set HIM, and Him only, before our eyes.

It is God who must go before us. He is our Shepherd, as we read in Ps. xxiii. 1, and we are to follow after Him, seeking to say with the Lord Jesus, "I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." If we thus set God before us, we are assured that "goodness and mercy shall follow" us all the days of our life (*v.* 6), until we reach home, and dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. God before, the promises following after, is God's order and faith's contentment. God is our vanguard, and His promises our rearward. This is what we have to seek to realize, and then all will be well.

Obedience fixes its eye on God, making His precepts its delight, and pleasing *Him* the one concern. Let *us* keep the precepts: *God* will keep the promises. Let God's name, and kingdom, and will, be paramount with *us*, and we can trust to *His* loving care for the fulfilment of all the promises of His word; they will so surely follow after us that, without seeking them, they will seek and find us out, just in the right time and in the right way, and we shall be able to sing—

“In some way or other the Lord will provide:
It may not be *my* way, it may not be *thy* way,
And yet, in His own way, ‘the Lord will provide.’
Then we'll trust in the Lord, and He will provide;
Yes, we'll trust in the Lord, and He will provide.”

In reading the Bible we cannot but be struck with the way in which the precepts, the commandments, the ordinances, the statutes of our God have been the source of delight, of joy, of comfort, of glory to the people of God. Thus all through Ps. cxix. the will of God, as manifested in His law and precepts, is the object of the soul's love, as we read, “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.” So also with the righteous One in Ps. i: “His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth He meditate day and night.”

This delight in the preceptive part of God's word, and this daily meditation thereon, is that which marks the man of God, to whom all the precepts are precious, as exponents of the character of that God with whom we have to do.

The precepts are *not* arbitrary enactments, but glorious revelations of God to the obedient heart, which has learned to obey because taught to love. Such an one reads the book to know his Master's will, and hears Him saying, “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.” Obedience yields happiness, and proves love. “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” Love seeks to *know* and obedience seeks to *do* the will of

God; and the Spirit of truth will guide the single eye and the upright heart into all His truth.

But how many read their bibles to find promises to comfort them, rather than precepts whereby they may glorify God! And what is the result? The promises which are put in the place of God fail to satisfy, because they are actually unfulfilled.

Every promise hangs on precept; seemingly broken promises and disappointed hopes are given to show that some mistake has been made; for God cannot lie, and all His promises in Christ Jesus are, "Yea and Amen." God has not failed, but the promise-seeker has failed, and the result is that an apparent mystery is thrown around the dealings of God; despondency and discouragement come in, and Satan, taking advantage of the darkness, leads the unexercised soul to question the promise-making and covenant-keeping God, and suggests the thought, "Hath God said?"

When, however, obedience occupies the heart, which it will do when the love of God reigns, the precepts are taken as our heritage for ever, and the believer is content to leave all the promises with God, knowing that He will accomplish them in His own way, and hence that we need not trouble ourselves about them, but rather look at them as our servants, appointed of our Father in heaven to follow after us, and to add to us all that we need, whether spiritually or naturally.

To illustrate this let us turn to the history of the "father of the faithful."

In obedience to the divine call, Abraham had come out of the land of his nativity, and found himself a pilgrim and stranger in a strange land, yet the inheritor of mighty promises in the future to himself and to his seed. But years rolled on, and Sarah was childless still; and Abraham sorrowfully says, "Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless? . . . and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir."

The promise is then made more clear and distinct;

for God says, "This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir." God then shows him the stars of heaven, and says, "So shall thy seed be;" and Abraham, we read, "believed in the Lord; and it was counted to him for righteousness."

Thus Abraham's faith is characterized as *faith in God*, which is the true essence of all saving faith. It is not faith in this or that fact, but faith in the living God Himself; as our Lord says in John xiv.: "Believe *in God*, believe also *in me*." Personal faith in a personal God, and in Jesus Christ whom He has sent, is alone essential to salvation.

In due time Isaac was born, and in him were made to centre all the promises of God: for "in Isaac shall thy seed be called," said God to Abraham, when commanding him to cast Ishmael out of the house.

But now the time of proving comes, as we read in Gen. xxii. God will prove Abraham, and see whether precept or promise holds the stronger place in his heart; whether obedience to God rises paramount to every other consideration; whether God or Isaac occupies the chief place in Abraham's thoughts.

But as Abraham's righteousness consisted in his believing God, so, when Isaac was to be sacrificed, *God* remained; and he laid hold on the mighty hand of the Promiser, and let the promise go from his grasp, knowing that God abode, though Isaac was slain.

Thus nerved with mighty faith in the Almighty God, he took that three days' journey. His faith staggered not. He had received Isaac out of Sarah's dead womb, and he was prepared to receive Isaac, though dead and burnt on his altar, alive in resurrection. And so, with every arrangement made, the fire, the knife, and the wood in hand, they go together up mount Moriah. The altar is built, the victim is bound and laid on it, the knife is taken, and the hand stretched out, when the voice that had said unto him "Abraham,"

(v. 1) now says again (v. 11), "Abraham, Abraham." In the eye of God the act had been performed, and thus we read, in Heb. xi., "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, *offered up* Isaac.*"

God reckons to us faith's purpose (for this is faith's obedience), whether actually carried out or not, and it is counted for righteousness. God therein justifies before man (as we read in James ii. 21) him who has already been justified before God. Faith and obedience always go together; the one seen as existing inwardly by God, the other seen as working outwardly by man; for with the heart man believeth, and with the mouth is the outward confession made.

God had proved that Abraham feared Him, and that in holy integrity of soul he would obey Him at all hazard, whether of personal feeling or of promised hopes, all of which centred in Isaac. God had made His own provision. God had provided the Lamb, and now Abraham can call the name of the place "Jehovah-jireh;" and "to this day" we may truly say, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen."

Jehovah-jireh will ever be found where consummated obedience may find us placed. God must go before us, and Jehovah-jireh is seen to follow after, a token of "the goodness and mercy" that ever follow those who follow the Shepherd, who obey His voice, and go wherever He leads; and even the enemy shall be constrained to say to the obedient, waiting, trusting soul, as Saul said to David, "Thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail."

May this be our happy portion, and then as "children of obedience" we shall at all times, and under all circumstances, find that "all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God

* The perfect tense, *προσεννοχεν*, is used, as if it were already done, although in point of fact, as we are told, "he that had received the promises *was offering up* (*προσεφερεν*, imperfect tense) his only begotten son."

by us." The promises will then be no longer looked at as given for the selfish enjoyment of the unexercised seeker after them, but for the glory of the covenant-keeping God, who is glorified in the fulfilment of His own promises. His eyes "*run to and fro* throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2 Chron. xvi. 9); and surely if God's eyes run to and fro to find out those to whom He can show Himself strong in fulfilling His promises, we need not fear, but with perfect heart and single eye may cast all His promises into His loving bosom, and live only to obey.

H. G.

JESUS CHRIST COME IN THE FLESH.

1 JOHN v. 1-9.

EVERY one who believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed One of God, sent forth by Him to save, is begotten of God; for "as many as received HIM (the Christ), to them gave He the right to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born . . . of God." And every one that loveth God the Begetter (and love is of God by His ingenerating power, for God is love), loveth him also that is the God-begotten, even every one of the family of God, the first-fruits of His creatures. And hereby may we know that we do veritably love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the way in which the love of God is shown to be in us, in that we love to keep His commandments. And surely they are not grievous; for His yoke is easy, and His burden is light. For all that is begotten of God wins the victory over the world.

"If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Now the way to obtain victory over the world is by faith in Him, who not only presenteth

to faith *counter attraction in Himself* against the temptations of the world, but imparteth to us, by His ingeneration, a life which is faith-sustained; so that, living by faith *in Him*, we shall be more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

Who is he that overcometh the world? No one but he who believeth that *Jesus* (whom men deny to have existed in human form, affirming He was but a Spirit) is the Son of God, even the Son of the Blessed. The one that trusts in Him gains sure victory; for *He*, the Son of God Most High, rewardeth the faithful one's faith by succouring him in need, and enabling him to gain glorious victory.

And lest any should seek to throw discredit on the fact of the power and glorious being of Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, we write unto you (says the apostle) that this is He that came by water and blood—Jesus, the Christ; for “one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.” Yea, he thus was inspired of God to write that ye might know it was no delusion; not a mere illusion, but a veritable fact, that Jesus, the man Christ Jesus, died; and that, as a proof of His being very man, and not a Spirit (as some would have it), we saw the blood and water flow from out His pierced side.

Thus Jesus, the Christ, has come by water and blood; has come before us palpably and plainly as *the man* Christ Jesus by this outpouring of blood and water from His pierced side; for no spirit could have thus been wounded and have given forth blood and water. He came not by water only, but by water and blood; and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, through the word, to the fact, because the Spirit of God is truth.

There are three, then, that bear witness to this wondrous truth of the personality and real humanity

of the Lord Jesus* (1) the Spirit; (2) the water; (3) the blood. The water and the blood flowing from Him when pierced are indubitable facts, and the Spirit attests the truth thereof; and the three agree in one.

Now, if we receive the witness of man concerning things, the witness of God is greater; and this is the witness which He hath testified of His Son.

A. O. M.

THE CHURCH: HER CALLING, AND CONSEQUENT POSITION AND OFFICE.

(Continued from page 167.)

EPH. iii. 3-6, and v. 32. Nothing less than "all truth" is the portion of the Church. As God is light, so the very brightness of His glory has been exhibited to us in Jesus. Moses, truly, declared much; yet he and all the holy men of old knew that there were secrets in the divine mind which, though they desired to see, they saw not, and to hear, they heard not.

It was the "PROPHET LIKE UNTO MOSES, into whose mouth God would put His words"—it was He alone that should declare God: and He alone was competent to manifest and introduce that SECRET, of which, though it was in the mind of God from all eternity, and though it was early foreshadowed by type, God made not the full declaration and development until after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, and the descent of the Spirit "who leadeth into all truth."

This secret—this great mystery—"the mystery concerning Christ and His Church," was indeed unfolded very gradually. Christ confined His personal ministry to Israel: though, throughout it, He treated Israel as apostate, and intimated the approaching change in dispensation.

Amongst the earliest intimations of this is that

* The words "in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth," are an acknowledged interpolation.

“astonishing” sermon on the mount; every line of which opposed the strictly Jewish feeling—*i.e.* the feeling of one who considered himself as under law, and therefore that *law* (or the assertion of right, and the punishment of the invader of it) was the rule betwixt himself and others. Law knowing nothing of mercy, the asserter of law manifestly takes the place either of one who has not himself transgressed, or of one who, in his transgressions, incurs punishment—of one, therefore, who has the title to deal with transgressors in the way of retributive justice. “The people were astonished at His teaching,” both at the unheard-of matter of it and at the authoritative manner of it. Indeed even now, unless we see distinctly that the spirit of the present dispensation is, not simply diverse from, but absolutely in contrast with, the spirit of the preceding one, we shall necessarily either charge God foolishly, setting God speaking by His Son against God speaking by Moses, or (what is now so extensively done) so accommodate and adapt the two dispensations as to neutralize both.

The principle is, “The Priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.” So, the kingdom being changed from an earthly one to a heavenly one, the law of the kingdom is changed also.

God, whilst He dealt with a people in a dispensation of righteousness of law (*i.e.* in an award of earthly good and evil according to their obedience or disobedience), made His own principle of dealing applicable to His people one with another: whilst He was dealing with them ostensibly in law, He sanctioned law-dealing between man and man. But when God changed His principle of dealing with man from LAW to GRACE, then He changed also the principle of dealing of man with his fellow. Having called us, not to blessing under conditions fulfilled, but “to glory according to His free purpose in Christ Jesus,” He grants us this principle as the principle of our dealing one with another. To

the children of the kingdom it is permitted that their principle of conduct be that of the kingdom and of their Father; so that a principle (viz. that of equity or righteous retaliation) which was right and fitting to man under Moses or in nature, would be wholly incongruous to a follower of Jesus, an imitator and a child of the God of grace.

THE HEAVENLY CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH.

Let us dwell a little upon the *distinctness* and the *characteristic nature* of the glory of the Christian Church; and to do so effectually, let us contrast it with the proper *Jewish* expectation of the Messiah.

Now, it is most clear that the Jewish expectation of Messiah was of a Redeemer to deliver them and their land—to make them glorious as a people, and to restore their land to fruitfulness; to make them also the channel of blessing to the nations; and all this when Jehovah should be the King. (See amongst other Scriptures, Micah v. 8, 9, and 7; Zech. viii. 23; Isa. ii. 2, 3; Isa. xxiv. 23; Luke ii. 30–32; Luke i. 32, 33, 54, 55, 68–75.)

But of THE CHURCH the distinctive glory (the great mystery revealed) is its ONENESS WITH CHRIST. The Messiah, though of, was *distinct from* Israel: though He was to be over the nation as King, He was not to bring the nation into oneness with Himself:—whereas CHRIST is, not over His Church as King, but of His Church the head; not a distinct ruler or Lord, but as the head to a body, as the bridegroom to a bride, as the root or stock to the branches.

The great characteristic of the Church is that it is HEAVENLY: that it is made one with Christ, not as the “Son of David after the flesh,” but as the “Son of God in power after the resurrection:” that its hope is “that which entereth into the veil, whither the Forerunner is for it entered:” that its country, its city, its resting-place, its home is—“heaven opened.”

Particularly let us consider that the *present* glory of the Church is heavenly: that its *present* calling is heavenly: that its *present* citizenship is in the heavens: that it *at present* is not of the world, even as Jesus is not of the world. As Jesus is the heavenly man, so are His members heavenly men: as He is the beloved Son, so are they sons beloved: as He is the heir of all things, so are they heirs of all things: as *He* is, so are *they*. The Church then, being "called of God into His kingdom and glory," so is called to declare and manifest God in its present sojourning place—to imitate and to exhibit God, not in that character displayed heretofore, but in that displayed *now*—that of God reconciling the world BY NON-IMPUTATION OF TRESPASSES.

It is most important to perceive the *distinct character* of the present dispensation: that it is not an improvement of the old—a new piece upon an old garment—but "the mystery hidden from all previous ages and generations."

When God took unto Himself "a nation from the midst of other nations, by signs, and wonders, and war, and a mighty hand, and an outstretched arm," He was "showing His wrath and making His power known." *Then* His avowed principle of dealing with man was righteousness: and His own people both were the instruments of vengeance upon His enemies and their enemies, and were themselves ostensibly under the righteousness of law.

But *now* God is making known, not His wrath and power, but the riches of His forbearance, and grace, and goodness: and *now*, accordingly, He calls upon His elect ones "to put on bowels of mercies, long-suffering, forgiveness, and love."

A time indeed is coming when RIGHTEOUSNESS shall be the principle to order the world. "A king shall reign in righteousness." *In that time* kings and rulers and powers shall be ordained, not by God in His providential government of the world, but by Christ

the anointed Man: and *then*, under this King reigning in righteousness shall the saints, as princes, rule in judgment. But *until that time*, as the servant is not higher than his rejected and refraining Master, the Christian cannot reign—cannot exercise power—cannot revenge, nor repel, nor resist evil:—his “calling is to suffer.”

Beloved, to this representation of the oppositeness and contrastedness of Judaism and Christianity object not, quoting Hebrews xi., that Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and the host of elders were, as well as Christians, partakers of the heavenly calling; and, upon such objection, denying the distinctness of Christianity, support not your arguments for the holding of the riches, the honours, and the power of earth, and for the engaging in legislation, in warring, and in schemes for the improvement of society and man: nor say that, as the CHURCH (*i.e.* God's election) was in the very beginning, and continued to be even through Judaism, a people “seeking the resurrection and the heavenly country,” there is no peculiar requirement from Christians of abstinence or withdrawal from earthly things—there is no reason why Christians should not, in company with Moses, David, and Solomon, be kings and rulers and warriors, and employ their talents and energies and affections in acquiring and applying and enjoying “this world's good,” and things seen and temporal.

Argue not thus, beloved. True is it that Abraham and the ancient worthies were “partakers of the heavenly calling.” True is it that Christians are “children of faithful Abraham, and inheritors together with him of THE PROMISE.” The oppositeness then, and the contrast which Christianity presents, is not to the religion of Abraham or of the children of faith, but to the law of Moses and to the dispensation of Judaism. *That* was not heavenly: and if Moses and David, and the sons of faith under Judaism, did yet look for a

heavenly country, and confess themselves strangers on earth, they did so only *by looking through and out of Judaism*. In Judaism they had but *earthly* things—earthly works, earthly good and evil, earthly hopes and fears: they “received not the promises, but saw them afar off,” seeking the resurrection. Though Jews, it was not *as Jews*, *i.e.* as subjects of Judaism, that they confessed themselves strangers on the earth; for *thus* they had the earth and all its glory for their portion—they rightly desired and pursued after riches and dignities, “minding earthly things.”

THE CHURCH was indeed, in the beginning, a body called out of and away from things earthly unto things spiritual and heavenly; and, in and from the beginning, was and has been a confessor of strangership on earth: and Judaism and its covenant of works, and its earthly stipulations and sanctions, was only a preliminary dispensation to bring out (by proving the impotence and moral ruin of man) God’s marvellous goodness in dealing in the way of PROMISE. Judaism was set up only “to be done away,” was established only “to be abolished” (See 2 Cor. iii. 6–18), after it should have tested and manifested man’s fleshly nature, and thus have prepared man for life as God’s *gift*.

The oppositeness then, and contrastedness of subjects under God as a King, and sons under God as a Father; of life or reward through conditions fulfilled, and life bestowed in the freeness of gift; of life to be attained through obedience, and obedience to be rendered as the response of life; of the flesh and the spirit, or of the Adam-nature and the divine nature; of blessings carnal and earthly, and blessings spiritual in heavenly places; of the law ministering condemnation and death, and grace quickening into the life of God;—the oppositeness and contrastedness of JUDAISM and CHRISTIANITY—are complete and absolute.

To fall back therefore upon Judaism, to seek for precept or precedent, to lay up treasures, to hold

honours, to exercise power, to fight and war, to mind earthly things, and to allow one's self in "whatsoever the soul lusteth after" (see Deut. xii. 7, 15, 18, 20, xiv. 26, xxviii. 1-13), is grossly to confound things differing, and greatly and hurtfully to err; and to refer to Abraham and the worthies antecedent to Moses, is, though to err less, yet to err; for to Abraham and the elders the flesh, not having been proved and found worthless, was not given *to be crucified*, and the world, not having rejected and killed God's Son, was not denounced as *lying in the wicked one*.

Nay, beloved. CHRISTIANS ARE RISEN MEN. They are CITIZENS OF HEAVEN. They are SONS OF GOD, living IN THE SPIRIT, walking BY FAITH, sustained BY HOPE, waiting and looking for "praise, and honour, and glory, AT THE APPEARING OF JESUS."

CONSIDERATION OF SCRIPTURES SUPPOSED TO SANCTION RESISTANCE OF EVIL.

But there are Scriptures which, notwithstanding this express precept, "Resist not evil," are interpreted as sanctioning resistance of evil. Let us consider them.

Matt. viii. 5-13. War and law, as modes of meeting evil with evil (*i.e.* of awarding righteous retribution to the evil-doer), have been defended on the ground of our Lord's commendation of the faith of the Centurion. Our Lord, it is urged, would assuredly have improved such an occasion for condemning and forbidding the Centurion's profession, had He indeed viewed it with disapprobation.

Have we then not noted that the obedience which our Lord required and valued was the obedience of the heart and understanding? that accordingly He laboured to *instil principles* and to *form a spirit*, patiently awaiting the sure conformity of the walk and outward life? Our Lord knew, and He tells us so, that man would but gradually be able to bear or

receive "the things He had said, and the many things He had to say;" and that the promise of the Father to lead into all truth, and to effect the reception of it and the obedience unto it, must be calmly awaited.

Our Lord wanted no mere *body-obedience*, no mere *bodily exercise*. God seeks *enlightened* obedience. He requires from man *only the loving and seeking heart*; and to such a heart He delighteth to reveal His whole mind and will. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and to them He will show His covenant."

Luke iii. 14. The directions of John the Baptist to the soldiers have been adduced in vindication of war, and law, and resisting of evil. But why are not Moses, Joshua, David, and the other servants of God in past ages cited? *They warred, they killed, they met injury with injury, evil with evil, yea, in countless instances, they were commanded to do so.*

John answers (as the Lord Himself answered the ruler, telling him *to keep the commandments* if he would enter into life—*argumentum ad hominem*) the people, the publicans, and the soldiers, *ad homines* or *ad officia*, and on the ground of righteousness or of common charitableness and decorousness. It was not *his* business to set aside Moses and the Mosaic code—"Do and live." *He* could only tell the people to do what was right *in those callings and departments in which he found them*. *He*, though the last of the prophets of the old dispensation, and the greatest of those born of woman, was yet *less than the least in the kingdom of heaven*. *He* pointed to the great Lawgiver just descended from heaven; and he left HIM to deliver His law and to set up His kingdom.

But CHRIST—the Lord from heaven—what does HE do? This—He formally and most authoritatively repeals the Mosaic law of retaliation or equity, enjoining His disciples to cease from avenging or vindicating them-

selves; not because it was wrong to do so, but because HE had come to proclaim to the rebels of man's race "the ACCEPTABLE YEAR of the Lord," the DAY OF GRACE on the part of GOD, the DISPENSATION OF FORBEARANCE AND PARDON, AND RECEPTION TO FAVOUR.

What! says Christ, would *ye* visit back the trespasses of your fellow-men, when the great King of kings is pleased to proclaim pardon both to them and to you, and to invite, and exhort, and command you all to come to Him and live?

Deut. xx. 10-12, xxi. 10, &c. &c. Numerous Christians labour to establish the *scripturalness* and *intrinsic rightness* of war and judicial punishment of evil; but in this they labour gratuitously. War (inasmuch as war is understood to be the mode of repressing or punishing foreign aggressions) and judicial retributory awards are incontestibly scriptural, and are intrinsically right. *Christ Himself* came to reduce the nations into subjection, and to reign as king with justice and judgment. He came as the subject of glowing prophecies to reign over Israel and over the whole earth; and, accordingly, He rode with royal style into Jerusalem, and formally presented Himself as "the Son of David to sit upon David's throne." And had Israel received Him, He would have reigned; and in reigning would unquestionably have appointed and maintained officers of justice and righteous retribution.

But Israel did *not* receive Christ, and Christ did *not* reign. Christ was rejected, cast out, crucified. Christ was driven from earth to heaven; to sit, not upon His own throne, but upon the throne of the Father: there expecting until the Father, in His providential rule, shall have made all His enemies His footstool. *Then* "He will take unto Himself His great power and will reign"—*His saints reigning with Him*. Now it is Christ's good pleasure, that as He Himself thus forbears to reign, so His "little ones," His "little flock,"

His "called ones out of the world," shall wait for their kingdom; shall manifest that their kingdom is not *now* or *from hence*: that their calling is a heavenly calling, and their citizenship heavenly; and shall, by refraining from all power, and authority, and dignity, and greatness, however permitted to them, or urged upon them, by the world, powerfully declare—

1st. The present position of Christ as the rejected King.

2nd. The present aspect of God in Christ, "not condemning the world, and not imputing its trespasses."

3rd. The sure coming of Christ to assert His right over those "who would not have Him to reign," and to judge all the persecutors of His people.

4th. The disloyal character of greatness and honour from a world lying in the wicked one, and the ungodliness and ripeness for destruction of that world itself.

And *were* the Church of Christ thus following its Head and Lord, all these things it *would be* declaring: it would be impressing the world's wickedness upon the world's conscience: it would be establishing the righteousness of the coming judgment upon the world: and it would be affording a sweet-smelling savour of Christ unto God.

War then, and judicial punishment, even did they aim, not at the grand and noble object of redressing evil or repressing evil, but at the simply equitable end of rendering evil for evil, are not *essentially* wrong. They are wrong *only to the Christian*; and power and authority and honour are wrong to the Christian only because—

1st. The Christian is called off from vindictive visitation of evil, in order that he should proclaim, not by inoperative words of the mouth, but by the overbearing evidence of a life, the grace and forbearance and long-suffering of GOD IN CHRIST.

2nd. The Christian is called out from present dignity and greatness, into the patient waiting for the grace

which is to be brought unto him at the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Cor. vii. 23. So obviously opposed to the spirit and principle of war is the whole spirit and significance of the religion of Christ, that, even by Christians set upon vindicating numerous conformities to the course and fashion of the world, the indecorousness, to a follower and imitator of Jesus, of the profession of arms, is perceived and admitted; yet, say they, quoting 1 Cor. vii. 20, "Let every man abide in the calling wherein he is called"—let the soldier and the sailor abide in the army and the navy. A brief examination of this argument will suffice.

On reading the chapter from the first verse to the twenty-fourth, we find a simple matter very plainly expressed:—That the unmarried and the widowed abide unmarried: that of the married, the wife, do not depart from her husband, and the husband do not put away his wife: that the circumcised person, when called into the liberty and glory of the gospel, is not to regret his circumcision, and to desire to become, if it were possible, *uncircumcised*: that the serving-man when called is not to deplore his servanthip and to fret after freedom; for, in truth, he *is* free, even the Lord's freeman: that in all states and conditions obedience is practicable, and that, in all alike, the keeping of the commandments of God is the great consideration:—that every man's concern should be "in the calling wherein he is called THEREIN TO ABIDE WITH GOD."

Thus the apostle is speaking, not of professions, or trades, or crafts, or employments, but of *states and conditions*—of certain of the connections and relations and engagements of social life: he is speaking, not of pursuits and occupations into which man enters *voluntarily* and *freely*, and in which voluntary and free acting he is of course under responsibility; but of positions and conditions in which man is found *without or with little*

alternative, or option. Is the apostle sanctioning the calling of the stage-player and the prize-fighter, of the gladiator and wrestler and racer, of the bravo, the pimp, and the bawd, and all the callings that pander to the lust of the eye, of the flesh, and of the mind? Nay, O child of light. Be solicitous "in thy calling, THEREIN TO ABIDE WITH GOD."

1 Tim. ii. 1-4. In support of legal resistance of evil, and of holding offices of power and authority, an argument is derived from this direction of Paul to Timothy. "If," it is argued, "Christians are to pray for kings, and all that are in authority, that, through their coming to the knowledge of the truth (and thus, of course, governing rightly), Christians may lead quiet and peaceable lives, then it is clear that kings and magistrates may continue in office after conversion."

In full reply, I present a running paraphrase in 1 Peter ii. 11-15, and of this passage from Timothy, including *v.* 8.

"Beloved, I beseech you that, as strangers and pilgrims, ye abstain from fleshly lusts, having your whole walk and demeanour amongst the nations fair and lovely: that, wherein they speak against you as *evildoers*, they may, from the good deeds which they behold, glorify God. Submit yourselves *therefore* (see Greek) to every ordinance of man. For so is the will of God, that as *welldoers* (*i.e.* as obedient and peaceful subjects) ye put to silence foolish men: as free, yet not using your freedom as a cloak for *evildoing* (*i.e.* for lawless and self-willed procedure). I exhort therefore that ye make supplications, prayers, &c., for all men—for kings and for all that are in authority: that ye may live a mild and quiet and peaceful life, in all godliness and gravity. For thus, with a gentle and calm spirit, to pray even for our oppressors and persecutors, is good in the sight of God our Saviour; for it is the spirit of Him who willeth that all men, of whatever condition

or class, come to the knowledge of the truth. Therefore, I command that all men pray everywhere, *without questioning, and with all quietness and peacefulness.*" The Greek words *ηρεμος* and *ησυχος* here signify *quiet or peaceful of spirit*, and do not point to the character of outward circumstances: and this is further shown by the two following words *ευσεβεια* and *σεμνοτης*. (See Jer. xxix. 7.)

Heb. xii. 7-9. Is evil, it is asked, not to be resisted *in children*? Are parents and guardians and school-masters not to correct the children committed to their charge?

Yes, children are to be corrected. But wherefore? *Because they are children, i.e.* objects of tender and loving care. Children are to be *corrected* or *chastened*—they are to be subjected to a discipline for their advantage and good; but *correction* is not *punishment*, not treatment in retributory righteousness, not dealing on the ground of desert. And it is thus, because this relation of sonship is the relation which we ourselves sustain towards the Father in heaven; and this corrective or chastening treatment is the treatment which we ourselves receive from Him.

Luke xxii. 36. That the Lord is not *absolutely* forbidding resistance of evil has been argued from, "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one." Let us consider together verses 35, 36, and 37.

"When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? Nothing. But *now*, he that hath a purse, let him take it: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and get one. For this which is written, And He was reckoned among the transgressors, must be accomplished in me."

Here the Lord is contrasting two states—the state of plenitude of power, and the state of absolute impotence, humiliation, and subjection—the state in

which He was when He sent the disciples forth, and the state into which He was now to enter. And He employs such particulars of the contrast as exhibit it vividly and powerfully. By reminding His disciples that He had sent them forth (see Matt. x. 9, 10) unprovided with gold, or silver, or brass, or scrip, or with two coats, or with shoes, or even with staves, and yet that they had lacked nothing, He strikingly represents to them His all-extending power and providence. By the mention now of the two great engines of power and dominance among men—the purse and the sword—and by the injunction to provide themselves with them, He as strikingly expresses the cessation of His extraordinary and extra-natural care of them, and the return of things into the natural course and character. He is forewarning them that, on their again going forth to preach, they will not find houses open to receive them, and tables spread for their refreshment, but, contrariwise, unkind rejection and outrageous treatment; and, in using emblems so lively and so comprehensive, He is most significantly intimating that they are to apply their own resources in the ordinary dependence of faith upon God. And whilst, in conformity with the Oriental idiom and usage, He employs strong figures to inform and impress them, He rests, for their apprehension of His mind, upon His *previous* and *plain* and *positive* injunctions and instructions. For, in bar to their misapprehending His present direction *to carry a purse*, He knew that He had said, “Lay not up treasure upon earth; sell that thou hast, and give alms; take no thought for the morrow;” and, in bar to their misapprehending His direction *to buy a sword*, He knew that He had said, “Resist not evil.”

Matt. v. 39–41. That the Lord is *absolutely* and *altogether* forbidding resistance of evil is by some denied on the ground of the *exemplifications* which He employs. These, they observe, are from *slight* provo-

cations and injuries, such as a slap on the cheek, the seizure of a garment, the pressing to carry a burden, &c. They must therefore be received as qualifying and explaining the precept into—"Under *slight* provocations and injuries, show that you have a better spirit than to seek revenge or reparation. Under trivial and merely temporary grievances, manifest your mildness, gentleness, and forgivingness. In patiently bearing trifles, which the people around you meet with impatience and anger, evince your differing from them and your superiority over them." The disciples then of Jesus are to show a meek spirit only under *slight* provocations and injuries—are not required to bear *great* and *serious* grievances—are permitted to bring the law and its vengeance against the *grave* offender—are to be *somewhat* milder and more forgiving than the men of the world—and are, in this their exhibition of grace in *little* matters and of wrath and vindictiveness under *heavy* provocations, to be witnesses for God, who, though He forgives the *petty* transgressor, has assuredly no mercy for the *great* offender. Is it indeed thus?

As the Lord *could* have used other exemplifications, let us suppose others: let us suppose Him to say, "If men even break open your jewelries and your treasuries, and bear away bags of jewels or of gold and silver; if men even set fire to your warehouses or factories or granaries; should they even drive off your cattle upon a thousand hills;—still bear and forgive, still endure meekly." Now, had the Lord so exemplified His precept, He would indeed have established the universal bearing and the absolute character of it, and have well expressed his mind as forbidding resistance of evil however enormous and atrocious: but whom could such exemplifications have served but the great, the noble, and the rich? How would they have elucidated a precept addressed to men exposed to a slap, a cuff, and a kick; to the deprivation of a garment or a turban;

to be pressed as porters or messengers; and to suchlike injurious acts of official underlings? to men who had no jewelries to be rifled, no factories to be fired, no flocks or herds to be harried?

Again the Lord says (see *vv.* 44–47), “Give love for hatred, blessing for cursing, prayers and kind deeds for despitefulness and persecution.” Does He mean love for *slight* hatred; blessing, prayers, &c., for *slight* or *trivial* cursing or injuries?

Again: How read we the numberless prohibitions of recompensing evil for evil, and exhortations to render good for evil: the awful judgment pronounced upon the servant whose sole crime was ACTING IN LAW AND EQUITY, himself being the subject of grace: the command to forgive seventy times seven: the injunction to follow Him who, when reviled, reviled not again: and the commendations and inculcations of meekness, lowliness, forbearance, and bowels of mercy and love—of *putting on the LORD JESUS CHRIST*? How read we?

Again: What think we of the disciple’s standing upon his rights and dues when his Lord suffered Himself to be disowned and rejected and violently cast out; and whilst that Lord is extending His arms of peace, and love, and intreaty to all the wicked of the world? Is the disciple greater than his Lord? Or is the disciple content to leave to his Lord all that moral power, that converting, transforming power, which is comprised in acts of self-sacrifice or self-disallowal, and which is signified so strikingly in, “Except a corn of wheat die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit”? Is the blood of martyrs *not* the seed of the Church?

Nay, beloved. As Christ *was* the light of the world, so Christ’s disciples *are* the light of the world. They are to exhibit and commend Christ unto men: they are to testify to the riches of the goodness and forbearance and long-suffering of God: and they are, through this their testimony, to furnish the vindication of that right-

eous yet most tremendous judgment which awaits the ungodly.

John xviii. 23. "Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" On the ground of this passage JESUS HIMSELF is represented as a resister of evil. And indeed He was so all His life through. And we, beloved brethren, are called to imitate Him even in this hard work and service. Oh, how easy to take abuse or a blow, and to pass silently on! but oh, how hard, how great, how Godlike to stop and front the injurious man; to speak home to his conscience; and to seek to convince him of his sin! Yes; the Christian is indeed to be, like his Master, Christ, the resister, that is, a reprover and represser of MORAL EVIL.

Acts xv. 37, xxii. 25, xxv. 10, 11. In favour of resisting evil, or, at the least, of applying the law, the conduct of the apostle Paul is sometimes brought forward. Let us briefly examine these cases.

Case I. Paul and Silas had been beaten and cast into prison by order of the magistrates. Had they therefore left the prison and the town upon receiving their private liberation, they would have furnished warrant for the general belief and perhaps official report, that they had been justly punished *as evildoers*: and thus they would have brought reproach upon the holy name of their Master. They reply then to the jailor, "They have beaten us openly, *uncondemned*, being Romans, and have cast us into prison, and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay verily let them come themselves, and fetch us out." Thus Paul and Silas made it manifest that, not *they*, but the *magistrates* were the evildoers—that the law had been broken by the officers and the conservators of the law.

As to their allegation, "being Romans"—this matter of fact was mentioned to show that they were entitled

to the protection and to all the privileges of the Roman law; and to convict the consciences of those who had violated it. Doubtless it was mentioned also for the obtainment of that protection and those privileges: for these they recognised as being thus provided for them by the good providence of their God. But to convict the consciences of evil-doing magistrates in order to obtain acquittal as well-doing Christians, is not to recompense or to resist evil: and to claim the benefit of a law made for our benefit, is not to demand its vengeance against the transgressor of it.

Case II. Paul, though a Roman citizen, was on the point of being scourged by a Roman officer without condemnation, without trial, and without a charge. Paul states the facts of his innocence, and of his title as a Roman subject to legal and just treatment; and he leaves his statement without argument, without entreaty, and without menace. He calmly, and simply, and with the meekest submission, and in exact accordance with the example of his Master (see John xviii. 23), *speaks to the conscience.*

Case III. "Festus, being willing to do the Jews a pleasure, said unto Paul, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged? I stand, says Paul, at *Cæsar's* judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. If I be an offender, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof they accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto *Cæsar.*"

The plain meaning is, If thou, O Festus, art judging me according to law, then *this* is the law—that I be judged at *Cæsar's* judgment-seat, and be not delivered over to bloodthirsty men, to whom, as thou knowest, I have done no wrong. If thou art granting to me the benefit of the law, then *this* is the law—that, if thou judge me not before thine own tribunal here, thou send me not before mine enemies at Jerusalem, but before thy master at Rome. If it is *the law* that is to

be observed, then "I appeal unto Cæsar." Paul, recognising the law as made in the providence of God for his benefit, demands the benefit of it. He seeks not vengeance upon his enemies, "not having aught to accuse his nation of." (Acts xxviii. 19.)

Beloved, what is the key of the mystery of the astounding directions of our risen and ascended Lord? Why, saith He, "Lay not up treasure," "Swear not at all," "Be not called Rabbi or master," "Condemn not, and judge not," "Go not to law," "Resist not evil." Why? BECAUSE YE ARE CHILDREN.

Beloved, God made Solomon a king. He gave to him riches and power and exceeding greatness and glory. He gave this earthly good in token of His well-pleasèdness and favour—He gave it therefore as BLESSING. God herein made the experiment of earthly good and of the fleshly nature. He made it fully and under the fairest conditions and circumstances: and He has graciously permitted Solomon to record the result.* Thus have been exhibited to us the earth, the flesh, and the Jew. But

WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN?

The Christian is a follower and an imitator of CHRIST. As Christ was in the world, so is the Christian. The Christian is a being *in* the world, but not *of* the world. Called to follow on in the steps of Christ, BEARING A CROSS, he regards the world's vast system of sights and sounds, of arts and crafts and busy occupations, of brisk and bustling movements and vehement doing—this system of objects and actions attractive to and exercising all his bodily senses, all his mental faculties, and all his soul's affections and passions—as a system, not only of things which are fast passing away, and from which he is himself passing, but of things which engage his senses and

* See the Book of Ecclesiastes.

faculties and affections far more powerfully than their importance warrants; and from which, as they tend to draw him down and to fix him down to the earth, upon which he is in truth a stranger, he should strive to hold himself detached and distinct. He further regards the earth as a vast theatre of man's rebellion and of man's misery, and as a respite-place for sinners, whilst the grace of God, striving amongst them, is calling and forming a people for His praise.

He, on these views of the world and of the earth, strongly realizes that he has no country here, no city, no citizenship, no concern with the Government but to respect and obey it, and no business with the politics and the mysteries of State. Knowing, too, that he has a country and a city and a citizenship, yea, and a government and a kingdom in heaven, he presses and pushes on, resisting and denying every lusting of the eye, every lusting of the flesh, and the whole pride of life, intent upon the utter destruction of the body of sin.

Being privileged closely to follow, and closely to resemble his master, Christ, and seeing that the disciple can be perfected only in the way in which his master was perfected, he acquiesces in being the object of the world's persecution, and in being "appointed to afflictions and tribulation." He rejoices in being constituted a fellow-sufferer with Christ, that thus he may be a fellow-conqueror and a co-reigner with Christ. He glories in the requirement to imitate and to seek conformity unto Christ, that thus he may exhibit and commend Christ during the present dispensation; knowing the appointment that he is to bear the image of, and to share the exaltation and glory of, and thus still to declare and display Christ, *throughout the dispensation to come*. And he judges and well settles it in his soul, that if in the *patience, passiveness, meekness, subduedness, deadness to earth, and heavenly mindedness* of Christ he is to bear Christ's likeness, he cannot possibly attain these graces if he will hold

earthly honour and power and wealth, and be ready to maintain his dignity, to protect his possessions, and to defend his person.

Beloved, seek we yet a solution of the mystery of the precepts of Christ?

The CHRISTIAN then, the Christian as contradistinguished from the Jew, is one called and set to declare unto a world that stoned God's prophets and crucified God's Son—THE FATHER.

The CHRISTIAN is a witness of God; unto the world, THAT IT LIES UNDER JUDGMENT, AND THAT A REFUGE IS APPOINTED FROM THE COMING WRATH; unto the flesh, THAT IT HAS BEEN PROVED AND FOUND WORTHLESS, AND THAT ITS PROBATION IS AT AN END; unto the devil, THAT THE SEED HATH APPEARED WHO IS TO BRUISE AND CRUSH HIM.

The CHRISTIAN is a being begotten of God, that he may overcome THE WORLD; indwelt by the Spirit, that he may overcome THE FLESH; made one life and one spirit with Christ, that he may overcome THE WICKED ONE.

The CHRISTIAN, as to the flesh or Adam-nature, has been *crucified*, has *died*, and has been *buried* with Christ; and as to the Spirit or divine nature, has *risen*, has *ascended*, and has been *seated in heaven* with Christ.

To the CHRISTIAN, then, as the old man *judged and crucified*, and as the new man *in the resurrection-birth and spiritual life*, the loving precept of his God and Father is, "LOVE NOT THE WORLD, neither the things in the world;" "Fulfil not the lusts OF THE FLESH, but deny and put to death and put off the flesh;" "Give no place to THE DEVIL, but watch against, and stand against, and overcome the devil."

"THANKS BE TO GOD, WHO GIVETH US THE VICTORY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.*

* These papers may be had printed as a pamphlet, entitled, *The Church : her Calling, and consequent Position and Office*. Price fourpence, or post free three copies for one shilling. YAPP and HAWKINS, 70, Welbeck Street, Cavendish Square, London, W.

THE "BROKEN" JESUS AND THE UNBROKEN "CHRIST;"

OR, LESSONS TAUGHT IN THE "BREAKING OF BREAD."

THOSE children of God who meet in the name of the Lord Jesus every "first day of the week" for worship and "the breaking of bread" are not in much danger of falling into the pompous formalities of ritualism. To them the ordinances of Christ, whether it be baptism or the Lord's Supper, are too simple for this; and they dare not add to them any traditions or self-willed inventions of men.

But the very simplicity and brevity of these precious acts of obedience may cause in *their* case an opposite danger, viz., that of haste and absence of profitable meditation in attending to them. The blessed meaning of them is then much lost; and they neither instruct the mind nor affect the heart as they should, and as they *would*, were they more pondered. We do not want their simplicity overlaid with the outward "pomp and circumstance" of man's religion; but we *do* want such a business of our souls to be going on as we obey them, and such a discernment of their meaning, as shall enrich them and endear them to us more and more each time we use them.

Who would not wish, for instance, the death, and burial, and resurrection meaning of Christian baptism to be filling the soul of both the baptised one and the baptizer, as, like Philip and the eunuch, they go down into the water and come up out of it? And who would not wish that both the baptized and the baptizer should have just previously well pondered the hallowed three-fold name of "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," and their common joy and different, yet combined, work in the matter of the sinner's salvation, before uttering it over the newly-blessed one—that one only time in his life

on earth as a believer when that threefold name is bidden to be named upon him?

Alas for formal, barren baptizings! The very fact that it is only *once* in a Christian's lifetime below should forbid such.

But a *frequently repeated* act is even in more danger of becoming familiar and feeble in its meaning to us than a rare one.

Hence Paul's urgency in 1 Cor. xi., that however frequently the Lord's Supper be observed, it should each time be to us "the LORD's Supper," not our own; that it should each time have the words, "This do *in remembrance of Me*," engraven on our hearts; and should each time be a showing forth (*κηρυσσω*), a kingly proclaiming of the *Lord's* death till He come.

Alas, then, for hasty, barren, breakings of bread! Surely they should never be.

To help against their ever being such, let us consider the two great meanings in Scripture of the "loaf," when thus used amongst us.

Does it not picture to us, first, the utterly bruised and broken Jesus, His once broken body, and "broken heart" of grief also, for us on the tree; and second, the unbroken, united, mystical body of Christ, which we, through knowing Him, become?

Our Lord's words in the gospels, at the institution of this ordinance, teach the first of these lessons in the loaf. "This is my body," said the Saviour, as with His hands He took bread at the passover and *brake* it; *i.e.* such will my body shortly be, a broken thing for *you*. Again, in resurrection, He says to Paul, "Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you."

What a confession it is we make, then, each time we place that loaf amidst us, and do all of us take part in breaking it! It *was* an unmarred, uninjured loaf; but in the hands of the company assembled it has been completely broken, and is returned again to the table, oh, how different—only disfigured remains!

How the thoughts of all who see it are taken back to Him who was once in death the "sore broken" Surety for His church (see Prov. xi. 15, margin); and that not in torn and anguished body only, but in heart also. (See Psalm lxxix. 20.) "Reproach hath *broken my heart*; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none."

And as each one thus partaking views the now broken loaf, how affecting to him the thought of his personal share in causing those body-broken and heart-broken woes of Christ! as also when he remembers, on partaking of the cup, the pouring out of His soul and His life-blood unto death!

If Jesus' sin-bearing death be thus vividly seen in the "broken bread," then the larger the number partaking, the more extensively will this lesson of His utter brokenness for us in death be enacted before all, and the humbler will the souls of all be. All will tenderly join in the much-loved verse—

"O Lord, what Thee tormented
Was our sin's heavy load;
We have the debt augmented
Which Thou didst pay in blood."

And each heart will wonder as it thinks of what it cost *Him* to redeem even that one small assembly then present. Assembly after assembly similarly partaking will then be also remembered, and the mighty woes of that wondrous death of Jesus, the Son of God, will be better understood each time His saints thus break bread in remembrance of Him. Yet each one's individuality will be retained while viewing, in some measure, the mighty whole; just as it will be when more deeply worshipping "God and the Lamb" with the countless multitude before the throne: for even then each saint will have his own "white stone," with a "new name written in it," which only himself knows; while all

will also rejoice together in the fulness of joy which is in God's presence.

But we must turn to 1 Cor. x. 16, 17 for the second lesson taught us by the loaf placed amidst us at the Lord's Supper. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (*i.e.* fellowship) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion (fellowship) of the body of Christ? *For we being many are one bread* (loaf), one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" (loaf).

Here the loaf sets forth the oneness of those saints with each other who have sat around as partakers and have partaken of it. As the Israel altar of old united those who joined in laying their hands on the head of the victim slain there, so the loaf signifies the oneness of those who by uniting to break it have confessed their common interest in the death of the Lord Jesus, whom they have thus "remembered."

As that loaf once was mere sundered particles of flour, with no coherence, so they were once estranged by sin, not only from God, but also *from each other*.

They were "as sheep going astray," "they turned every one to his own way;" but, through Jehovah's, having "made all their iniquities to meet on Him," they have "now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls," and through Him and in Him are as truly now united and made one, as the once unconnected particles of flour have been now united into one substance in that loaf. And as it takes positive force to detach part from part of that loaf, so should it take a great deal to sunder saint from saint of those who have been together remembering the Lord Jesus' death by means of it.

Surely, then, we should go away from the Lord's Table a blended and united company! And, as Paul teaches us in the remainder of the chapter, this fellowship and sense of oneness with each other, thus substantially and vividly set forth, should follow us

into daily life; so that at all the meal-tables of the week, wherever we may be, remembrance of it should both keep us "from idolatry;" and should also move us only so to eat and to drink at any meal as shall bring glory to God, by edifying the weakest fellow-saints, and not stumbling them.

Oh what union of heart, and mind, and ways would then be seen all the week through, in the saints who had broken bread together on the Lord's-day, however diverse their paths of life might be, and however scattered abroad amongst men!

In the remembrance of the Lord Jesus, once so "sore broken" for them, they would indeed see that they were now members of the unbroken "body of Christ," and would seek to keep this God-made "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." They would see themselves as still in the "body of Christ," the church, wherever they were, and in whatever they were engaged. The teaching of the one *loaf* would be still before them, and for the communion sake of the body of Christ, thus week by week set forth, they would eschew all schism, and the evils which lead to it, and would cultivate thoughts, and words, and ways of heavenly fellowship with the weakest of the Lord's-day fellow-partakers.

But to walk in this believing, loving, and patient companionship with fellow-partakers from day to day, and hour to hour, and in all details of life, demands no little self-crucifying, and power, indeed, to forget self altogether. And what shall ever give us this, or keep it vigorous within us, but more and more vivid remembrance of Jesus as once "broken" for us? "For the love of Christ," says St. Paul, "*constraineth* us (binds us all together); because we thus judge, that if *one died for all*, then have all died (see Greek): and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them, and rose again."

Therefore the first of the two great lessons of the

loaf must be deep within us, in order to our practically accepting the second. We must be full of remembrance of Jesus broken for us, that we may walk in the fellowship of the unbroken "body of Christ."

Well does one hymn express it—

"Oft we forget the woe, the pain,
The bloody sweat, the accursed tree,
The wrath His soul did once sustain,
From sin and death to set us free."

And this is only too truly followed by another verse as its consequence—

"Oft we forget that we are *one*
With every saint that loves His name;
United to Him on the throne—
Our life, our hope, our Lord, the same."

And well does the hymn end with—

"Lord, we are Thine—we praise Thy love—
One with Thy saints, all one in Thee;
We would, until we meet above,
In all our ways *remember Thee.*"

We may add, these two meanings of the "loaf" at the breaking of bread, are closely connected with the two expressions, "The Lord's Supper" and "The Lord's Table;" the first in 1 Cor. xi., the latter in 1 Cor. x.

"The Lord's *Supper*" sets before us that on which we sup, viz., that redeeming, dying love of our Lord Jesus, when at Calvary, giving Himself for us, of which He spoke (John vi. 51), "The bread that I will give is *my flesh*, which I will give for the life of the world." And the more believingly and intelligently we take that bread and cup, "discerning the Lord's body," and judging ourselves as we eat and drink, the richer does His "supper" become to us, and the more of spiritual health do we gain from the costly and heavenly diet.

We but "fill our belly with the east wind" when we partake of that bread and cup with only dry doctrine or talk of the lips, however orthodox it be. We

find in it food, and also medicine, when we discern in it the once "broken" One, and rejoice in His still unchanged and unchangeable love to us.

But "the Lord's *Table*" is the expression used by Paul in 1 Cor. x., because it is the "*fellowship*" of saints together, that the "supper," which is his subject there, shows forth. To be guests together at the "*table*" of a common host implies and begets, even among men, a society and a fellowship; and according to the rank of the entertainer is the honour of having been a guest at his table. The very expression, "The royal table," implies that the one placed at it was not only in favour with the sovereign, but was thereby in the society of all the other royal guests.

This is the whole force of the apostle's appeal in 1 Cor. x. to the Corinthian saints. As if he would say, Having been placed at "the Lord's Table" by Himself, as His guests, be careful never to link it with idolatry, or that other fellowship, that other "*table*" of guests in Corinth, viz., "the table of demons."

Solemn thought! There were to the apostle's mind only two "*tables*" in Corinth, and thus also only two fellowships of guests! The one, "the table of the Lord," with all the purity and the blessings, joys and heavenly rank, of even the least and feeblest of its guests; and the other, the table of "idolatry," presided over by "demons," who blind the minds of the deceived guests, under the supremacy of Satan, the god of this "world." (See Prov. ix. 13-18.)

How far apart these two from each other! How watchful should each guest at "the Lord's Table" be, all the week through, to have no fellowship with the "*table of demons*" and its idolatry!

And in the presence of such a danger, how jealously and tenderly careful should each of the Lord's guests be not to stumble any fellow-guest—not even the weakest!

But how little are we awake, either to the costliness

and the heavenly richness of viands of the Lord's "Supper," or to the pure and godly tie that binds together the blood-bought and honoured guests of the Lord's "Table."

The Queen of Sheba *marvelled* as she saw, not only the wisdom of Solomon and the house he had built, but also "the *meat* of his table" and "the *sitting* of his servants," till "there was no more spirit in her." And were our eyes but more opened to see as we ought the banquet-house of the heavenly King, the feast He spreads for us, and the sitting at it of His ransomed servants, we should be oftener found breaking bread together, and much more profitably.

May the Lord Himself increase to us the blessing both of His "supper" and of His "table." H. D.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON CANTICLES.

WHAT a precious interweaving we have here of Christ's joy in the church and the church's joy in Christ. His love resting in what He has made her. Her soul occupied with what He is, His loveliness filling all her vision, and absorbing all her affections; and again the heart of Christ ravished with the reflection of the glory of His own grace in His spouse.

There is no self-occupation from the time she is brought into the King's chambers, and discovers her blackness in the light there. She forgets herself entirely in the banqueting-house (chap. ii. 4); and on from one depth to another, in the appreciation of her Beloved, we find her but once looking inward (chap. v. 5, 6), and so losing sight of Him. Slothfulness of soul, as in chap. iii. 1, first comes upon her, just testing the faithfulness of Him who waits in the night dew until she rises, though, alas! it is to look at that which He has wrought in her—not at Himself.

But her Beloved had withdrawn Himself, and was gone. The watchmen handle her roughly; and she

finds no rest until her soul is again filled with the joy of His presence, bursting forth into a yet higher song of praise, "Yea, He is altogether lovely."

It is very remarkable how much broader and deeper all through the book is His joy in her than her joy in Him. Ah, beloved saints, as we gaze through a glass darkly on Him in whom our souls delight, do we enter into the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints? Do we remember that the very joy that flows into our waiting souls flows from His who said, "That my joy in you might remain, and that your joy might be full"? The heart of Jesus is gladdened as He sees in us of the fruit of His travail, and our hearts are glad in fellowship with His; yet always remembering that what He is, is *for us*, and what He has made us, is *for Him*, and for Him only. His love for us must ever outstep our love for Him; His joy in us be ever the greater, bearing its proportion according to the depths to which He descended, that He might present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy—the joy of the Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep. *Then* we shall perfectly reflect His image; for we shall see Him as He is. Then, and then only, shall the deep longings of His heart for us find rest; and, blessed be God, rest for ever.

Service we find far on in the book, when the soul has reached the full experience of the love that is to be the power for it. (Chap. vii. 10–12.) The fruitful bough first spreading forth its roots by the rivers of water, then the branches shooting over the wall.

Lastly, we have the *hasting*—"Make haste, my Beloved." (Chap. viii. 14.) If our affections have passed within the veil where Christ is, we cannot linger here in spirit. There must be the reaching forth (Phil. iii. 13), the straining of every energy of our souls to where He is, the life we have received from Him panting for its native atmosphere in His unveiled presence. What can quicken to this like apprehending

the fact that Christ waits for us there? that even on the Father's throne His heart is still unsatisfied without us? Once He came down from the glory into our deep need, misery, and sin, to redeem us with His own blood. Yet again He will come, to take to Himself the purchased possession, His own now in the world. Who shall say how precious, how longed for? But our home is there, where He is. Ah, beloved fellow-saints, may God help us in the little while that remains to give joy to the heart of Jesus by dwelling continually in His presence and abiding ever in His love.

A. E. W.

THE MAN IN CHRIST.

A THOUGHT ON 2 PETER I. 1-11.

LEST there should be any misunderstanding as to the remarks we are going to make on this important subject (important at all times, and specially at the present), and lest that which belongs to the new life in its liberty be confounded with that which belongs to the old in its bondage, we would say, that we address those only who have found rest in the Lord Jesus Christ, those who see the end of all man's capabilities in *His* death, and the beginning of all God's possibilities in man in *His* resurrection; possibilities which belong to all the members of Christ, in living union with their living Head at the right hand of God. We address those who can say their sins are forgiven for His name's sake, through the precious blood shed; those who can call God, Abba, Father, through the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost.

Until the completeness of the work of Christ is realized, we can enforce no real manliness in Christ; for he only who is at perfect rest as to himself and his salvation can find a heart large enough for the sorrows of the house of God, or the woes of a world of sin

and death—a shoulder strong enough to bear the burdens of the Lord—a hand brave enough to carry the sword of God into the conflict in which the Christian is called to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ. God takes all *our* burdens; He carries them; and He would have us roll them on Him, that we might bear the burdens of His service, and come “to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”

The first chapter of 2 Peter may help us in our consideration of this subject.

It begins with “precious faith” already obtained; it points to a “divine presence” that has not left us to our own weakness in the conflict to which we are called, but which has given us “ALL THINGS that pertain to life and godliness;” for He has made us “partakers of the divine nature.”

Regeneration imparts this participation of the divine nature to him who by faith receives Christ Jesus (Jno. i. 12.) This is the incorruptible seed that gives power over “the corruption that is in the world through lust.” The capabilities of His divine nature know of no limitation; and to saints so possessing, the teachings and instructions of the word of God are addressed.

The essence of the divine life is faith. Faith trusts in the living God; it calls Him Father, and leads him who has it to pass the time of his sojourning here in fear. (1 Peter i. 17.) He remembers that he has been redeemed from his vain conversation by “the precious blood of Christ,” and is therefore called on to lay aside “all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speaking,” and as the newborn babe, to desire earnestly “the sincere milk of the word, that he might grow thereby.”

Spiritual growth is the object set before us; and growth is not by jumps, but by the steady progressive development of the implanted life. Thus the babe in Christ develops into the “man in Christ,” able to endure hardness in the service of Him who has called him to

be a soldier. We are called for service, and not for rest; for warfare, and not for ease; to go with God into the battle-field, because we have been carried by Him in the arms of love in Christ Jesus.

Thus Israel came out of Egypt, borne as on eagles' wings; but when they stand on the other side Jordan, they stand as God's host, prepared for the battle, and the angel of Jehovah appears as their captain.

It is of importance not to confound the passage of the Red Sea with the passage of the Jordan in its typical relation to ourselves. In one case Israel left the enemy behind them; in the other they found the enemy all before them. In the one the rod of God accomplished all, and Israel stood still, and saw His great victory; in the other the sword of Israel is owned by God, and Israel conquers. The one represents the work of Christ for us, and the other the work of the Holy Ghost in us. The one is absolute and complete, not one enemy being left alive, for all were seen dead on the sea shore; the other is progressive and incomplete, awaiting the time of Solomon, who is emphatically called "the man of rest."

In this latter conflict the work of God may be let and hindered by the unbelief and distrust of His people; but the essential purpose of God is not an absolute and immediate conquest *at once* accomplished, but one only obtained "by little and little." (Exod. xxiii. 29, 30.) This must never be lost sight of, or the child of God will often be needlessly discouraged. God is wiser than we are. He foresees the beasts of the field multiplying against His people, as the result of a too speedy conquest, as He foresaw the danger of His beloved servant, Paul, being exalted above measure, and sent him as a preventive a messenger of Satan to prove His love.

The first epistle of Peter may be regarded as the epistle illustrated by the passage of the Red Sea; while the second stands in contrast with it, and is

illustrated by Israel's passage of the Jordan; and in this light we will ponder for a little verses 5-11.

These verses open up to us in a very striking manner the manliness of the real child of faith, who, having taken the sincere milk of the word, has grown thereby, and become one whom John would address as "strong," and as having "overcome the wicked one."

The opening clause of verse 5 calls for attention: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add," or rather, as Alford renders it—"And for this reason, giving on your part all diligence, provide."* God, as we have seen, has brought to us divine power and given a divine nature, and consequent thereon we are called upon not to rest satisfied, as if all were done, as in the work of Christ finished on the cross; but we are to give ALL diligence, because God has made such ample provision for us. We are to bring in on our part in the power of the Spirit that diligence which can alone end in the realization of the abundant entrance into the kingdom, at which all should aim, and which points to the mark of the prize of the high calling in Christ, to which Paul pressed, not as if he had already attained or were already perfect.

There are eight characteristics enumerated here by the apostle, and we will dwell a little upon them in the order in which they stand:

1st, *Faith*, of which we need only say that it is that primary grace which, in the helplessness of fallen and sinful man, lays hold of the omnipotence of the

* The Greek word rendered in the E. version "giving," is *παρεισεύγκαντες*, and signifies bringing in on your part something by the side of something else that has been brought in by another, spoken of as *on our part*; not as the result of what we are by nature, but as resulting from what we are in the power of the Holy Ghost, who dwells in us, who works with us, helping our infirmities, but never independently of us, as if it were He and not we; yet neither is it we without Him. This is the mystery of the communion of the Holy Ghost with us.

mighty God, and leads to the soul's acceptance of God's testimony as to man and his utter ruin, and to God and His infinite grace. Hence the apostle calls faith "precious faith;" for it initiates the soul's relation to God in dependence and trust; "for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him."

But faith is not to stand alone, otherwise it were dead; for faith without works is dead, therefore we read, "Add to your faith virtue;" or, as Alford reads, "Provide in* the exercise of your faith virtue."

There are, as it were, many circles, each one within the other, and each resulting from that which is immediately outside itself. Thus the outer circle will be faith, and the centre of all love; or the converse, which is in a higher sense true also: the centre is faith, and the outer circle love. Both are true; but the former more strictly corresponds with the seven times repeated word "in."

2nd, *Virtue*. What is meant by virtue? In the soldier it is courage; in the servant it is faithfulness; in the child, obedience; in the friend, friendliness; in each situation it is that which meets its obligations with fidelity. Thus it embraces the faithful discharge of all the relations of the new life. Virtue fulfils them all, fails in none. In its aspect God-wards, this is *consecration*. Virtue gives God His due; and His due is ALL; for He gave us all when He gave us Christ.

"Virtue," moreover, is not to be brought down to the measure of our consciousness (so low and faulty are all our conceptions); but bringing every thought into captivity to Christ, consecration makes His thoughts our thoughts, and His ways our ways. Conscience is not the measure of right and wrong. God's word gives us the only true measure we possess, and that under the magnifying power of the mighty Spirit of God.

* All through this passage *ev* is used in the Greek, and is better rendered "in."

It is interesting to connect this beautiful word "virtue" (*αρετη*) with its use in 1 Peter ii. 9, where it refers to God, and is rendered "praises," and in the margin "virtues." The virtues of God consist in the perfect fulfilment of all belonging to the place He holds as Creator of all, Judge of the quick and dead, Father of all who believe, &c. Each relation has responsibilities of faithfulness, and each in its fulfilment will raise in the redeemed the song of praise here and hereafter.

3rd, *Knowledge*. "In your virtue knowledge." The position occupied by knowledge demands pondering over. We are apt to idolize knowledge; but we are told by Paul that "knowledge puffeth up." Of the carnal Corinthians he wrote that they were "enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge;" but "virtue" was wanting, and therefore knowledge lifted them up with pride.

It deserves notice, that when the characteristics of the sevenfold spirit that rested on Christ are given to us in Isaiah, the last pair of branches in that perfect candlestick are "the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." (Isaiah xi. 2.) In Him perfect knowledge and perfect fear went together to form that perfect character which He presented to us.

As long as harmony subsists between the knowledge and the fear, as long as the knowledge is kept within the circle of the "virtue" of which we have been speaking, so long and so long only will knowledge lead to humility, and we shall find that, like the seraphim in Isaiah vi., we have wings given us to cover our feet, as well as wings to fly with; and let us remember that wings are given for service and not for pride, to use for God and not for ourselves. Alas for us when, as was well remarked by another, we are disposed to use all six wings to fly with!

Thus Satan, "full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty," as "the anointed cherub," refused to cover his feet

with his wings in the presence of God. His heart was lifted up because of his beauty, and "he corrupted his wisdom by reason of his brightness." (Read Ezekiel xxviii. 12-17.) He turned his knowledge into pride, and fell. Let him who readeth understand; for these things are written for our learning. Alas! how many mighty have fallen, because knowledge has lifted up the head rather than bowed down the heart. God keep our knowledge in its right place, and the fear of the Lord, which is the highest virtue, as well as the beginning of wisdom, will keep us from that proud spirit which precedes a fall.

4th, *Temperance*. "In knowledge temperance," or self-control.* The knowledge of God and of His will must lead to a self-government that holds our being in subjection to God's control, and every lawful thing is then held lawfully under the restraint of that love that finds its meat and drink in allowing nothing that God does not allow, and that goes not beyond the measure that the word of God and His Spirit indicate. This was spoken of by Paul to the godless Felix, and he trembled while the man of God "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." In Galatians v. 23 it stands last on the list of what the fruit of the Spirit consists in; and in 1 Corinthians ix. 25 we are told that "he that striveth for the mastery is temperate (self-controlled) in all things."

"Self-control" is the negative side of virtue, and perhaps a greater importance has to be attached to it in the victory of faith than we are prone to imagine; for in seeking to remember what we are called to do, we are prone to forget what we are called *not* to do. The negative side of our Christian life is far more difficult of realization than is often supposed, for we fail through the intuitions of the flesh, and nothing

* The Greek is *εγκρατεια*, self-control, self-restraint. "Temperance" has acquired too limited a usage to embrace the full idea of that self-government which is here intended.

but the blessed intuitions of the Spirit can keep us. "I did not mean it," "I did not think of it," so often given as excuses for wrong-doing, are but too sure indications that the self-control here spoken of has been little attained to.

5th, *Patience*. "And in self-control patience," or endurance. As self-control acts on what is within, so endurance acts on what comes upon us from without, whether from God or man. It is the bearing up under pressure, affliction, or sorrow, as one who has a burden laid on him, and is contented to stand under it, and to learn the lesson it is sent to teach.

If there is any thing that marks manliness in Christian character more than another, it is the power of endurance, cheerful patience under all allotments of God, remembering that we are commanded to "let patience have her perfect work, that we may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing;" "knowing this, that the trying of our faith worketh patience," and therefore we are to seek to "count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations." (Jas. i.) Thus could Paul glory in tribulation, because tribulation wrought out patience.

In Luke viii. 15, fruitfulness is beautifully connected with patience, as the element in which it is produced, when our Lord says, that "the seed on the good ground are they, which, in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." May we who are called to stand "in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ" thus show that "the God of patience" is our God.

6th, *Godliness*. "And in patience godliness." Godliness is that which embraces especially our relation to God. Godliness sent Joseph to the prison, because when sin presented itself he said, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" It restrained David's hand when his enemy fell into his hand, that he slew him not. It prevented Daniel and his three friends from defiling themselves with Babylon's dainties;

and sent the latter into the burning fiery furnace, and the former into the den of lions.

Godliness looks at every thing in the light of the will of God, and thus faith leads to godliness; for faith lays hold on God, and godliness acts for God. This is specially illustrated in the lives of the worthies recorded in Heb. xi., whose godliness became the witness for God, while God bore witness to their faith.

7th, *Brotherly kindness*: "and in godliness brotherly-kindness" (*φιλαδελφια*, brotherly-love). When godliness has given God his proper place, the man in Christ learns to give to all his brethren their place. To man as a brother in creation his place, and to man as a brother through redemption in the new creation his place also. When godliness has come in brotherly-love will not fail, even though sorrowfully it may have to say with Paul, "Though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." It will likewise add, "But be it so, I will not love the less because unloved;" but, having loved for Christ's sake, will love still. Christ had not failed Paul, and therefore Paul's love, which found its spring in Christ, did not fail towards the Corinthians, however much their love towards him had grown cold. Surely this is to quit one's self as a man, this is to be strong indeed.

8th, *Charity*. "In brotherly-kindness charity," or love. This perfects the Christian character. It forms the centre of the whole, which, beginning with faith in God, culminates in love, which is God Himself; for "God is love, and he who dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

This is the very heart of the Christian life, out of which streams the light of God, not in the weakness of a one-sided view of the divine character, but in the power of a harmonious view of the whole, to which the child of God is conformed; that is, conformed to the likeness of Christ, who is the express image of God. Being thus rooted and grounded in love, he is

“able to comprehend with all saints” (that is, not in the narrow circle of the individual, but in the large sphere of the whole body of Christ) “what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,” and to “be filled with all the fulness of God.”

These eight characteristics, the result of the in-working and indwelling of the Holy Ghost supplied unto us, necessarily cause those in whom they abound to be “neither barren (neither *idle*, as in margin) nor unfruitful unto (εἰς) the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

There can be no idleness and no unfruitfulness where these are; but in their development they will lead up into a deeper, fuller, and clearer knowledge of Christ; and hence the force of the preposition “unto” (εἰς, not *in*, as in English version). Where these are wanting there exists blindness and shortsightedness, a forgetfulness of the cleansing of the old sins.

Again does the apostle repeat the words “give diligence,” and connects the making of “the calling and the election sure” with the doing of these things; that is, the carrying out the command “add,” of verse 5.

There is no royal road whereby to make the calling and election sure. References to texts of Scripture, very beautiful in themselves, will not do. Many a deluded soul has done that, and not known till it was too late that he had never been known of Christ, and had never truly known Him. Faith in Scripture is a living power, and therefore James guards against a faith that says and does not—that professes to have Christ, but does not add virtue, &c.

If we read these verses—9, 10, 11—in the light of the parable of the ten virgins, we shall not miss our way. We need to seek an *abundant* entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour.

This is reserved for those who, standing on the platform of Paul in Phil. iii., are “forgetting those things

which are behind, and reaching forth unto those which are before," and can say with Paul, "I press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." It is reserved for those who so run that they may obtain—who keep under the body, and, giving it no quarter, bring it into subjection. (See 1 Cor. ix. 27.) It is reserved for those who are soldiers in the battle-field, having put on the whole armour of God, and who stand, and think not of rest; but, like the two and a half tribes, are content to wait till all Israel can rest together.

We can never sufficiently thank God for rest of soul; and this is ours in the mighty Promiser; but we must as good soldiers keep our sword and armour bright, and our loving Captain will not fail to find us a bed on which to lie when we are needing rest. Let us hold our sword, and Christ will provide the couch. Alas! that we are so prone to think more about the bed for rest than the sword for conflict.

May we hear the words addressed to the Corinthian church sounding in our ears afresh from God in these days of enfeebled discipleship, when so many are seeking, like them, to reign like kings, rather than, like Paul, to suffer as martyrs—"Quit you like men. Be strong."

H. G.

GOD'S PREDESTINATION.

"THIS people have I formed for myself; they *shall shew forth my praise.*"

"I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I *will* be to them, a God, and they shall be to me a people," being

"Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, *unto obedience* and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," being

"Called according to *his purpose*. For whom He

did foreknow, He also did *predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son*. . . . Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, He justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified."

"Having predestinated us *unto the adoption of children (sonship) by Jesus Christ unto Himself*."

"In whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will: *that we should be to the praise of His glory*, who first trusted in Christ."

"This is the Father's will that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing. . . . And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life." "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Yet "no man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." But "my Father worketh hitherto, and I work;" for "the living Father hath sent me," "the bread of life," and "he that eateth me," "that eateth of this bread, shall live for ever." "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son (and this is His work), that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "For it pleased the Father having made peace by the blood of His cross, by Him (the crucified and risen One) to reconcile all things unto Himself." For "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men (*i.e.* will be God's attractive power to draw, and those drawn will be all *thus drawn*) unto me."

For God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God is desirous

“that all men should be saved, and come to a knowledge of the truth” (yet they will not come that they might have life).

Thus, “according to the *riches of His grace*, wherein He hath abounded to us in all wisdom and prudence,” hath He “*chosen and ordained*” that those “whom He hath saved and called with a holy calling, not according to their works, but according to His own purpose and grace given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began,” “should go and bring forth fruit,” should be “His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which (*i.e.* the bringing forth fruit and good works) God before ordained that we should walk in them.” (See also Luke i. 74, 75; Titus ii. 11–14; Ephes. v. 25–27.)

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind.”

“Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father. Knowing, brethren beloved (by these evident proofs, as well as by our own assurance), your election of God.”

“Ye are a *chosen* GENERATION (concerning this see John i. 11–13; James i. 18) that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy,” “because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto He called you to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Thus, then, if the “seed” of Abraham *by faith*, are we Christ’s, and heirs according to the promise. The blessing of Abraham (the blessing of the covenant promised to Abraham) has come on the Gentiles through

Jesus Christ, and we receive the promise of the Spirit *through faith*.

Thus has God made known to us in Jesus Christ the riches of His grace, wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence. And while presenting to man the fulness of His love in Christ Jesus crucified, and now commanding (earnestly exhorting) all men everywhere to repent and to believe the gospel (that Christ has made atonement for sin), He showeth a complete provision, even eternal life, with all its accompanying blessings secured for those who believe in Christ. He also showeth *that this believing seed in Christ* hath been by Him apportioned blessings, activities in holiness, obedience, and all that pertaineth to godliness, which could not be looked for *from a seed in the flesh*; that His election of this seed *to these blessings, &c.*, was in His mind before the foundation of the world—in short, that *His election* was that the believing seed in Christ should be to the praise of the glory of His grace, and a people *unto HIMSELF*.

Yet remaineth there another aspect of His predestination. Let us ponder the Scriptures pertaining thereto.

He who saith, "I called, and ye refused; I stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;" "I would, but ye would not;" "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life;" "He that *believeth not* the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him;" He also speaks of vessels of "wrath fitted to destruction," of those "*ordained to this condemnation*," of "many being called, but few chosen;" and other kindred passages.

It is written that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God;" that "the carnal mind is enmity against God." Now God's *decree* is, that "flesh and blood cannot inherit" His kingdom; for "the end of all flesh has come before Him." (Gen. vi. 13.) In it "dwelleth no good thing." (Rom. vii.) It is "corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." (Eph. iv. 22.) Of it

God, speaking typically in Romans ix., saith, "Esau (Edom) have I hated." This shows us then that "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." And throughout the line of the promised seed is this to be traced; viz., that God setteth aside the claims of the flesh to bring in that which He chooses; that His purpose according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth. Judah is set before his brethren; Ephraim before Manasseh; Moses before Aaron; David is chosen out of his brethren; Solomon from amongst his father's sons. Then, again, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, all show forth the setting aside the natural way of things, that God might bring in His own counsel. Ever then in God's mind was *the seed in Christ* pre-eminent; and now to us is this apparent.

Now the flesh is ever at enmity against God; it *cannot be* subject to the law of God. Pharaoh is, in Rom. ix., given us as a proof of this. He dares to withstand God, and so he stands out as a proof to us of God's fearful power and judgment. God hardened his heart because he daringly refused to own His power and to let His people go; and then God smote him with destruction.

So then God hath mercy on whom He will; and whom He will—even such as Pharaoh, and those alone—He hardeneth and destroyeth.

Thou wilt then say, "But why doth He then find fault; for who hath resisted His will?"

Our answer is, that thou hast no business to dispute with God; thou canst not understand Him. Can the vessel argue with the potter? Cannot the potter make or unmake? Canst thou not give credit unto Him to do rightly? "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?"

"Supposing that God, willing to show His anger (against the flesh), and to make His power known,

endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction"—even those like Pharaoh, who rebelliously withstood His will, or the unbelieving amongst the Jews, who proudly followed after self-righteousness, and thus fitted themselves by their sinfulness for destruction—"that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy;" even those who had received Christ, and thus become a new creation, which He had afore prepared (made ready to receive) to glory; even on us the called (in Christ) out of Jew and Gentile. Then doth this narrow God's grace? or doth it show injustice on His part?

In no wise; for we have before shown that He willeth not the death of any sinner, though ever must His righteous sentence be executed to the destruction of the flesh, and of those who oppose His will by acting in the flesh against His salvation revealed in Christ Jesus.

So then Israel and all in the flesh cannot attain to the law of righteousness; but the election hath; and wherefore? Because the one seeks it by faith, whilst the others are blinded by their own folly in refusing to listen to God. (See Rom. ix. 31-33; xi. 7.)

We come, then, to this conclusion, that God has pre-ordained to eternal condemnation all that are Christ-rejecters, and all that live in and love the ways of the flesh.

Many indeed are called, but few are chosen, because few choose Christ as Saviour and Lord.

God's invitation is to all; God's salvation is to those who accept Christ; God's condemnation to those who reject Him.

To those who believe, Christ is precious; but unto those which are disobedient, He is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, even to those who stumble at God's word, being disobedient; whereunto (*i.e.* unto which stumbling at Christ, as being God's salvation); they who disobey God are appointed.

“Ordnained indeed to condemnation” are the ungodly, who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, and deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ; not ordnained to deny Him, but ordnained to condemnation for doing so.

To conclude. Has not God predestined that all believers in Christ should be a seed to serve Him, a people formed for Himself, His workmanship? And has He not also predestined to eternal condemnation and destruction the Christ-rejecter, the evil-doer, the unbelieving, and those who love and live in the ways of the flesh?

Doth not then God’s election afford unspeakable comfort to the humble believer in Christ—whilst it presents an awful revelation to those who refuse and reject Him?

Is it not God’s fold-fence to keep in His sheep? to keep out the wolf?

Is it a hindrance to man’s salvation? Is it not rather the most powerful incentive and attraction to win men to God, in presenting as it doth such complete provision for the believing sinner, such eternal security?

A. O. M.

HOLINESS: A WORD TO CHRISTIANS.

HOLINESS, as God sees it, is the reflection of Christ. Not faith in Him for victory over sin; or the casting of all our care upon Him; or the apprehension of our privileges in heavenly places as children and heirs: not all this only; but all this and much more is holiness. Angels are holy by creation—perfect as to sinlessness; but it is Christ formed in us, in which our Father’s heart delights. Hence we are partakers of the divine nature by birth, conveying to our minds the idea of growth, not by the extinction of that which is natural, but by the development in us of that which is divine.

The word given to us in 2 Peter iii. 18, testifies of

a continuous unfelt progression, being changed into an image of glory and beauty, unfolded to us as we go on. In this we see a wondrous twofold purpose of wisdom and love. As little children we know the Father: we taste of His love in the gift of Jesus, and we find rest to our souls. But we press on to learn Him that is from the beginning: the Spirit ministering to us the Word, as we are able to bear it; for babes, milk: for strong men, meat: all truth converging to the one divine centre, finding its perfection and vitality in Him. Thus beholding as in a glass "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," we are transformed into the same image: not in a moment—that shall be when we see Him as He is; but "from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

If we beheld without growing, we should be overwhelmed; if we grew without beholding, we should be puffed up; but it is the wisdom of God to draw our hearts after THE PERSON OF CHRIST, that having an object infinitely precious outside ourselves to be occupied with, we may lose ourselves in wondering adoration, just in the measure in which we grow into His image.

Did we grasp salvation, or a Saviour, when we first believed? Do we, as saved ones, go after holiness or Christ? Have we got such a sight of God's Holy One as to be self-consumed in the presence of His glory, and to have our hearts poured out as water at His feet? Then we can afford to glory in infirmities, having found a soul-satisfying portion in Him. Partakers of the divine nature, it is our birthright to be holy: it is the condition, rather than the aim, of our being: wrought in us while we look out—ceasing to be wrought while we look in, because it is a reflected glory. Still the natural man must decrease as the spiritual man grows up into Christ: proving God's blessed unalterable truth, "He that is least among you all, the same shall be great."

A. E. W.

PUNCTUALITY.

WHY is it that so many Christians arrive at the various meetings too late for the commencement? It is most painful to find believers dropping in to a meeting five, ten, fifteen, or twenty minutes late; and one cannot help *thinking that a great deal of it might be remedied by a little self-denial or extra exertion.*

The blessed Lord Jesus left a promise, which has *never been cancelled* and never *once* broken: "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, *THERE AM I* in the midst."

Do we remember this as we should? Do we think of it as we prepare for the meetings—as we journey to them—as we take our seats—as we sing—as we pray? I cannot but think that the one great cause of unpunctuality is that Christians *lose sight of the fact*, that they are going to meet *Jesus Himself!* I cannot conceive that any one, knowing and *realizing this fact*, would, as it were, keep *Him* waiting.

Beloved in the Lord, the Lord Jesus always keeps His appointments; and is it not a fact that a half-hour earlier rising on the Lord's-day, or a little brisker movement in household affairs, would so alter matters that we should see every one in their places at the appointed time?

Dear friend, what has hindered you from being punctual? Cannot the difficulty be overcome? Ask Him earnestly to enable you to overcome every obstacle. He is worthy of a little self-denial on your part; for He denied Himself in every way, and suffered unto *death for you.*

May the Lord stir up your heart with love to Himself, and if you have hitherto failed in this respect, may you be so exercised about it that, by the Lord's help, it may become a thing of the past not to be repeated.

THOUGHTS ON WORSHIP.

BRIEF NOTES OF AN ADDRESS IN DUBLIN BY MR. LINCOLN.

“*The Father seeketh worshippers.*” Oh, I think that such a grand thought—the *Father seeking worshippers!* Once He did not; they had to seek Him. “And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart.” He was walled off. They dared not come too near. But now the veil is rent, Jesus has come forth as the expression of the Father; and God seeks worshippers. God is coming close to us, saying, as it were, Come to my bosom, to my *heart*, my children. Just as a father coming home at night has his heart gladdened at the sight of his children dancing around him, so is God seeking worshippers; that is *His* joy.

To worship we must be *consciously* in His presence, and it is only children who can be so; only the saved, only those who know they are saved, and no one else; only those who have received the Holy Ghost, and no one else. He has given the Holy Ghost to identify Himself with us, to urge us to say, ‘Father.’ “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” Observe, *He* first came close to us.

I would call your attention to a little expression, the full meaning of which is not always understood; it is this, “*In the midst.*” “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the *midst.*”

Observe, there is a difference between “meeting” and “gathering.” When we *meet*, it may be *accidental*; when *gathered*, it is by the Holy Ghost.

The expression “in the midst” is never used in the narrative of our Lord’s life before the crucifixion, except

where He was found in the midst of the doctors. On the cross itself we find Him thus spoken of. (John xix. 18.) But after He was risen, we read of it over and over again as if He had got to us at last. Once in Luke, and twice in John, on two successive *first days*, Jesus came and stood *in the midst*. There must be some meaning in this.

We find it is still His way—"I *am* in the midst." Oh, I think it is like as a hen would gather her chickens under her wings, making us *feel at home*. And so when the Lord is seen in the Revelation, it is walking *in the midst* of the churches. When we are gathered in the glory-cloud, that will be the position He will take. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: *in the midst* of the church I will praise thee." Compare Ezekiel's vision, where the Lord is seen appearing to Ezekiel. There were the cherubim seen, and a human form *in the midst*. The cherubim in glory are the church of God. Again, look at the position of the Shekinah on the mercy-seat—two cherubim with the cloud of glory between: "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are *all of one*." The cherubim and mercy-seat are *all one lump*.

These little words, "in the midst," show us the Lord's place in the assembly, and do away with the thought of one being nearer than another. He seeks worship from all. This brings us to the question—

What is worship? Prayer is *not* worship. Praise is not worship. Worship is much beyond either of these. It might be stated thus:

Prayer is being occupied with our *wants*.

Praise is being occupied with our *blessings*.

Worship is being occupied with our *God*.

His blessings have endeared *Him* so to us that we look beyond them. Suppose Jesus were to come personally into our midst this evening, I believe He would do just as He did before. He would set our minds at ease as He did Peter's by granting him a private in-

terview. (Luke xxiv. 34.) Were one of you to say, "Lord, I am not quite happy, I have got no bread," He would say, "According to your faith be it unto you," and you would be sure to find a loaf when you got home, if you trusted Him.

Ah, we are so terribly selfish; we forget that the Lord wants something as well as we. The Father is *seeking* worshippers. One has said that we use the Lord oftentimes like an umbrella, as a shelter from the storm, but folded and put away in sunshine. But the Lord is not satisfied till He brings from us this utterance, "My Lord, and my God!"

Look at the eighteenth chapter of Genesis. It is divided into two parts. (1) Abraham is told he is to have a son; and (2) The history of Sodom. The second part as you know sets forth *communion*. "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do?" That is fellowship—God making *us* His confidants.

But what connection can there possibly be, you say, between the first and second of these parts? Just this: God knew that there was something on Abraham's heart, and He wanted Abraham to be easy, to have the care that was on his heart rolled away. So He promises him a son; and having thus removed his cares, Abraham could have communion with God.

Oh, don't drag the assembly down, if you are not in a worshiping frame; don't lead the worship, then; leave it to others who are, and may-be the fire will afterwards get kindled in your own soul.

A friend of mine having expressed considerable surprise at my saying prayer was not worship, I asked him whether there would be prayer in heaven? He answered in the negative. I said, then will there be worship in heaven? "Oh, yes," he said; and he was satisfied that the two were quite distinct.

Since I have been in Ireland several have reminded me of a passage I mentioned when here five years ago. It is from the Song of Solomon. "O my dove, that

art in the clefts of the rock . . . let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice." We must get into His presence *first*, and *then* hear His voice. Observe the order—first, SEE; second, HEAR.

"*In my name*" means unto my presence (2 Chron. vii. 16 proves this), and whether we speak or are silent, let us realise *His* presence, and we shall need no man-president. Who ever saw the stars at noon-day? *No one*; and so, if we are in the presence of the Son of God we shall not see man. "Oh, but A. B. was the means of my conversion." "Yes, but Jesus Christ was the means of thy salvation, and He is in the midst."

Observe, it is not a *promise* as many take it; that where two or three are gathered together He *will be* in the midst. No; He does not say, there *will I be*, but "*there* AM I." *He is there*, seeking worship from those gathered to *enjoy* His love. So in Luke xv. the fatted calf is killed, and "let us eat and *be merry*." For those of you who like commandments here is one, "*Be merry*," or as in 1 Cor. v., "Keep the feast;" and this dovetails with the fifteenth of Luke. We are to be merry before God.

So it was with Israel in God's dealings with them. He brought them not first to the thunders and lightnings of Sinai, but said, "Let my people go that they may hold *a feast* to me in the wilderness." *Feasting* indicates *joy*. Oh, how slow God's children are to rise up to His goodness! Worship is just the overflowing of the heart—*My good God*. "Be merry;" God wants us to anticipate heaven. We see not all things yet, *but we see Jesus*.

Worship in its highest thought implies *assembling*. The present dispensation is the gathering out of a body, and the idea of worship is that of the heart being so full that we want others to help. *Come and help us* is the idea. A young lady once asked her musical instructor, how she might attain *perfection* in

playing. The reply was, "You must feel it." That is, she was to throw her entire energy, her whole soul into it. Oh, what a burst will escape that assembled throng, as they ponder o'er life's finished story with Him in the midst! Again, I think the "one loaf" sets forth the true character of worship—"We being many are one loaf."

Now if we would worship God, it must be *according to His word*. When the Queen holds a drawing-room, everything is done according to some prescribed order and arrangement, and when we come before God, are we to do as we like? *Do as we like!* Who am I? Who are you? that we should talk of doing as we like. It is *His* instructions that we must follow. First Corinthians is a whole book about it. If we worship as we like, it is *will worship*.

Real worship is this: on the *Lord's Day* the *Lord's people* gather round *the Lord Jesus*, to worship *the Lord*; and that is not to be mixed up with a mass of the unconverted. Oh, let us remember in the midst of much that is of human invention, that God's words as to *how* He is to be worshipped are unrepealed! See His instructions to Moses: were they not exact down to the knops on the candlesticks? It depends not on our vote or likes, but, *What saith the Word?*

And when we gather it is Christ who presides. Surely if the Holy Ghost is actually here it must be of very great importance. As the wind speaks through the *Æolian harp*, so does the Holy Ghost in the *Church of God* (seven times is it so called; *not once* the Church of Christ).

Again, it is only *children* that can worship God. In John i. it is Christ the *Lamb*; in chap. iii. Christ the eternal life; but it is only in chap. iv. that worship is brought in. It is only His children that can worship the Father. He gives us His own nature. God never can be worshipped except as He is known; and God was not fully known till the cross. The

angels could worship, but we know Him better than the angels.

The church will not *learn* or *lead* the angels' song. Our song is a new song, a *redemption* song, which the angels *cannot* sing. The *church* leads the worship in Revelation. The church *sings*; the angels *say*.

Our stand is as it were between two points. "Ye do show the Lord's *death* till He *come*." We are on the resurrection side of the cross, and we are just waiting *till He come*.

No matter what time of the day this Supper is celebrated. Some say that because it is a supper it should be held in the evening; that does not follow, because I find that the whole dispensation is reckoned *a night*. We must begin with God, and argue downwards. Because it *is* a supper, therefore it *must be night*, and we are just looking for the Morning Star to arise; and then what a meeting will that be! the same, only on a larger scale, as our gathering together unto Him every Lord's-day morning.

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.

THOUGHTS ON GENESIS I. AND II.

"THE mystery of Christ," the apostle tells us, "in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." But while unrevealed it lay hidden in many of the types of the Old Testament, awaiting the time of the unveiling, which could only be after Jesus had risen and ascended into the glory, and the Spirit at Pentecost had come down to open the eyes of the heart, as well as to unfold the glorious truth of the divine mystery to the receiving eye, the hearing ear, and the understanding heart.

On the right understanding of the church in her relation to Christ hangs all our consistency of walk as

children of God; and hence the deep importance to the saints of God that that relation should be clearly understood and faithfully maintained. The apostolic and prophetic ministries were given to the church to unfold this great mystery—a mystery to faith no longer, but a mystery to sight still, and which will remain such till the prayer of John xvii. is fulfilled in the glory, and the world sees what the bride of Christ is when He comes to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. (1 Thess. i.)

It is when we read Genesis i. and ii. in the light of Ephesians v. that the truth hidden in the Old Testament history of the creation of Adam and Eve is opened up to us; and this not as a cunningly-devised picture out of man's fertile imagination, but as a divinely-appointed type, designed of God to reveal to us His holy mysteries, and to assure us that they were present to the divine mind not only in the creation, but also in the verbal forms in which that creation was revealed to Moses.

The formation of Eve, the construction of the tabernacle, the building of the temple, and many other typical figures of the Old Testament, open up various aspects of that which is spoken of in the New Testament, as the bride, the body, the city, &c. At present we confine ourselves to the former, and pray the Lord so to open our eyes to see His revelations of His mysteries, that they may act in living power upon our lives and actions. These deep and glorious unfoldings of truth are designed to give depth and glory to our Christianity, and to stamp their character upon our life and heart, that we might ever deeply feel what manner of persons we ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness.

Dark and undefined views of the church, her position and calling, will lead to uncertainty as to our path, and to hesitancy as to our walk, which can only be obviated by a living realization of our calling as members of the

church of the first-born written in heaven. We say *living* realization, because there is perhaps nothing so dangerous and deadening to spirituality as mysteries unfolded as dead, lifeless theories to an unbroken spirit, where the spirit of knowledge and of fear go not hand in hand.

As we turn to the first two chapters of Genesis we observe some very marked differences between the accounts given in them. In Genesis i. we read of God always as "God," "*Elohim*." He is there regarded as the mighty Creator of all, speaking and acting of His own will; but in Genesis ii. He is always mentioned as "the Lord God;" *i.e.* "*Jehovah* God." This at once unfolds the difference between these chapters.

"JEHOVAH" is always connected with the covenant relation in which God stands towards His creature, not only as the merciful and faithful Creator, but as the almighty and promise-making, covenant-keeping God, who would link the creature to Himself by an eternal bond of covenant grace. To this name God appeals to Moses when He declares Himself as the I AM THAT I AM; and connects this name with the word JEHOVAH, which is formed from it. Of this God says, "I am JEHOVAH: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by my name JEHOVAH I was not known unto them. And also I have established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan." (Exod. vi. 2-4.)

The patriarchs knew well the name Jehovah, or Abraham could not have called the place where he offered up Isaac "*Jehovah-jireh*." They knew the *name*, but the *mystery* of the name was not known to them. Jehovah's name to Israel was specially connected with the promise of the land; and now, as they were going in to possess it, they learned to estimate the full value of that glorious name of covenant and promise, which makes all certain "in oath, and covenant, and blood."

The history of Genesis i. is soon learned. God created Adam in His image, and after His likeness. We read (v. 27) "God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." In Genesis v. 2, where the "*Jehovah*" of chap. iv. again gives place to "*God*," we read, "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him; male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam."

Man thus made in the image of God becomes "the type of Him who was to come." (Rom. v. 14.) And in the deep mystery of the "Let us make," we have the truth of the incarnate Christ involved, "who is the image of the invisible God" (Col. i. 15), and the image unto which all the children of God are to be conformed. (Rom. viii. 29.)

Thus the earthly type foretold of a heavenly prototype that was to be revealed in the fulness of time, the embodiment of the new man into which *in one body* we are created (Eph. ii. 15, 16), and in the power of which we are to put on the new man which is renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him. (Col. iii. 10.)

In this knowledge the fulness of eternal blessing is realized; a knowledge which God kept from the creature because it could not possibly be safely entered into except in communion with Deity. Therefore God links the creature with Himself in Christ, and then opens up "all the riches of the full assurance of understanding into the full knowledge of the mystery of God, in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."* (Col. ii. 2, 3.) Thus that which in Adam was withheld from man before the fall, is in Christ given to all who believe.

Let us now proceed to Gen. ii., which we find full

* See Greek: *επιγνωσις* is full knowledge, an experimental acquaintance with. The words "and of the Father and of Christ" are omitted by all critics.

of mysterious details in reference to the man, the woman, and the garden. Of the latter we shall not here speak, but will confine our remarks to Adam and Eve. Here we no longer find both called by the common name "Adam," but the woman, or Isha, is formed out of the man, or Ish.

In chap. i. man is spoken of as "created;" here it is said, "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Thus we see brought together in man the dust from the ground and the breath from God, united in the formation of that which is lowest and that which is highest—even a being, in whom was combined the dust of the earth and the breath of the eternal God. In the creation of the animal world, God spake, and it was done; here He forms as a potter forms a vessel on his wheel, and having thus prepared the vessel, He breathes into it the breath of life, in order to its becoming a living soul, *i.e.* a living person.

We have to remember that "soul" must not be confounded with "spirit," of which nothing is said here. The soul represents the being, and is used alike of man and of beast; but the one speciality of the human soul is, that the breath of God inspired it. To this the book of Job refers, when Elihu says, "But there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration (*breath* in Hebrew, as here) of the 'Almighty giveth them understanding" (ch. xxxii. 8); and again we read, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." (Chap. xxxiii. 4.) Thus life and understanding are alike spoken of as communicated by the breath of God.

Herein man stands as the mighty handiwork of the Almighty God; so insignificant, and yet so great, that in the contemplation of the wonderful mystery Job says, "What is man (אָנִישׁ weak, frail man), that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest

set thine heart upon him? and that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?" (Job vii. 17, 18.) And so David, "What is man (אִישׁ as before), that thou art mindful of him? and the Son of man (אָדָם Adam), that thou visitest him?" (Ps. viii. 4.) It was not until the Word became flesh, that the answer to these Old Testament questionings could be given; and Paul, referring to the question of Ps. viii. 4, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" says, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death (*i.e.* made of a type of being lower than the angelic to enable Him to die), crowned with glory and honour." (Heb. ii. 6-9.) Jesus is God's answer to all the heart's deepest yearnings; and he who fails to see Jesus, fails to understand the real mystery of his being, or to perceive that man is made for God's delight and joy. (Read Prov. viii. 30, 31.)

Christ is thus presented to us as the "Last Adam" of Genesis i., but as the "Second Man" of Genesis ii.

All creation, animate and inanimate, was placed under Adam. All was brought before him, and all living things were named by him; for God "brought them to Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." (ii. 19.) All passed before man as their lord and owner, whom God had crowned with glory and honour. Man stood as king; for God gave him dominion over the works of His hands. God named man, calling him "Adam," thereby indicating His claim over him. Man thus named by God, thus honoured, was designed to own that allegiance to God so beautifully expressed in Ps. viii. 1: "O Jehovah our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens."

But amidst all this glory man was alone. He looked around on all; each had its fellow, its companion, its

counterpart; none but man was solitary, even though crowned with glory; for, it is added, "But for Adam there was not found a help-meet for him." Every thing else had its help-meet; man had none. He was alone. Of this condition "the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone. I will make him an help-meet for him."

Observe, it is no longer, as in chap. i., "Let us make," but "I will make." Adam in the covenant chapter takes the place of the son, as we read, Luke iii. 38, "Adam, which was the son of God," and hence the Father says, "I will make." God saw what the need was, "a help-meet;" that is, a help who should be the exact counterpart of man himself.* And now let us ponder the beautiful unfolding of the mystery of the Church of Christ in the creation of the woman. There are several steps, and these steps involve ages in their antitypical development.

The first step is the *deep sleep*,† and this represents

* The Hebrew expression עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדוֹ is one of exquisite beauty. It represents a help that should be the likeness of him who needed the help, and which would give a sympathy and companionship which a common flesh-and-bone relationship alone could give. This we see in the joy of Adam's exclamation, "This is *now*"—at last I have got what my lonely soul has craved. It is no longer a different creature, an alien form—"This is *at this time* bone from my bones, and flesh from my flesh."

† תַּרְדֵּמָה This word rendered deep sleep is used in the following passages: Of Abraham, in Gen. xv. 12. Of Saul and his men under the miraculous intervention of God, in 1 Sam. xxvi. 12; so also Job iv. 13; xxxiii. 15. Of judicial deadness and blindness, Isaiah xxix. 10; also perhaps Prov. xix. 15.

The verb is used of Jonah chap. i. 5; and again when he is called "sleeper" in v. 6. Of the destruction of God's enemies, Ps. lxxvi. 6, "The chariot and the horses are cast into a dead sleep;" and also Jer. iv. 21. Of Daniel, when under the power of prophetic ecstasy, Dan. viii. 18; x. 9, which explains the passage in Job. These references are given, as the subject is of much importance in elucidating the passage in question.

the sleep of death under the judicial act of God, whereby from the ruins of a fallen estate God was to bring forth her who is to be the help-meet for Him who is alike "Son of God" and "Son of Man."

Till this death-sleep had fallen on the last Adam He abode alone, like the corn of wheat, until it fell into the earth and died; but the dead corn was to rise again and bring forth much fruit. So from the grave of Jesus does God provide a help-meet for Him, and thence does He bring for Himself many sons unto glory. Thus do the children of God and the Bride of Christ rise from the grave of His deep-sleep.

Abraham's deep-sleep in Gen. xv. bears typical reference to this. He thought he was to be alone, and to have a steward from Damascus for his heir; but this was not to be, and Abraham was to know it, and hence the deep-sleep precedes the birth of Isaac, and is connected with the ratifying of God's covenant with Abraham. The whole scene is intensely typical.

So again Jonah, the "sleeper," in a "deep-sleep" on board the vessel, and afterwards in the fish's belly, bears witness (as we are divinely instructed) to the fact of the death and resurrection of Christ. Out of that deep-sleep only God can arouse the sleeper, and cast him forth alive on the dry land.

How simple are these types. As little incidents, they pass before the eye in the histories of Adam, or Abraham, or Jonah; but how deep their significance, how profound their meaning, when read in the light of the grave of the Son of God!

A thousand ways might have been chosen to have made the woman. Why choose this first step, except, as we have indicated, to foreshadow "*the mystery of Christ*," which was to be kept secret till the fulness of time had come, and then, when it had come, to throw back its glorious light on these pages of types and shadows, and to encircle them with the halo of the glory of the Lord Himself?

The next step in this typical scene is the *taking of the bone*. We read, "And He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof." As has been said, Not from his head, as if to rule over him; not from his feet, as if to be trampled on by him; but from his side, to become his companion, his fellow, the partner of his joys and sorrows, the sharer of his crown and glory; for God calls both the man and the woman "Adam," and, as we are beautifully reminded by Peter, they are both co-heirs of the grace of life.

We cannot but notice an allusion to this forming of the woman out of the man in Ps. cxxxix., where the typical David says, "My substance (or my bone*) was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my unshapen-form (עֲלֵמָה) . . . and in thy book all of them were written, which day by day (יְמֵי) were formed, when as yet not one of them was. And concerning me, how precious are thy thoughts, O God! how great is the sum of them!" (Ps. cxxxix. 15, 16.) There are analogies and figures used in these verses we cannot enlarge upon, but may the Spirit of God take of the things of Christ in them and reveal them to our adoring souls!

The third step in this divine mystery is the *building up*. We read, "And the Lord God builded the rib which He took out of man into a woman." Special stress has to be laid upon the word "builded," a word in itself so unlikely to be used, and but for the typical truth couched under the figure of building, perhaps the last word man would have chosen; but, as ever, God chooses His words; for He knows what words suit not only the obvious intention, but the hidden meaning.

* For עֲלֵמָה our present Hebrew Bible reads עֲלֵמָה, strength, as if the Jewish punctuators could not see the force of the connection with Gen. ii.; but the Septuagint reads *το οστρον μου*—"my bone;" and so would we render it here.

Thus while God *forms* Adam, and forms every beast of the field (Gen. ii. 7, 19), He *builds* the woman, as if to cause to underlie that word the wondrous fact, that the church of the living God is being built up as a temple for God on the eternal Rock, or as the heavenly city on the twelve foundation-stones that rest on the Rock, on the heavenly hill of Zion. Thus is the body of Christ being builded member by member, the holy temple stone by stone, till all the living stones are gathered in, and each placed in its fitting place, and the top stone crowns it all, when shall rise the shout of triumph, "Grace, grace unto it!" The grace of God that laid righteousness for the foundation, and raised up the building; shall crown the whole in heaven ere long.

This word "builded" blends as it were the *bride*, the *building*, and the *city* into one; a silent protest against a system of interpretation that would separate figures rather than harmonize them. A *builded* woman, and *transparent* gold, are among the many beautiful incongruities of expression, which the Spirit knows so well how to use, and how to blend and harmonize.

The fourth step is the *presentation*. It is said, "And He brought her unto the man." This reminds us of the expression in Psalm xlv. 14—"She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework." It was God who brought the woman to the man, but it is Christ who will present His bride "to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," but "holy and without blemish." (Eph. v. 27.) Adam, the creature, could not present to himself the help-meet provided for him, but Jesus the Son of God can; and thus here, as elsewhere, types fail, and stand out in contrast with an unfailing reality in Christ Jesus.

In all this we have the unfolding of the great mystery of the church. God's "workmanship created in Christ Jesus," and which in His death-sleep was brought out of Him as "bone of His bone and flesh of

His flesh." In contemplation of that perfect form that stood before Adam, he exclaimed, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh." The "*now*" has particular force; it is as if he had said, "This is what I want, something of myself for myself;" and therefore he says, "She shall be called Isha (wife); for she was taken out of Ish (husband)." All this lets us into the understanding of what God considered a help-meet must be, as one "OF" and "FOR" the one needing help.

How great the mystery, and how precious the truth, that the church is prepared a help-meet for the Son of God—worms of the earth bound together in the bundle of eternal life, power, and glory; and so conformed to the image of the Son, that He shall exclaim, in the day of His espousals, when He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied, 'This is now at last, after ages and ages of patient waiting, of suffering and of labour, "bone of my bone," a partaker of myself and of my very nature, even the divine nature.' Thus will there be a further unfolding of the great mystery, "God manifest in the flesh." Here we can but worship, and, adoring the riches of God's grace, read in the earliest chapters of Genesis the secrets of God's eternal counsels unveiled in the fulness of time.

In Christ, the eternal life has been manifested to faith, and in the church will be manifested to the sight of the world that glory which must be seen to be comprehended. When it is seen, the prayer of John xvii. will be fulfilled—"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou hast given me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one (*τετελειωμενοι εις εν*); and that the world may know that thou *hast sent me*, and *hast loved them*, as thou hast loved me."

Long, and weary, and painful, has been the process of "perfecting into one;" death and dying has been stamped on all; but the workmanship is God's, and will not fail; for He will not fail nor be discouraged until He has brought forth judgment unto victory.

God's judgment of right and wrong, of perfect and imperfect, is infinite and absolute; and His judgment that shall pronounce His verdict of "very good," on this new and immutable creation shall meet its full and perfect realization, when that for which the old creation has groaned, and sighed, and suffered, shall be substantiated in glory. The marriage of the Lamb will then have come, and His wife have made herself ready; and to her shall have been granted to be "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white."

Thus comparing Gen. ii. with John xvii., Eph. v. and Rev. xix. xxi. and xxii., we see the mighty thoughts of the living God, when He builded the woman and presented her to the man. The Lord solemnize our hearts and humble our spirits as we contemplate God's exceeding grace, that has made us one with Christ, and partakers of His eternal glory in the Son of His love. H. G.

PARAPHRASE OF I PETER IV. 1-6.

"FORASMUCH then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh (for Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit), arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he should no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." Or according to Romans vi. 10, 11, "For in that He (Christ) died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive

unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." For "ye are crucified with Christ," "Ye are dead (as to sin), and your life is hid with Christ in God," that ye might henceforth live before men as those "alive from the dead."

"For the time past of our life may suffice us (surely) to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked (after the desires of the carnal, unrenewed heart) in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them (still) to the same excess of riot;" being unable to understand by what power, or for what reason your lives are so altered, "speaking evil of you," laying all manner of accusations against you, imputing to you false motives, and denying your real change.

But, beloved, give no heed to them or their words; your cause is in the hands of the Lord, and they will have to give account of their deeds to Him that is ready to judge "both quick and dead"—the Judge of all men. And remember, too, that "for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead." They charge you with your former ill-doings, and impute to you guilt. God has provided, and that lawfully, in the gospel for this very thing; for the gospel addresses itself to *sinners*, even to those dead in trespasses and sins, guilty, condemned, that those who believe might be dealt with—judged, and substitutionally have the sentence of death executed upon them as men in the flesh—showing God's full sentence carried out against them, as guilty and condemned to death, in the person of their substitute and atonement, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God's provision.

No real charge can therefore be brought against you now; for Christ has answered every claim, and God Himself is satisfied. And now since judgment has been carried out, God can bring you again to life;

and this He hath done by raising you together with Christ, that “quickeneth by His Spirit,” you might live the rest of your days in the flesh (*i.e.* here below) according to the mind and purpose of God.

A. O. M.

“THE GOD THAT ANSWERETH BY FIRE.”

Read Lev. ix. 22-24; 2 Chron. vii. 1-3; 1 Kings xviii. 30-40.

THE manifested presence and power of God amidst them and with them is deeply felt by God’s children to be their great need in these days. And this too not as a theory or a doctrine of what ought to be, nor even what *might* be merely, but as a constant token and inward sense of what *is*.

In other words, God’s answer to the cry of our need must be, as of old, by “fire”—it must be by the presence and power of the God-lit, living flame amidst us, for either His people’s wants or the deepening darkness of our times to be fully met.

And is not our God still “the God that answereth by fire”? His past answers by fire may help to show us that He is. Let us consider some of them.

Fire—*i.e.* supernatural, God-lit fire—is a solemn yet blessed subject all through the Scriptures. It is the expression of the pure, unsparing holiness of God, in grace to His saints; and in judgment on the “children of disobedience.”

All through the Scripture the fire of God takes these two lines, and in this order also, blessed be God: first, on behalf of His saints, through the sacrifice; afterward, against the ungodly. Nor is fire mentioned in God’s word till after sin had entered the world. It formed no part of the sinless Eden this creation was at first. Its glory and its terror were both subsequent things.

Gen. xv. 17 is the first mention of fire; it was “the lamp of *fire*” given to Abram in his “deep sleep;” it

moved between the "pieces" of the sacrifice, where his own feet had been walking to drive off the birds of prey; and it burned and shone in that vision to tell that when Egyptians and Canaanites had their doom, Abraham's believing seed would be God's burning lamp, and shining light in earth, through the grace of the once bleeding Lamb.

But the same Abram lived to see the next occasion of the God-lit fire. It was the "*fire and brimstone*" which Jehovah rained on Sodom and Gomorrah "*from Jehovah out of heaven;*" but "*the lamp of fire*" of his deep sleep" had prepared him for that awful day; and his then enlarged name of "Abraham" told of the lessons he had learned.

And thus we might trace the "fire of Jehovah" all through: ever coming first *for* His saints, and afterwards *against* the ungodly. But our immediate object is—God's *answering* by fire; that is to say, His acceptance of the worship and service of His saints by fire that issues from His own presence.

Three glorious occasions of this kind will readily occur to us: the *first* was at the installation of Aaron and his sons as priests; the *second*, at the first using of Solomon's newly-built temple; and the *third*, when Elijah gathered backslidden Israel—and their false prophets on mount Carmel, and amidst them cried to God.

These three occasions of God's answering by fire are full of encouragement and solemn instruction to us in our life and service as His saints. In each of them the fire came *upon the sacrifice*; in each of them the worship and service embraced "*all the Israel of God*"—it was catholic as well as pure; and in each of them the worshippers were bowed as "*with reverence and godly fear*" before the God of their salvation, who *thus* accepted them. Yet these occasions differ in their teaching.

1. In the first of them Aaron and his sons had come

near at the outset of their life and service as priests to God, on their own behalf, and on behalf of the people. Sinful were they in themselves, and so were the people. The same evil nature was in all the family that broke out afterwards in Nadab and Abihu, the “desperately wicked” heart of man; but they came with a “sin-offering” for themselves as well as one for the people—their own the larger of the two—and with all the other offerings that told of God’s own way of access to Himself; and no sooner had they thus called on Him by, as it were, the voice of His own altar, than He answered them by fire.

They, in the confidence of their acceptance, had doubly “blessed the people,” first from the altar, and next from the sanctuary, and God confirmed it; for “there came a fire out from before the Lord and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat; which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.”

Aaron and his sons were thus taught, first, their *lifelong* acceptance as priests to God; and second, the acceptance of all their *acts* of worship, if only they savoured to God of the sacrifice: a *strengthening* lesson was the first, a *cautioning* and awakening one was the second.

And are not the lessons the same to us as God’s “spiritual priesthood”? The blessed flame of the Spirit’s power is *always* in Christ for us before God as our acceptance, who “gave Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.” (Eph. v. 2.) It was through the eternal Spirit that He once offered Himself without spot to God, and the flame of God’s holiness so delighted in the Sin-bearer’s sin-atonement sacrifice, that “according to the same Spirit of holiness” He has been “declared to be the Son of God with power” by His resurrection from the dead; and in Him now above, in whom the heavenly flame delights and ever burns, we stand constantly accepted.

In this sense the flame of our Altar never ceases to burn, and never lessens its intensity. We stand accepted in HIM, the Holy One. It is the Lamb "as it had been slain" (slain for us, the spiritual priesthood) whose seven eyes are the seven spirits of God (Rev. v. 6), and those spirits are "lamps of fire." (Rev. v. 5.) The Spirit's flame of obedient love was in Him "without measure" for His atoning death. It is in Him now in all its fulness, as our great High Priest and Advocate for our acceptance before God. All this is blessedly and lifelong true for our strengthening and our joy.

But shall we be content unless the flame of God's felt acceptance of us burns in our hearts in every act of our worship and in every loving deed? Shall we not seek God's answer to us by fire—the fire of His Spirit in our hearts—in all we think, or say, or do, whether to Him or to fellow-creatures in His name? We *may* have it, and if our soul's eye but rest on Christ as ours, both in His death and in His life now above, we *shall* have it. The "God that answereth by fire" is as truly ours, by His Spirit with us and in us, as He is ours by Christ within the veil.

This God-lit flame, divinely burning for us at God's throne in Christ, has been once and for ever lit also in our hearts by the Spirit of Christ. But it is for us to feed it by setting Christ before us in all things, and whatsoever we do, "in word or deed" doing "all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Every such word and action being full of Christ, the Spirit's grace in us causes the flame of it to ascend as a sweet savour to God; and in every such word and deed God is well pleased, Christ is glorified, and the Spirit has His gracious way with us.

Aaron and his sons had to feed the flame of the altar which God had divinely set burning when He first made them His priests (see Lev. vi. 12, 13), and a sad day it was for them when it grew faint for want of fuel.

And, alas for us, when we no longer, Abel-like, bring Him the “firstlings” of all we have, and “the fat thereof,” but begin to “offer the blind for sacrifice,” and “the lame and the sick!” Not only the altar has not its due, but the Spirit’s flame cannot be sustained. The Holy Spirit by whom we are “sealed to the day of redemption,” and whom therefore we cannot lose, nevertheless is “grieved;” and “the God that answereth by fire” has no liberty to make that answer heard in our hearts.

But it need not remain thus with us: let us only again remember HIM by whom we first became priests to God, who was the consecration of our then “filled hands,” and the richly-laden altar of our worship, the One of whom it as truly says that He still “loves us” (see Greek), as that He once “washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Rev. i. 5); let us but by His grace again occupy our hearts with HIM, and the Spirit’s flame will burn in us as ardently as ever, or more than ever before; for there was “fat” to feed the flame in the sin-offering and the trespass-offering as truly as there was in the burnt and the peace-offerings.

If we have as believers sinned, the Spirit as truly *delights* when we remember “Jesus Christ the righteous as our advocate with the Father,” as He did when we first became Christ’s at all. And quickly does God again make felt the answer of the heaven-kindled flame. Well may we sing, as we sometimes do—

“Our Father, we would worship
In Jesus’ holy name;
For He, whate’er our changes,
For ever is the same.

“The fire Thy love hath kindled
Shall never be put out;
Thy Spirit keeps it burning,
Though dimmed by sin and doubt.

“Oh, make it burn more brightly!
By faith more freely shine!
That we may value rightly
The grace that made us Thine.”

2. We pass now to the second occasion. At the first using of Solomon's temple there came also God's acceptance by fire. (2 Chron. vii. 1-3.) It was not now the moving tent of the wilderness, the journeying "meeting-place" of God with His people, but the costly house built of solid materials, which Gentiles had helped to supply. But the "glory of the Lord" was not in the materials; nor was it enough that all had been fashioned according to the pattern which Solomon had received from David, and David from God. (See 1 Chron. xxviii. 12, 19.) True, it was "by the Spirit" (v. 12), and also in writing (v. 19), that David had received the pattern. Its orthodox accuracy therefore could not be disputed; and David's death-bed transmission of it to his son had been very affecting. But all this was not enough, and Solomon knew it. And leaving behind him the massive stones, the gold, and the sculptured beauty of it all, and making also as little of his royal descent and kingly crown and throne as Aaron before him had made of his priestly prominence, he turned, like Aaron, to the bleeding sacrifice as God's only way of acceptable worship. (See 2 Chron. v. 6.) "Also king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel that were assembled to him before the ark, *sacrificed sheep and oxen*, which could not be told nor numbered for multitude."

"The God that answereth by fire" heard the voice of this self-renouncing, Lamb-exalting worship, and replied by the flame from heaven which "consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices," and shone out a "glory of Jehovah that filled the house." The very priests could not enter; their office was for the moment in abeyance; but they and the worshipping people, far from being terrified, "praised Jehovah, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever."

The same "Spirit" which had given the pattern of the house to David, according to which it now stood a permanent erection, was also present to give visible

value to living, believing, obedient worship and service in the house.

Oh for the same now in the “house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth!”

Erected on the chief corner-stone, the Risen One, Christ Jesus, its foundations were laid here below by “apostles and (New Testament) prophets,” who, Judas and Silas like, inculcated apostles’ doctrine (see Acts xv. 32); and the Holy Ghost, who alone fully knew the “pattern” man at God’s right hand above, filled it with living power at Pentecost. The “cloven tongues as of fire” blessedly told of the Spirit’s gifts for speaking in all languages; but the flame of LOVE that filled “all that believed,” both toward God and toward each other, was indeed “the glory of the Lord filling the house.”

The church still stands, thanks be to God, a permanent erection, and God has never superseded His original “pattern” given “by the Spirit;” but oh for the glory of the Lord to fill it more abundantly! Oh for the heavenly fire as of old! May God our Father renew and still increase the preciousness of Christ and His sacrifice to all our hearts, and as we thus cover His altar with its fat and fulness, His answer by fire will not be long wanting.

3. The third occasion before us—Elijah’s case at mount Carmel—shows us that none *thus* cry to God in vain.

“*Ichabod*” (where is the glory?) was the last voice heard from the house of Eli when the lamp was near going out, and the sacrifice a polluted thing; and it was a deep *heart-felt* cry—a cry “out of the depths.” It was from the dying widow of smitten Phinehas, in whom neither the grief of widowhood, nor the pangs of childbirth, nor the “joy that a man-child was born into the world,” could drown her concern for the glory of God, nor her anguish at the ark being taken. Many

an answer to that cry came from God in Israel's subsequent history; such as the raising up of Samuel and of David, the restoring of that ark again, and the worship at the opening of the temple: but no mightier answer to the "Ichabod" cry is in all Israel's history than when Elijah uttered it on mount Carmel, and "the God that answereth by fire" gave the reply, and showed Himself to be "Jehovah" indeed; "the Unchangeable," spite of all Israel's sin.

The days could not in *that* age have been worse; the very "foundations were out of course" (Ps. lxxxii. 5); the "powers that be" "walked on in darkness," "knew not, and would not understand." Ahab and Jezebel were surrounded by prophets of Baal and of the Groves, and the people mingled Baal worship with the "Jehovah" name. But a single one in Israel who leans on God "chases a thousand," and two put ten thousand to flight; or, better still, a single "faithful witness shall deliver souls," and a solitary voice that cries to Jehovah for it shall yet turn Israel's "heart back again."

But, as in Adam's case and Solomon's, the appeal to God *must be* upon and by *the sacrifice*, and must be "for *all* Israel." The simple altar of unhewn "stones" was all he raised; the number of the stones was twelve for the tribes, not of Jacob, but of *Israel*, the name of honour; for it was still as true, as in the days of the wilderness (Numbers xxiii. 21), that the people were precious in God's sight, and that He "beheld not iniquity in Jacob, nor saw perverseness in Israel."

With these twelve Israel stones for the altar, Elijah gave a corresponding confession of the state of those tribes by the *twelve "barrels of water"* which he poured upon the altar, the sacrifice, and the wood. Like Samuel at Mizpeh, or Daniel in Babylon, he thus "poured out" his confession of their state as a people; and who that knows the God of Jacob and of Israel,

the God of all grace, can wonder that He, Jehovah, answered by FIRE as Elijah had prayed He would? For when did Spirit-wrought confession, made upon and by the sacrifice, ever fail to obtain its answer from God? The flame could not only feed upon the sacrifice, but the twelve Israel stones were all of them also consumed, and the twelve barrels of poured out water only gave glorious opportunity for the flame to show its intensity.

But, best of all, the flame was not at the altar only, but was kindled also in the hearts of the long back-slidden people; their former condition of two opinions (*marg.* thoughts) was over; they had only one mind now, and that was, all of it *for God*; each of them could say with the psalmist (cxix. 113), “I hate thoughts” (Heb. i. 9, “two opinions” 1 Kings xviii. 21); “but Thy law do I love.” They apprehended every prophet of Baal; they let not one of them escape: Israel was now zealous for Jehovah, and a precious “seven thousand” they make in chap. xix. 18, who had bowed no knee to Baal, nor mouth had kissed him.

Such, then, was the answer of “the God that answereth by fire” to the voice that cried to Him by sacrifice and by confession on behalf of ALL Israel. And such it will be still.

It is idle to talk of “*Ebenezers*” when there has been no “pouring out” of water before the Lord, nor offering of the “sucking lamb,” nor the fighting with the Philistine powers of sin, and the flesh and the devil. It is but the talk of the lips that “tendeth *only* to penury,” whilst “in *all* labour there is profit.” (Prov. xiv. 23.) And it is easy to soothe the mind with the assurance that God *has* a “seven thousand” that have bowed no knee to Baal when there has been no obtaining of the answer by fire that makes them manifest.

One word more. In the instances of Gideon and Manoah (Judges vi. and xiii.) we see that God gives

this acceptance by FIRE, God-lit FIRE, to the *hospitalities* of His saints, as we have already seen He does to their public worship. In both cases the very Rock gave out a flame at the command of the Jehovah angel. In Gideon's case, to strengthen him amidst the obstacles of family life, that he might step out for God, and fight "the good fight;" and in Manoah's, to hallow to the parents the gift of their child, that they might bring him up as a Nazarite for God by first being Nazarites themselves.

The same divine teaching by fire is in the New Testament; but this must be for another paper. The Lord meantime give us His fire, both *in us* and *among us*, to save us from the "strange fire," which He hates, because He commanded it not (Lev. x. 1); for the devil was a liar from the beginning. But, as John says to the "babes" of God's family (1 John ii. 21), "I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that NO LIE is of the truth."

"Now may the Spirit from above
Impart His holy fire,
 And cause our hearts to glow with love
 And vehement desire;

"The sweet desire of holy things,
 That finds its element
 In converse with the King of kings;
 With nought but this content.

"The pledge of sacred joys to come,
 Anticipation blest
 Of heaven, our everlasting home,
 Of heaven, our place of rest."

H. D.

THE BAPTISM OF FIRE.

“He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.”—MATT. iii. 11.

THE same “God of glory,” and “God of all grace,” who answered by fire now and again in Old Testament times, and made heaven-sent flame upon the sacrifice the token of His approval and of His gracious presence with His saints and servants, has made “fire” to be yet more fully His voice and His chosen element now that Christ, the Lamb of God, has Himself come. The mind of John, the baptizer, was full of this when he uttered the above words. Filled with lowly, worshipping thoughts of the glory and grace of the Messiah King, “Immanuel,” whose advent he came to proclaim, John puts His work in the utmost possible contrast with his own.

As if he would say to all around him, I but help you to learn, in common with myself, your deep need, and have a baptism of water only; a mode in which you may express that sense of need; but the Mighty One, for all your need, is about to show Himself, before whom I am no more anything than you are; for the baptism He has for you is as different from mine as substance is to shadow, or as power is to weakness, and as God Himself is to feeble, sinful man.

And what two emblems of God’s salvation by Christ could be more apt than those John here uses, viz., “Holy Ghost and fire”? *i.e.* life by the Holy Ghost, and fire as the character and power of that life.

God’s saving mercy to us in Christ is spoken of in the New Testament in different ways: as “forgiveness of sins” (Acts xiii. 38); as “God’s righteousness” (Rom. x. 3); as “reconciliation” with God (Rom. v. 11); as “everlasting life” (John iii. 16); as the “kingdom of God” (Acts xx. 25); and the “kingdom of His dear Son.” (Col. i. 13.) But John here speaks of God’s salvation as bringing us under and into all the infinite grace and power of the Holy Ghost. And

could anything short of this teach us what God has given us in giving us His only begotten Son? Does not faith in Him, the moment it enters, give us the beginnings of all that fulness of the Spirit's grace and power, which will be our *crown* of bliss and joy before the throne of God and the Lamb ere long and for ever?

In other words, Christ *baptizes* us with the Holy Ghost; through the Spirit's quickening, He delivers us, as by a burial, from our guilty life of sin and its condemnation, and raises us in newness of life to live unto God. This quickening, this baptizing with the Holy Ghost, the dying thief received, and in the joy of it departed the same day to be "with Christ."

This baptism with the Holy Ghost in His *quickenings* or life-giving power thus flowed from Christ before His death and resurrection. But it is not only the quickening baptism of the Holy Ghost that Christ gives; for no sooner is He risen from the dead than we also find Him opening the *understanding* of the disciples "that they might understand the Scriptures" (Luke xxiv. 45), and imparting to them the Holy Ghost by the action of breathing on them (John xx. 22, 23); and even then they were still to tarry at Jerusalem for Christ in heaven to receive "the promise of the Father," and so to send the Spirit, in all His might and grace, that they might be both filled with the Spirit, and go forth in the power of the Spirit.

How gloriously this was done at Pentecost for the hundred and twenty disciples who were then at Christ's bidding waiting for it! The Scriptures tell us (Acts ii. 4), "they were ALL filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

And they knew that this grace of God through Christ, this enduing them with the Holy Ghost as a Spirit of life, and understanding, and discernment of spirits, and divine power, was not for themselves only, but also for any others who should through them

“afterwards believe on Him to life everlasting.” For when their hearers were pricked in the heart with a sense of sin, as they themselves in time past had been, they assured them that on their believing in Christ they also would receive the remission of sins, and “*the gift of the Holy Ghost.*”

And this possession of the Holy Ghost was thenceforth a thing so true of all who came to Christ, that Paul tested any one’s being Christ’s by it: “Now if any man,” says he, “have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” (Rom. viii. 9.) And the presence of the Holy Ghost was known, not only as quickening into divine life, but also as a “law,” a power, a divine force within, which from that moment made him a freed one “from the law of sin and death.”

Truly Christ does “baptize with the Holy Ghost” all who come to Him; not only encompassing them with sights and sounds of the Spirit’s giving (see Prov. xx. 12), but filling them also in the inner man with the Spirit’s strengthening power. Who can doubt it that reads the apostle’s prayers for saints in Eph. i. and iii., and his doctrine concerning saints in Rom. viii. 1–13?

But then it is “FIRE,” as well as the Holy Ghost, with which Christ baptizes; or rather fire—heavenly, God-lit fire—is an essential element of this Holy-Ghost life, into which Christ baptizes the believing sinner, and with which Christ fills him.

And in this is seen the contrast between the Holy-Ghost life which Christ gives, and man’s natural life, even at its best estate. For as fire is unfriendly to man’s natural life, and extinguishes it, and the furnace quickly reduces him to ashes, so the holiness of God cannot dwell with the unregenerate, it can make no terms with fallen and corrupt human nature; God can neither tolerate nor spare it. And this burning purity of the “God of all grace” is declared by Paul in Rom. viii. 7, 8, in the same close connection with the Holy-Ghost truth concerning the believer, in which John

puts it in Matt. iii. "So then they that are in the flesh CANNOT please God. But YE," he instantly adds, "are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be (*i.e.* since) the Spirit of God dwells in you."

Here then is a mighty, a glorious characteristic of this grace of God to us in Christ. The throne of the Ancient of Days is as "*the fiery flame*, and His wheels as *burning fire*." (Dan. vii. 9.) "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; *a fire shall devour before Him*, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him." (Psalm 1. 3.) But He has not only pardoned our sins, robed us in a righteousness of His own providing, and reconciled us to Himself by Christ; He has also imbued us with, and made to dwell in us, a new and divine life, which, far from shrinking from the flame of God's holiness, rejoices in it, approaches it with solemn delight, and seeks to dwell in it as in its native element and home!

And this is true, in measure, of ALL believers. The feeblest born of God have ever loved His holiness. In less favoured Old Testament times the answer by the fire of God's burning flame did not terrify Aaron on entering his priesthood, or Solomon at the dedication of the temple; and confiding Elijah even asked for it at Carmel; Gideon was strengthened by it (Judges vi. 24), and Manoah's wife argued from it only good to herself and her husband (Judges xiii. 23); while the writer of the 50th Psalm boldly claims Him as "OUR God," of whom he says, "*A fire shall devour before Him*;" and hears God saying in reply, as from His flaming throne, "Offer unto God thanksgiving . . . and call upon Me in the day of trouble" (v. 14), though the words just before have been a declaration of the utter shortcomings of His saints.

But if saints of former ages have thus rejoiced in the Lord, and given thanks "at the remembrance of His holiness" (Ps. xcvii. 12), how much more is it ours to do so in this age when Immanuel, the Son of

God, has not only come, but being raised from the dead, and glorified, has sent the Holy Ghost Himself upon us, and in us, and amongst us, as His saints, and has verified to the full His forerunner's words about Him—"He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with *fire*."

We need not wonder that to children of God, as the partakers of such a baptism, the Holy Ghost repeatedly, in New Testament pages, brings the lesson of the fire; for how can it but be a lifelong element in our instruction, as it also will be in our immortal glory and joy before the throne, since it forms a part of our very birth and being, as saved ones of God?

The epistle to the Hebrews is full of the majesty and glory of the Son of God, as the Apostle of our profession, and of God's voice to us by Him, and of the value of His once shed blood as our way to God; and it is in this epistle (chap. xii. 28, 29) that we read—"We receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a CONSUMING FIRE." The voice which speaks to us from the throne of grace, now that we are worshippers within the veil, is the very voice from before which, as a fiery flame, the present earth and heavens will ere long pass away; and this day we look for as a "promise" to us, for we have already "received (by faith) a kingdom" which that day will not shake; nay, more, "the righteous shall then shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matt. xiii. 43.)

Even *now*, by the baptism of the Spirit which we have received, we see the King—"we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour;" and as "sheep of His pasture" we hear His voice. Oh, then, says Paul, let us show that we truly *know* Him! let us show that our souls are filled with the gaze of His loving yet flaming eyes, and that our hearts welcome the gracious but burning breath of His words to us, by this—that

we draw not nigh to worship with fleshly confidence of any kind, but hold fast His "*grace*" to us, and that alone, as our title to approach, and as our boldness in His presence. Let us acceptably serve Him as His priests, in the solemn but joyful remembrance that "OUR God is a consuming fire," and even now sits for us upon His "throne of grace" as a Refiner, who purifies as by fire His worshippers, that they may "offer unto Him an offering in righteousness," a "pleasant offering." (See Mal. iii. 3, 4.)

Nor is it as *worshippers* only that we are thus taught by fire. The same cheering yet solemn teaching is given us concerning our life and service in the *Church* here below. The whole Church is to be built, not only of living stones, but stones with a quality in them that will stand the fire. Hence Paul's word to the Corinthians (1 Cor. iii. 10-15), that they should all of them take heed how they built on the foundation he had already laid; that is, take heed how they behaved in God's Church, both one to another and toward the outside world. They were "of God in Christ" (see chap. i. 30): they had received through Christ the baptism of the Spirit unto life and salvation; yet let them not forget that it was also a baptism of "FIRE," but rather—in the constant remembrance of this, and of how soon the day of Christ would make it manifest, and would try every one's work—let them increase God's Church with nothing but divine increase—"gold, silver, precious stones"—material that would stand the *fire*.

Let them not teach in God's Church, nor suffer to be taught, any "evil communications" (1 Cor. xv. 33)—"evil teachings" (see Greek)—which not only in the end "corrupt good manners," but which will have no place before Christ at His coming; for "a King," says Solomon, "that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with His eyes." (Prov. xx. 8.) And the "doctrine of the Nicolaitanes" (who, judging by their name, were followers of a man named Nicolas

—*i.e.* ruler of the people—and, Diotrephes-like, were casters of others out of the Church) will certainly not stand that day of *fire*; for the Lord Jesus says even now that He hates it.

Neither let them defile God's Church with any indulgence in it of "lusts of the *flesh*," such as drunkenness, or covetousness, or idleness (2 Thess. iii. 11), or any other; for the "doctrine of Balaam," which led Israel to idolatrous meal tables, and to fornication (Rev. ii. 14; compare 1 Cor. x. 14-33), is hateful to Christ's already flaming eyes, and will be as truly consumed before His fiery tribunal for His saints as will the spiritual abomination of the Nicolaitanes.

In God's Church, therefore, here below, as well as in our worship within the veil, let us benefit by the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire.

Peter teaches by this lesson of the FIRE as well as Paul; for, having spoken (1 Peter i. 4) of the "never-withering inheritance reserved in heaven for us,"* he tells us (*v.* 7) there is the trial of our faith, which is to be "tried with FIRE, that it might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Peter had not forgotten the teaching of John in the wilderness of Judæa, as to Christ bringing a "baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire," nor the verifying of it which he had himself so blessedly shared in at Pentecost; and with a skill truly divine, he counts all earthly reproach and persecution as part of this same FIRE of the Heavenly Refiner, even as it was part of "Christ's sufferings," and an element in that altar-flame in which "He gave Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour."

"Beloved," says Peter, "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you . . . but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's suffer-

* How unlike the rich man of earth, who fades away in his ways (is "withered:" see Greek—James i. 11) before the "burning heat!"

ings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Peter iv. 12, 13); and in verses 14-19, we find that this furnace of purifying, this "judgment" already begun by God in His own "house," is through suffering "as a Christian" and being "reproached for the name of Christ."

Oh, precious wisdom which the Spirit gives, enabling us to see not only, as Paul says (Rom. viii. 28), that "all things" here are actively "working together for our good," but also that all here below of sorrow in the Church, and evil in the world, is but as a "burning fiery furnace" for us, the flame of which, if we but enter it willingly for Christ's sake, will no more "sing a hair" of our head or leave on us "the smell of fire" than Nebuchadnezzar's furnace did upon the Hebrew youths, but will only, as in their case, loose us from all bonds, for more present liberty of fellowship and friendship with the earth-rejected but God-approved Messiah King! (See Ps. cxvi. 15-16.) Well may we say:

"My soul, when tossed with tempest, sees

The Prince of Life draw near :

The burning furnace hurts me not ;

For Christ is with me there.

Come, speak to me, thou Great High Priest,

By Thy atoning blood,

And quench *the violence of fire,*

And calm the angry flood."

And, lastly, the FIRE, thus seen as already our birthright through Christ, and our helper all our days below, also forms part of the glory and the joy which awaits us before the throne of God and the Lamb.

We read in Rev. xv. 2: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with FIRE: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having harps of God"—a heavenly scene with evident allusion in it to the Red Sea of old and Moses, with the children of Israel, singing on its bank their song of triumph, and hence

it says: "They sang the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb;" a blending together before the throne of ALL the triumphs of the "Israel of God," whether of Old Testament time or New.

A contrast indeed to the singing of the nation on the Arabian sea-shore! An earthly deliverance was the theme then, and sin-stained and mortal were the singers, scarce any of whom ever entered the Canaan they sang about, Moses himself not excepted; and quickly was their singing followed by lives of murmuring, on account of which they died!

And why? Because they had never as a nation known the divine grace and power of the Messiah King; and had therefore never known "the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire."

But how different with these in Rev. xv. They are brought into the heavenly glory; they have a sea of glass, on which they stand! so unlike is it to this world's sea, the waves of which, like the wicked men of it, have no rest; and its turbid waters are ever "casting up mire and dirt." (Isa. lvii. 20.) And though it is a sea of glass, "mingled with FIRE" (a heavenly, not an earthly combination), yet are these harpers fitted for it; for their bodies have been "conformed" to His glorious body whose praise they sing, and their harps are altogether and always for God—"harps of God"—and no Babylon oppressors shall ever again even *ask* them to sing their song or sound their harps for any earthly pleasing! No, indeed! They, by grace, refused it below (see Ps. cxxxvii.), and they will never be thus tempted above.

On earth they knew and loved HIM who was consumed in the FIRE of God's holiness as a sin-offering, and as a whole burnt-offering, for their sakes; and through HIM they more or less learned here below to rejoice in being thus brought to God, and made even here children and heirs of that God who was to them as "a consuming fire." And now, "the God of all

grace," having not only "*called* them to His own eternal glory by Christ Jesus," but, after they have "suffered a while," having *brought* them to it, we behold them on that "sea of glass"—as Peter says (1 Peter v. 10)—"perfected, stablished, strengthened, settled."

Nothing now disturbs or weakens them, nor ever will again! They have "gotten the victory" of a truth. Christ has fulfilled His word (Rev. iii. 12), and has now made every one of them "a pillar in the temple of His God, to go no more out." And while "Praise the Lamb" wakes their chorus, and they give all the glory of their salvation to God and Christ, the FIRE of the sea of glass on which they stand is the everlasting and divinely-perfect token that all the holiness of God as truly delights in them, in their creaturely measure, as it fully and infinitely does in Immanuel HIMSELF, through whom and by whom God has brought them there. H. D.

EXPERIENCE.

"I have learned by *experience* that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake."
GEN. xxx. 27.

"My heart had great *experience* of wisdom and knowledge."—ECCLES. i. 16.
"And *patience, experience*; and *experience, hope*."—ROM. v. 4.

THREE times in Scripture does this word occur as quoted above, and it is very interesting to notice how widely different in character these *experiences* were. They stand as types of three careers. Man promises himself happiness in the first two; God promises man happiness only in the last.

What is experience? Is it not the knowledge or skill obtained by the habit of seeing, hearing, doing, or suffering, as the case may be? Laban's intrigue for adding to his substance acquired strength by practice. Solomon's researches after wisdom made him earnest for further discoveries. (Eccles. i. 17.) But the result of both these experiences was emphatically a hope that made ashamed, a longing that was left unsatisfied, a goal that was never reached.

Still man continues to expect happiness from these experiences. The success of some in the pursuit of wealth or wisdom, the ease and honour obtained by them powerfully incites those behind them in the race to make light of all attendant hardships and disappointments, if so be that they can thereby reach a certain sphere which promises their hearts content.

How contemptible does the apostle's *experience* appear to an enthusiast of either of these classes—" *We joy in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*" Is that all? he asks—the sequel of tribulation, the result of trial of patience—is it only a hope? Yes, that is all perhaps; but there are those who would not exchange it for all the estates and the wealth, the influence and the fame, this world has to offer.

It is very instructive to notice how the exhortations, both of St. Paul and St. James, lead to the same issue. "We glory in tribulation also," Paul writes to the Romans. James opens the subject with, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." "Knowing that tribulation worketh patience," adds Paul; "Knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience," continues James. "And patience, experience," is the testimony of one; "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing," is the testimony of the other. How clearly does the latter explain the former.

Here then we have the testimony of two taught by the Holy Spirit, and they both point to the same path for the attainment of a signal blessing, and both congratulate those who have set out on it. What is the blessing? What the attainment to be won in the path of trial and temptation? It is to KNOW HIM on whom we have believed. This is the constant purpose

of the Lord, the beginning and end of all spiritual education.

Why is trial and temptation absolutely necessary to this end? Because our interests and affections *fasten* upon any object we have pursued with success. It is as natural for us to become engrossed with ourselves and our work as to fall on the ground when we lose our foothold; and the trial or temptation is the *interruption of the Lord's hand raising our faces from their downward gaze, to look up into His face and listen to His words.*

The yielding up to Him of our attention is the exercise of our *patience*, and His support and intercourse with us under the trial or deliverance from it follows. This counts as *experience*; but, alas! we sometimes shut our eyes, refusing to look at anything if we may not look at what we like, so that the trial brings us no *experience* in the sense the apostle uses it. In the school of the Holy Spirit, as in seats of earthly learning, there are those upon whom all advantages are lost, because their attention is not given to Him who speaks.

Now for the effects of this experience. "*Hope that maketh not ashamed.*" The reason given is very beautiful, revealing as it does the process of sanctification. The soul brought for the first time under trial is in the condition of a dark chamber, and the Holy Spirit's action is to admit a ray of the Father's love in Jesus into it. The continuance or repetition of the trial (where the will is yielded up to God) gives occasion for the Spirit to let in more rays of comfort, until the darkness of distrust is entirely dissipated by the light of God's love being SHED ABROAD in the heart. Christ's yoke is realised as easy, His burden as light. With loins freshly girded the refreshed soul resolves—

"In this light of life I'll walk,
'Till travelling days are done."

E. K. G.

HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS.

ISAIAH xxxviii. 9-20.

"THE writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness."

This writing reveals the thoughts of Hezekiah's heart, and if we gaze steadily at the picture it brings before us, we shall find that it lays bare yet deeper depths, and discloses the heart secrets of many a dear child of God.

Few know what it is to have a life of uninterrupted health of body, fewer still are continually in a healthy state of soul; and it may help and strengthen some of the Lord's weak and sickly children to spend a few moments over this writing of Hezekiah, as he reviews his lately trodden path, and marks its lights and shadows with truthful accuracy.

"I SAID in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years. I SAID, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living."

He had been looking both at circumstances and at God Himself from the stand-point of his own sad thoughts—"I said." Oh, how many a sigh, how many a tear, how many an hour of bitter sorrow and God-dishonouring apprehension, arises from what we say! especially when we are sick in soul—weakened, it may be, because we have neglected our rightful food and have been tasting of the devil's dainty meats, or carried away by the rush and turmoil of "life's fitful fever" until our utterances have become more like the ravings of delirium than the words of truth and soberness which become the child of God.

Hezekiah considers his case hopeless. There can be no recovery for him. He is fast going to the grave, and going unwillingly; deprived of all enjoyment of life; cut off in the midst of his days; and, if he is to believe the sayings of his saddened heart, shut out also from his

God! We wonder not that he "wept sore;" and, dear depressed one, we wonder not that you weep if your heart bears the same false witness, and you are believing its testimony. You say you could have borne the dashing of an earthly cup of joy; but when you doubt whether you will ever see your Lord, how can you be comforted?

Poor Hezekiah's sad complaint runs on. Not content with present sorrow, he anticipates still further evil, and evil at the hand of God. "*He* will cut me off with pining sickness: from day even to night wilt *Thou* make an end of me." Still no ray of comfort. He feels that God has left him; *His* hand is pressing him down. He seems to dwell upon his grief with persistent self-torture. "*I reckoned* till morning, that, as a lion, so will He break all my bones." And do such *reckonings* as these ever find an entrance into the heart of one who has tasted of the love of the Lord Jesus? Alas, it is even so!

Hezekiah had been one who "trusted in the Lord God of Israel;" "for he clave unto the Lord," "and the Lord was with him." (2 Kings xviii. 5-7.) In the first year, and the first month of his reign, he had opened the doors of the house of the Lord. (2 Chron. xxix. 3.) He had restored Israel's worship, had gathered them for the long-neglected passover, had prayed for other sick ones, "and the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people." He had encouraged Israel against their enemies by such words as these: "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him: with him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested on the words of Hezekiah." (See 2 Chron. xxix.--xxxii.)

Alas! how soon he has forgotten all the goodness of the Lord. He speaks of this loving, faithful, ever-present Jehovah as "a lion!"

Does not your heart rise in indignant anger against such base distrust? Do you not exclaim with dismay at seeing your Lord thus wounded in the house of His friends?

Stop, my friend. Has not your soul been sick? and have not you sunk down in despondency, and said, "All these things are against me"? Have you not shrunk from the tender hand of the Lord Jesus when stretched forth in love to chasten or to prune, and in your heart of hearts have thought of Him as a lion? And there is less excuse for us than for king Hezekiah. He had never been to Calvary; he had never seen the love of God displayed and manifested as we have done; he had not received the inspired message which we have in our hands—"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32.)

Oh take the lesson home, and never again so grieve and wound the Lord that loves you! How is it possible that He can "make an end of you"? (See *vv.* 12, 13.) He has given you ETERNAL LIFE, His own life. He has purchased you for His own inheritance. He loves you, and His love is unchangeable. How can you have one doubt or fear for the *future*? And for the *present*, which sometimes weighs so heavily, has not He said, "FEAR NOT; FOR I AM WITH THEE"? "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered!"

But let us return to Hezekiah. In verse 14 his fear seems to be lessening, and giving place to the cry of very weariness: "Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward." And the upward gaze, weak though it be, is bearing fruit. Hezekiah looks away from himself and his circumstances, and it is no "lion" that meets his eye. He sees, as God's saints have ever seen when their eyes are directed to His face, love, pity, and compassion. As in Luke xv. the father runs forth to meet the weary wanderer who is seeking rest, so not

one look of reproach meets Hezekiah's upward gaze ; but he feels that he is welcome. The cloud is lifted, and he cries, "O Lord, I am oppressed ; undertake for me," or as the margin has it, "ease me."

It is the cry of the tired child on the mother's breast, but it is a trustful cry ; all doubt is gone, and at once the healing balm enters his soul. "What shall I say ? He hath both spoken unto me, and Himself hath done it." The discipline is accepted as coming from a loving hand ; and the bitterness of the trial is gone, though he is still under its depressing influence, "I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul." He has recognised that the trial has been sent in love, but he has not yet learnt his Father's purpose in it, and therefore, although he *submits*, he does not *acquiesce* in the Lord's dealings with him. His heart is wearied out with its rebellious struggling, and though peace has been at last restored, he feels as though the joy of the Father's house could never again be his portion. But he has yet to learn the fulness of that Father's grace. He begins to see that there is some deeper meaning in the trial, and that its teaching is of life and not of death. "O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit : so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live," and step by step he leaves the mists behind.

Do we not find in this a key to much perplexity of soul among God's children ? If we are rebelling against our Father, struggling to have our own way, and unwilling to submit to Him, the rod must fall, and our experiences under it will more or less be like that before us. We cannot realise our Father's love while the dark mist raised by our own rebel will rises between, and therefore we misread His loving purpose, and are ready to fall an easy prey to the suggestions of the enemy, who will seek as he has ever done to raise doubts as to our Father's love. But the moment we submit, the moment our stubborn will yields to the

fatherly correction, that moment the rod is dropped. We receive the kiss of reconciliation. And although the very same trial which He has used as the rod to subdue us may in some cases be continued, we find it has *lost its bitterness*, we can look up and smile through our tears; for we have recognised our Father's word and hand of love—"He hath both spoken unto me, and Himself hath done it."

What a change in the aspect of all around us is produced by the sun shining forth after a storm! How it lights up all the shadows, and brightens the most rugged path. And who among the little band of strangers and pilgrims has not felt the song, "He *restoreth my soul*," to be like "clear shining after rain"?

The brightening gleam touches not Hezekiah's future only; but the past, which lately seemed so wholly dark, is seen in a new light: "Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast *in love to my soul* delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth."

The fact of accomplished redemption comes back to the soul with added power at such a time as this, and the language of the soul is, My sins, even *this sin* of murmuring and unbelief, *all* forgiven; all put away by the precious blood; all cast behind thy back for ever! Oh, my God, what cause is this for praise! I am not made "an end of!" My bones are not all "broken!" I am still in the land of the living, and I WILL PRAISE THEE. I will speak of thy faithfulness and thy truth; my children shall hear the voice of thanksgiving—and not for one day only—I will keep in memory thy great goodness. I have doubted thee, I have dishonoured thee, but thou hast not forsaken me. "Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together."

“THE LORD WAS READY TO SAVE ME: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments ALL THE DAYS OF OUR LIFE IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD.”

NO CONDEMNATION.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”—Rom. viii. 1-4.

“WHAT God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” God has connected justification and sanctification. In these verses we have not only “no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,” but also “the righteousness of the law fulfilled in us.”

What God has put asunder, let no man join together. “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us;” therefore “let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

Verse 1: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.”

The secret of conscious security is realizing by faith the place into which grace has put us—“in Christ Jesus.” Noah in the ark is the type of this.

According to 1 Peter iii. 20, the believer passes through death and judgment in Christ. The eight souls in the ark were saved through water. The ark went through the judgment that destroyed a world, going down into its depths, and riding on the crest of its highest wrath-billow; while not a wave from the depths beneath, nor a drop from the clouds above, reached Noah; for “God shut him in.” But by that very act he was not only shut IN from the wrath to come, but shut OUT from the world of sinners on whom the wrath was coming; not only secured, but separated. So in Christ Jesus; we are not only saved, but sanctified.

There was but one window in the ark, and that window a sky-light; so that while the deluge continued, Noah was shut up to one sight—the frown of the Almighty above, like Christ on the cross; and when the deluge was past, to those cloudless heavens which had exhausted all their stores.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,” and “he that abideth in Him sinneth not.” We have only to seek refuge in Christ, to give the challenge to the universe, “Who shall lay anything to our charge?” We have only to abide in Christ, “looking off unto Jesus,” to be separated from a world of sin and sinners.

But in Romans viii. 1, the type is not so much the ark tossed on the billows as the ark at rest on the mountains of Ararat. Not Genesis vii., but Genesis viii. The date when the ark rested was the seventeenth day of the seventh month, the day of Christ’s resurrection from the dead, three days after the passover. (Compare Exod. xii. 2, where the seventh month was changed to the first.)

The title given to the Lord, “Christ Jesus,” also intimates this; Jesus Christ, the title employed in the four gospels, being His title as living and dying on earth, or as having lived and died; Christ Jesus, His title as risen, and ascended to heaven. And the rainbow of covenant promise is not simply an arch in the horizon, or the skirt of the cloud as it passes away, but seen in complete circle in unclouded brightness around the throne. (Rev. iv.)

Verse 2: “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (*hath*) made me free from the law of sin and death.”

“Made me free,” not “*hath* made me free.” Having believed in Jesus, and having been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, we were then and there set free from the bondage of sin and Satan. The bill of our emancipation was signed, sealed, and delivered, that henceforth

we should not serve sin. "He made me free" is the *privilege* of every child of God; "hath made me free" is the *experience* of comparatively few.

"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus"—what is it? It is LIFE in Christ Jesus, sitting at the right hand of God, in whom our life hath been hid. (Col. iii.) It is the SPIRIT of life in Christ Jesus; for "it is the Spirit that quickeneth." It is the LAW of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; His uniform acting; invariable as the laws of nature; for He must ever act according to His nature, as the HOLY Spirit.

As believers in Christ, we have not only a rule and an example of holy living, but the LIVING POWER of a life of holiness. His name was called Jesus, that is, Jehovah the Saviour (Hebrew), not only because He saves the poor sinner from guilt, but His people from THEIR SINS.

"How sweet the name of JESUS sounds
In a believer's ear!"

He saves us, as Jesus Christ, by the blood of the cross, and, as Christ Jesus, by the Spirit from the throne.

We derive our motives from His cross, our power from the throne, and our encouragement from His judgment-seat.

Verses 3, 4: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God having sent His own Son in (the) likeness of sinful flesh, and for (or concerning) sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who are walkers not after (the) flesh, but after (the) Spirit."

What the law could not do through the weakness of the flesh, God accomplishes by the sacrifice on the cross, and the Spirit from the throne.

There are two aspects of the sacrifice. Jesus was the spotless Lamb of God, the bearer away of the sin of the world; but He was also the goat of the sin-offering, made in the likeness of sinful flesh, though

personally sinless; and in Him, on the cross, God condemned sin in the flesh.

In Leviticus we have the type of these two things: the male sacrifice was for actual transgression; the female sacrifice for sin in the nature, or for involuntary defilement. The recent convert may be singing to-day—

“Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away.”

To-morrow he may be groaning, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?” But deliverance from both is found in the same precious Jesus, on whom was not only the guilt of actual transgression laid and judged, but in whom sin in the nature was condemned.

We never get God’s estimate of sin in the nature till we see sin in the flesh condemned in the sacrifice of Christ; but for what purpose? Verse 4: “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who are walkers, not after (the) flesh, but after (the) Spirit.”

We must never separate the blood from the oil. Where the blood was put, there was the oil. The blood redeems from the lowest pit; the oil connects with God in highest glory. By the blood on the ear, the hand, and the foot, God sets apart the whole man from sin and its eternal consequences, saying, “Deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom.” By the oil He seals the whole man for Himself, from the tip of the ear to the toe of the foot, for resurrection and heavenly glory.

The commandments of the law might either have been given in the imperative mood, as “Honour thy father and mother;” or in the simple future, as “Thou shalt have none other gods before me;” and with the one exception quoted above they are all given in the simple future; for this purpose—in order that *precept* and *prohibition* under the first covenant may become

promise and *provision* under the new, God undertaking the accomplishment, "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not." Writing His laws on our hearts, and putting them in our inward parts, the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is our power of fulfilment; and we say with the psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee." Thus the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us.

In these four verses of Romans viii. we have three things—JUSTIFICATION, SANCTIFICATION, and RIGHTEOUS WALK. Justification in Christ Jesus, and there is no condemnation to them which are in Him. Sanctification, by abiding in Him; for "he that abideth in Him sinneth not." Righteousness of walk, by walking in the Spirit of a risen Christ—holding the Head, and living His life; for the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in such.

JESUS CHRIST redeemed us from sin and its eternal consequences by His blood on Calvary's cross. In CHRIST JESUS on the throne we have life and holiness—"one Spirit with the Lord."

When JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD, who purchased us with His blood, and CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD, who anointed and sealed us with His Spirit, shall appear in glory, then shall the remembrance of every step walked in the flesh be blotted out by the blood which redeemed us, and every step walked in His Spirit receive its eternal recompence of reward. T. N.

WEAKNESS AND STRENGTH.

2 Cor. xiii. 4.

THE impotency of the creature and the omnipotence of God are truths which run side by side throughout Scripture. Christ our risen Head, who was once crucified through weakness, we see living by the power of God. The cross, the symbol of weakness, becomes the very foundation and strength of our sal-

vation; that on which is built the Church of the living God, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, and the centre round which all His mighty eternal purposes revolve.

The cross was the crowning-point of the weakness of the Son of God. Step by step from the manger at Bethlehem He emptied Himself until He became obedient unto death. Infinitely perfect and glorious in holiness, yet intensely capable of suffering, His life was one continued yielding up of everything to God—one beautiful, unbroken example of helpless dependence on Him from whom He came. Having all the resources of the Godhead open before Him as God manifest in the flesh, He yet received from His Father's hand every supply of strength or succour in all His pilgrimage of need and suffering on earth.

The cross was but one side of His wondrous mission. There His holy soul came into contact with the sin of the whole world. There He tasted the outpourings of His wrath in whose bosom He had lain from eternity. The accumulated judgment against sin, which else had rolled over our souls throughout the ages to come, rolled once over God's devoted Lamb, with all its waves and billows. He drank there the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out.

But that was not all. His perfecting as the Captain of our salvation cost Him a life of suffering obedience. He was always the Father's delight; but a life of holiness in the courts of heaven is not a life of holiness as an alien and a stranger amongst men. He must be tried by men and by Satan as well as by God; yea, and tried to the uttermost. But every fresh heating of the furnace brought into manifestation some perfection of His grace, who was the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person; some richer fragrance of the incense of that one offering in which all the frankincense was incensed up to God. (Lev. ii. 2.)

And now there is nothing left us but to follow in His steps. All the fulness of grace and glory was filled up in Him; every ray of divine holiness found its centre there; and we receive out of His fulness even grace for grace; for the overflowing of that which had its fountain in the Head enriches all the members.

The meat-offering, with its fine flour and oil, is given to us as a type of the evenness and richness of grace that marked all His steps below. It was a perpetual offering, and without measure. All the sons of Aaron might partake of it, one as much as another. It was the same fine flour and oil; but all the frankincense was incensed up in the first part consumed.

God would provide at any and every cost riches of mercy and faithfulness to meet our varied needs all through the wilderness way, and therefore in the fulness of His love to us it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him who was our Surety, that He might accomplish to the utmost His purposes toward us. But it was impossible He could be holden of death. Having shed the blood that was to put sin out of God's sight for ever, He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.

But here we stop. We may worship, and wonder, and adore; but we cannot scan the glories of Him who is at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. Faith can apprehend her oneness with Him there; she can claim her right to enter with boldness into the holiest, because of the blood by which He entered; but all that this oneness involves of glory and blessing for eternity we can never fully know until we see Him as He is.

But faith must learn her lessons in God's school. Let us glance at just two instances in Scripture, and we shall see the consistency of the ways of God in blessing to His saints.

Look at Jacob at Peniel. God wrestled with him

until the breaking of the day. God wanted to bless him; but Jacob must first be made fit to receive the blessing. He had to become helpless first, and then God could say, "As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

Again, look at Paul. Caught up to the third heavens, he heard unspeakable words which it was not possible for a man to utter; and yet when God would perfect strength in him he must be made weak; he must be made to glory in infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon him.

Has all this no voice to us? Do we never want the strength of Christ without His weakness? Do we never forget that the path upward to where He is, is first a downward path? We never can go as low as He went; but if we would know the power of His resurrection, it must be through the fellowship of His sufferings. Every fibre of the sacrifice was consumed. Man's eye saw only the destruction of what was natural, but the richness and life of the sacrifice went up in the power of resurrection to God for a sweet savour of Christ. It was most holy.

Beloved saints of God, this is our reasonable service. (Rom. xii. 1.) Let us not look upon it as high attainment. Anything less is unreasonable. Are we prepared for this? Do we know our place of solemn responsibility as brought thus into fellowship with the Son of God? We need to be weak, to be helpless, to be nothing, that we may not stand in the way of God's unalterable purpose to exalt him who humbleth himself.

But, blessed be God, if we are called to suffer with Him, it is that we may be also glorified together; if we are made weak, it is that we may be strengthened with all might; if we are cast down, it is that we may be lifted up; if with empty, longing souls we thirst to know Him, it is that we might be filled with all the fulness of God. (Compare Eph. iii. 16-19 with Ezek.

xlvi. 5.) This is the one place where God can safely bless us, when we are lifted off our feet, out of everything we have and are, and made to take our stand on what He is; not seeking so much to be given wisdom, or grace, or power, as to know Him in whom God has put it all in its perfect measure, and in whom He has put it *for us*. We shall then glory in the weakness and infirmity that give to God an opportunity of perfecting in us the strength of Christ; learning in our place at His feet the full meaning of that most blessed experience—"When I am weak, then am I strong."

A. E. W.

BURDENS.

"GATHER up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost," was the injunction of our Lord with reference to the food provided by Him for the starving multitude; and surely He would have His disciples act out the precept now with regard to teaching—food for the spirit—taken from His word. A few fragments, collected at one of the Dublin meetings, I should like to share with some needy fellow-pilgrim. May He direct them just at the right moment to nourish the fainting heart.

The portion of Scripture selected on the occasion to which I refer was Isaiah xli., and it was used as an illustration of the wide difference between the religion of the world—for the world has a religion—and the religion of the Christian; the one "a burden for the weary beast," the other securing to its possessor a strong and faithful support. "And even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you." So it is in truth if we Christians would but accept and act upon the gracious intentions of our God; but which of us does so—not spasmodically, not merely in moments of great and pressing

trial, but as the constant daily habit of our lives, in reference to the constant daily cares and anxieties of these same lives?

We need to be thoroughly honest with ourselves; for the matter is one of infinite moment, deeply touching God's glory and our testimony for Him as His sons and daughters. Take for example our longings for the conversion of relatives. Do we in prayer actually roll the burden on the Lord, and *leave* it on Him? We are so apt to pour out all our troubles to Him, and then pour them all back again into our hearts, and go away with the weight not one whit really lightened.

Distrust of God—not in theory, there we are right enough, but in positive practice—is the great sin of Christians. Yes, *sin!* Let us call things by their right names. The abounding promises, both spiritual and temporal, are ours—we know them by heart, and we prize them truly; but if we had the courage and honesty to sit down and make a list of them, and then set opposite to each the commentary on our belief, as shown in our daily lives, what sort of a record would it be? A strange and humbling one we may be very sure.

Time would not allow of an enumeration of all the evils produced by this state of things; but one must be alluded to. It is possible—do we not all know it by grievous experience?—to make an idol of our very sorrows and perplexities. Anything that comes between us and God is an idol; it hides God from us. We may be so burdened with family cares, business anxieties, nay, even with service, as to lose sight of God. Can we not do with these things what we have already done with our souls, trust them wholly to God? If we can depend on His word for salvation, can we not for other matters? Can we not roll these weights on Him who has promised to carry both them and us, and then go on free from the responsibility of the issue?

Does not every Christian heart respond to the truth

of our brother's words? But do not let us be content with such response. If this distrust, of which he spoke, be the habit of our souls; if, looking back on the experiences of a year, a month, a week, nay, it may be even on those of this very day, this very hour, we feel that we have carried or are carrying our burdens instead of rolling them off; that troubles poured out into the ear of a loving Father have been by us poured back again into our own aching hearts, let us go to Him now, without an instant's delay, and, confessing our fault, pour them out again, and leave them with Him. Let us be very plain and practical in our dealings in the matter, remembering that it is the simple, trustful spirit of the little child that God looks for and can alone honour. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. vi. 33.)

If we are one with Christ, heirs of God and joint-heirs with His Son, what have we to do with anxious care? "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32.) "Be careful for nothing," says Paul to the Philippians (chap. iv. 6), "but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

"*With thanksgiving.*" If we practised this more, if we prefaced each new petition for help with thanks for the help afforded in our last difficulty, we should soon be shamed out of our distrust, and we should know better what the apostle meant when in the next verse he adds: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Yes, for me my Saviour careth
 With a brother's tender care;
 Yes, with me, with me He shareth
 Ev'ry burden, ev'ry fear.

THE WORD "BOSOM,"

AS USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

In previous pages it has been said that God has been pleased to connect His own precious and eternal truth with individual persons and places.* It is also true that special phrases, and even *single words*, often yield treasures of meaning and of blessing, if studied. Sometimes the frequency, sometimes the rareness of a word in the Scriptures suggests much; sometimes the connection in which it occurs.

The word "bosom" may be taken as an instance. Even naturally the word is rich with meaning, a thing of love and joy to the ear and heart. Among men of this world the "bosom" of parent or friend suggests repose, affection, and sweetest liberty; but how much more when it occurs in the "God-breathed" Scriptures, all the words of which are His own, and are often full of depths of meaning—fathomless, like Himself.

This rich, suggestive word occurs only *five times* in the New Testament; and the places of its occurrence, if linked together in our minds, may be as a golden chain of love for us, binding us afresh to God and to Christ.

The first place we will consider is John i. 18: "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father." This carries us back at once to that eternal and infinite love of His Father to Him, which was Jesus' home of rest and blessedness before He left it to become "the Word made flesh," and to "tabernacle" among us. The word "*bosom*" shows us *what* a home and dwelling-place He left. A dateless, everlasting abode was God His Father's "*bosom*" to Him; the rejoicing love of which He could appreciate and return whilst He dwelt in it with unlimited filial freedom.

* See *Bethany and its Lessons*, p. 77; and *The God of Jacob*, p. 169.

It was only by sending amongst us the Son of His bosom that God could even begin to teach us what a bosom *His* is. The One who filled it must leave it, and come down to us to make us know it; and more than this, having come to unfold the secrets of the "bosom" He had left, He must, as God's Lamb, give Himself for our sins; for His Father's bosom purpose was that we, even we, "should with the Son be blest;" that is, should taste and know the love with which He had Himself been eternally loved.

What a beginning, then, does this passage give us of the meaning of the word "bosom!" Love and joy shine on our souls by it from God Himself; for it tells of the *place* from which love to us ever came, and in which it still and for ever dwells; while the gift from it of His own Bosom One, since He was needed to "purge our sins" and meet our case, humbles us before Him! Well may we say—

"Eternal God, why set Thine heart
On creatures of a day,
And give whate'er Thou hast and art
To us who were but clay?"

"Thy riches and Thy majesty,
O Lord, were infinite;
Thine own perfections were to Thee
All fulness of delight.

"A wondrous fellowship was Thine;
Thy fellows were Thy Son
And Spirit, in that bliss divine;
Nor didst Thou dwell alone.

"Why then the heavens and earth create,
Thou self-sufficing God?
Why look upon our low estate,
And ransom us with blood?"

"Thy children, by Thy Spirit led,
Once heirs of death and hell,
Soon, glorified with Christ their Head,
Must in Thy bosom dwell.

"Thy all before Thy throne will cast
Their crowns, and bless Thy name,

Thou God of love, the first and last,
The Omnipotent I AM." *

John xiii. 23, as a second instance of the word, reminds us of the "bosom" of Christ as, by faith, our place of rest and communion all our days here below. He gives us the love with which Himself is loved; for He gives us that place in Himself which is His own in His Father.

And the word "bosom" in this place seems specially and intentionally given us. The plain fact was, John lay on "Jesus' breast" in the affectionate manner in which a guest easily and conveniently could on the one next him on the reclining couches then used; and it is thus worded in verse 25; but in verse 23 it is, "Now there was leaning on Jesus' *bosom* one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved."

Why thus worded, unless to remind us that the most endearing place of nearness to Himself is now in His love given us? How like this folding of John to His bosom is that word of Jesus to us (chap. xv. 9): "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love."

John at that supper-table, leaning on His "bosom," was recognised as in the place of *intimacy*; and to him Simon Peter beckoned, to learn for them of their Master who the unknown traitor was. And John used his bosom nearness, and obtained the thing sought.

But it is now no longer "the days of His flesh;" the better thing has come. His going away, so "expedient" for us, has come to pass; and it is not now the leaning on His bosom of a *single* "loved disciple" for but a *brief* earthly supper-hour. Something far better is ours. It is the reposing in the "bosom" of His intimate affection and closest communion of ALL His loved ones.

John's loving and happy leaning at that brief supper

* Hymns by R. C. Chapman. Yapp and Hawkins.

is a specimen for us of the privilege now of *all* His saints to enjoy *everywhere* and under *all circumstances* the "bosom" of the Son of God as their resting-place during these night-watches of the church's waiting-time below.

Thus Jesus loves us "as the Father" loves Him, as He said. But it needs watchfulness for us to enjoy it. We must on our part abide in Him; as He added, "*Continue ye in my love.*"

But if this "bosom" of Christ is ours everywhere and always, which of us would willingly lose the sense of it? That bosom love of His, thus known, will as truly deliver us from the world's flatteries and soft seductions as from its hostile frowns and threats. Carried in His bosom, we shall, like Him, see through the fairest scene of this world's glory that Satan may at any moment of temptation present to us, and shall say with Him whose love we are tasting, "Get thee behind me, Satan." (See Luke iv. 8.) And dwelling in His bosom will enable us, when any bitter trial comes, to say, like Him, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John xviii. 11.)

The bosom of Christ is thus our portion and our strength all our days on earth. And what when days below are done? Why then it shall be better still: a still inner folding of the same "bosom."

This leads us to the next place of the same loving word; for it says of afflicted Lazarus, that no sooner were his "days of evil" ended, than "he was carried by angels into Abraham's *bosom.*" (Luke xvi. 22.)

"Bosom" is the word our Lord here uses to express the "far better" thing it is for His tried ones to depart. And if "Abraham's bosom" was the truly human and winning manner of His teaching then, how much brighter and "better" now, when it is "to be WITH CHRIST," and to know the closer enfoldings of His bosom, which is our privilege, should we depart!

“ Were I from this my house of clay
 By death’s kind hand set free,
 My spirit would, by angels borne,
 To Jesus’ *bosom* flee.

“ No guilt can there benumb my soul,
 Escaped from Satan’s wiles ;
 Atoning blood perfumes that place,
 And nothing there defiles.”

How precious to pass from dwelling in His bosom now by faith to the blessedness of the dead who “ die in the Lord,” and “ rest from their labours ;” for they have left a “ Babylon ” world for ever behind them. And the coming day of “ the marriage supper of the Lamb ” will add on the resurrection-glory to this bosom-rest, only to enhance it and perfect it for ever ; for though the word “ bosom ” is not used of it, yet it was at the very time that John lay in His bosom at the passover that our Lord pointed them on from their then reclining with Him, to when they should “ eat and drink at His table in His kingdom.” (Luke xxii. 30.)

We also find this word used in a scene of Scripture which has often been taken as a type of the present storms, and the coming rest, of the precious, tempest-tossed Church of God: I mean Paul’s voyage and shipwreck. (Acts xxvii.)

Some points in that graphic narrative have been often spoken of as illustrating spiritual things. Paul’s confidence in the promise of the Lord to him, that not a soul in that vessel should be lost (*v.* 25) ; his dependence, nevertheless, on *use of means* for the bringing to pass of that promise (*v.* 31) ; the night scene the storm was, and deliverance coming with the *morning* (*v.* 39), have often suggested spiritual truths about God’s church, and we cannot doubt must have done so to Paul himself, whose imprisonment and voyage were endured in the service of Christ and the church. And, as if to add something more to these spiritual allusions, it not only says (*v.* 39) that it was dawning of day

brought them deliverance, and the shore before them was new to them—"they knew not the land"—but the word rendered "*creek*," into which they were minded to thrust the ship, is again our word "bosom," (literally, "a bosom having a shore,") and, without wresting the Scripture, or even straining it, may be taken as heightening the typical teaching of the scene.

For, oh, when the framework of the church ceases, when, as Paul says (1 Cor. xiii.), "prophesies shall fail," the gift of tongues "shall cease," and the gift of knowledge "shall vanish away"—because the church's longed-for bright morning has come—"faith and hope and love" will still abide! And no wonder; for as the resurrection "shore" will be broad enough for all the living saints to land on, so the "bosom" of God's eternal love in Christ will be the haven of rest and joy and praise to all the redeemed for ever.

The fifth and remaining use of the word "bosom" is in Luke vi. 38, and may serve to remind us, that if we so dwell in Christ's bosom of love to us as to be loving and liberal for His dear sake in our ways to others, we shall have our "*bosoms*" recompensed and filled at the resurrection of the just, somewhat in our creature measure, as God our Father will have His filled in that day. "Give," says our Lord to us, "and it *shall be* given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall men give into your *bosom*."

But who are the men that shall do it? and where shall they do it? and when? Let Luke xiv. 14; xvi. 9, &c., give the answer.

The truth is, that the same eternal glory, the same "new earth and heavens"—the mighty and loving hallelujahs of which will for ever repay and recompense the "bosom" of God and of Christ, and will for ever be the rest and delight of the blessed Holy Ghost—will also surely recompense into the *bosoms* of

Christ's disciples all service which on earth they rendered to the feeblest ones of His.

Yes, truly; God's bosom will not be the only replenished and recompensed one then; His delight will be the gladdening and repaying then of multitudes of His children's bosoms also: for, observe, it is into their *bosoms* the givers shall be repaid, not in the *earthly* things which for Christ's sake they gave.

On earth the wants and woes of our fellow-saints are our opportunity for outlay for them. At "the marriage of the Lamb," when, by all these services of love, His wife shall have "made herself ready," there will be such rich repayment of grateful hearts as shall make the "bosoms" of all the earthly donors for ever swell with grateful praise to Him by whose "pound" (see Luke xix. 11-19) they "traded" so successfully.

Paul looked forward to this repaying into his "bosom" of all his outlay of life itself for fellow-saints, and says of the Thessalonians, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even *ye* in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? For *ye* are our glory and joy." (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.) And John entreats the "little children" (dear begotten ones) to abide in Christ, "that, when He shall appear, *we* may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." (1 John ii. 28.)

Oh, yes; there will be filled bosoms of swelling joy at that day, corresponding to the reward-crowns of "life" and "righteousness" and "glory," which, as martyrs unto death, or as fighters of the "good fight," or as under-shepherds of the one "chief shepherd," any shall have earned. (See Rev. ii. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 8; and 1 Peter v. 4.) Yet none of all the ransomed and the saved will more ascribe to God and to the Lamb the glory and the praise of it all, than will those whose "bosoms" are most repaid and whose crowns of reward shine the brightest. Well may we sing, as we rejoice sometimes to do:—

“The cross, the cross! the Christian's only glory,
I see the standard rise;
March on, march on! the cross of Christ before thee!
That cross all hell defies.

“The cross, the cross! redemption's standard raising,
I see the banner wave;
Sing on, sing on, salvation's captain praising,
'Tis Christ alone can save.

“The crown, the crown! ah! who at last shall gain it?
That cross a crown *affords*;
Press on, press on, with courage to *attain* it,
The battle is the Lord's.”

H. D.

THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE.

A THOUSAND shadows fail to represent the substance, and hence the Spirit of truth takes up one symbol after another to unfold the perfect oneness into which God has brought us with the Son of His love: all incomplete, because the finite can never display the infinite.

Ephesians v. gives us the nearest earthly relationship, but it falls short of the reality, because “He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” The figure of the body shows forth the one life. Elsewhere the church is compared to a temple of living stones, built upon the chief corner-stone; and again a wild branch grafted into the good olive tree. Observe, in this last figure the natural branches are taken off that we might be grafted in.

Israel indeed was spoken of in Old Testament Scripture as the wife, though never in connection with the Son; but having rejected God's Well-beloved (Mark xii. 6), and thus filled up the measure of their fathers' disobedience, and counted themselves unworthy of eternal life, Israel as a nation is set aside, that God may take out of the Gentiles a people for His name (Acts xv.); returning afterwards to raise up the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

Here comes in the marriage of the King's Son, in which parable we have surely come to the time of the last invitation—"Compel them to come in." Christ came unto His own, and His own received Him not; but having found one pearl of great price, He sold all that He had and bought it; and the value of the redemption price paid for His chosen one must ever be the measure of His appreciation of her, and of her present and eternal place in the affections and purposes of God. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." Knowing all things that should come upon Him, His communion with the Father was about her before He suffered. "Now I am no more in the world, but *these are in the world*, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me."

We get the answer to this prayer in the glorified, unchangeable priesthood of our risen Christ (appearing in the presence of God in His relationship to us), and in the Spirit indwelling on earth, ministering, teaching, interceding, guiding, comforting. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, everything is for the church, because everything is for Christ.

By and by, when the very last stone is laid on the spiritual temple, when the bride of His affections is at home with Him for ever, Christ will remember His *earthly* people, and receive His earthly inheritance, and the whole earth shall be filled with His glory. (Psalm lxxii.) But Israel's time is not yet.

The figure of the bride shadows forth His love to us; the body, our oneness with Him; the olive tree, our fruitfulness in Him; the temple, our completeness in Christ, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. All is ours, and all too poor and insufficient to show our place and portion in Christ; therefore we cannot afford to lose any.

We see the saints (the wife), arrayed in white linen

(Rev. xix. 8), following Christ upon the white horses (*v.* 14), according to the promise given to Him (Psalm ii. 9) and to her (Rev. ii. 26, 27), coming down to earth for the deliverance of Israel's remnant (Zec. xiv. 3), witnessing (Rev. xii. 17, and xi. 3) and suffering (Rev. xiii. 7, Zec. xiii. 9) under the iron rule of antichrist. The church is here looked at as an army, because Christ goes forth as a Conqueror; and her fellowship is ever with Him, whether in service, or suffering, or glory.

Revelation xxi. clearly unfolds the church as the bride. We are there shown the bride, the city descending out of heaven from God, having "the glory of God," which verse 23 tells us is "the Lamb;" and here, in verses 11 and 23, connected with Rev. iv. 3, we have one of the most wondrous touches of the Spirit of truth, showing the inexpressibly perfect oneness of the church with her living Head, completed now, but then manifested to earth and heaven. The glory like unto a jasper stone of Him who sits upon the throne in Rev. iv. 3, is displayed in her in chap. xxi. 11, 18, 19; and the light which is His in chap. xxi. 22, is hers in chap. xxi. 11. This needs no comment. It is too precious to be touched by any hand but God's without spoiling it.

For the foundations, compare Rev. xxi. 14 with Eph. ii. 20. Rev. xxi. 12 mentions the twelve tribes of Israel; but this need be no difficulty, as there may be an association without a blending of glories. The early part of this chapter gives us a glance into the eternal future, when the Son, having put all enemies under His feet, shall have delivered up the kingdom to the Father, and God shall be all in all.

"His wife hath made herself ready," perhaps points in some special way to the state of the church between the rapture and the appearing (2 Thess. i. 10), or simply testifies to the riches of His grace, who loves to give to His feeble ones the name of overcomer, while

the victory is all His own. We find this balance of truth maintained all through the word. God never sets us to do anything which He has not first touched and perfected. For instance, salvation. We are saved from wrath by the blood, from falling by the priesthood; yet we are to work out our own salvation, just because God worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. Because we are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, we are to build up ourselves on our most holy faith. We can only begin where God has finished. The power as well as the glory is all and only His. But He wants us to have fellowship with Him; and hence He bids us take unto us His own armour, gives us His own strength for the conflict, holds us in His own hand, and then calls us overcomers, that He may give us the overcomer's reward.

How beautiful to see grace thus retreating into itself for a reason to bless! giving more, just because much has been already given; multiplying itself, until room be not found to receive it (as in 1 Peter iv. 10); unfolding as we exercise it; having the spring of its resources in God. How blessed to be heirs of it all in Christ! and yet what solemn responsibility it lays upon us, filled out of such fulness just according to the measure faith can receive.

W,

CHRIST IS ALL.

ROMANS x. 1-11.

“BRETHREN, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved (*or* unto their salvation). For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.” They have an unintelligent, yea, even an ignorant zeal. “For they being ignorant of God's righteousness”—in their blindness, incapable of understanding aright the righteous God, whether in His own character, ~~or~~ concerning the

depth of His righteous requirements from man—"and going about (or seeking) to establish their own (character for) righteousness;" occupied with and careful about the observance of the law (in the letter), in order to prove both to themselves and to God their own goodness; they thus have failed to submit themselves "unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end (or object) of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

Failing to see that God's object in giving the law was to prove to them, not their own righteousness, but their own unrighteousness, they blindly seek to establish a righteousness of their own before God, and stumble over the corner-stone laid by God in Zion for righteousness. Failing to apprehend that God's purpose in giving them the law was to bring out and prove their transgression and sin (for the law "was added because of transgressions;" "the law entered, *that* the offence might abound") they sought to prove they were not bad of heart, but worthy of being called the children of Abraham, the friend of God.

Now the end or object of the law as given by Moses is, by showing the sinner his helplessness and guilt, to lead him to Christ. So that we may say that God's object in giving the law to the Jews was to prove to them their guilt, and thus prepare them to welcome Christ as their deliverer and Saviour, the Effector of righteousness for them, both in satisfying the righteous claims of the law on their behalf (for Christ hath delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, as it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree"), and also in imparting by His mighty inworking, to every one that believeth, righteousness of life; "for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: *that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who*

(being born again) walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

"For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law (that is, the righteousness which the law demandeth, and by the fulfilling of which alone it could be satisfied), That the man which doeth those things shall live by them;" but that if he "offend in one point, he is guilty of all." But the language of the righteousness which proceedeth from faith in Christ "speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart (don't begin to make difficulties, and say it is impossible), Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it?" Even this, that the matter is plain, that "the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach" concerning Christ; "that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." And this no mere intellectual assent, for that would not profit; "for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

If the heart be "inditing a good matter," then the lips will speak thereof; and so if *the heart* hath found in Christ God's righteous provision for the sinner's salvation, then the lips make confession thereof to God, and own Jesus Christ as Lord to God's glory.

Israel, seeking righteousness by the law, obtained it not, because they sought it not by faith, but by the observance of the works of the law. Now God hath made known that every one that believeth truly in Jesus the Christ shall find in Him "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption;" and the Scripture saith, "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed."

"Blessed is the man that trusteth in Him." He

shall not be disappointed; he shall find that sin no longer has *the dominion* over him, for that he is a new creation in Christ Jesus: "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God." And now the righteousness (*i.e.* the rectitude of life) that seemed so hopelessly out of reach has become the outflow of the new life within—God in-working within him to will and to do of His own good pleasure; he outworking his own manifested salvation, or deliverance from sin's power, in fear and trembling: not lest he should be lost in case of failure, but lest he should grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby he has been sealed unto the redemption-day.

Thus the righteousness of the new-born soul exceedeth the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. Solemn was the Master's word, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Sufficient to cause deep heart searching still; yet, thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift, one grain of God-begotten, God-wrought righteousness far outweigheth in His sight all the legal effort of the flesh.

"A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit;" "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." So as long as the corrupt flesh be unjudged, all its effort before God is but foolish pride—attempting to prove good that which God has pronounced bad.

Now, truly, "he that believeth on Christ shall not be ashamed." Surely the object of trusting in Christ was not for a cloak to hide natural depravity and sin, but *for a cure* thereof by its condemnation and removal out of God's sight in the old creation, and by a recreation, a resurrection—by the impartation of a new nature, created in righteousness and true holiness, that the receiver thereof might thus live, through virtue of his new life in Christ, unto the praise and glory of the great CREATOR.

“I will therefore greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth.”

A. O. M.

“IF YE LOVE ME, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.”

JOHN XIV. 15-21.

THE Lord's Table, with the Lord's Supper, is for the Lord's children, who meet in blessed memory of Him who loved them, and gave Himself for them, and washed them from their sins in His own blood. He Himself said—“Do this in remembrance of me.” (Luke xxii. 17-20; 1 Cor. xi. 23-26.) So when we come together in obedience to His word, we remember Him, the Crucified One; we come to Him, the Living One (1 Peter ii. 4); and we look for Him, the Coming One.

The reason we assemble is because our Lord and Master has commanded us: and His commandments are not grievous. (1 John v. 3.)

The time for meeting is the first day of the week. (Acts xx. 7, ii. 42-46.)

The book given for guidance is the Word of God, without man's inferences and deductions. (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16; Deut. xii. 32; John vi. 63; Eph. iv. 14.)

The name given to believers is “CHRISTIANS” (Acts xi. 26); though we stand as *children* in relation to our Father (1 John iii. 1), as *brethren* to each other (Acts xxviii. 14, 15), and as *bride* to the Bridegroom (2 Cor. vi. 18; Matt. xxv. 6-10). We accept Christ's name as others but add to the confusion of tongues.

The teacher present when assembled for worship is the Holy Ghost. (John xiv. 26; 1 Cor. xii. 8-11; 1 John ii. 27; 1 Cor. ii. 13.)

The name in which we gather together is the name of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. v. 4; i. 12, 13; iii. 4, 5); to meet in any other name is to dishonour the name that is above every name. (Phil. ii. 9.)

Christians may not choose their pastors and teachers. It is written that God sets them in the church as it pleases Him, and it is given to every man to profit withal by the manifestation of the Spirit in those so given. (1 Cor. xii. 4, 11, 18, 28; Eph. iv. 11, 12; 2 Tim. iv. 3.)

The epistle unfolding to the church the commandments of God in reference to ministry and worship is the first to the Corinthians (1 Cor. v. xi. xii. xiii. xiv.), which is addressed to all, in every place, who call on the name of Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours. (1 Cor. i. 2.)

The children of God may not cease to remember the Lord's death until He come (1 Peter i. 8; 1 Thess. i. 10; 2 Thess. ii. 1): He has not come yet, so all who love Him and who wait for Him should keep the forget-me-not feast till He appear.

We are told to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and to lay aside the commandments of men. (Jude 3; Acts xx. 32; Mark vii. 7.)

The Father seeks worshippers to worship Him, not only in spirit, but in truth. (John iv. 23, 24.)

In the word of God, we are forbidden to worship as we like, or as we think best; nothing is left to our choice either in service or worship.

Scripture teaches us that it was the custom in apostolic times to meet at certain hours, and in appointed places, to break bread; thus the Christians were told to tarry one for another, all being expected. (1 Cor. xi. 33.)

The Lord well knew the weakness of His children,

and how soon He their Lord and Master would be forgotten (Jude 17), hence His thoughts of kindness to His own in providing a table spread in the wilderness; thus while breaking the bread and drinking the cup, the broken Body and shed Blood of Christ crucified are set before the eyes of the elect again and again until He come to receive them to Himself. (John xiv. 3.)

It is unkind and disobedient in the servants not to assemble at the Master's call (Matt. xviii. 20; Luke xxiv. 30-35), to sit with Him at the table (Can. ii. 4; i. 4-12; John xii. 2); absenting themselves, they suffer loss, and lose the fulness of the blessing God calls them to inherit. (John xi. 28; 1 Peter iii. 9.)

Not to meet as the Lord has directed manifests disobedience and naughtiness of heart. (Acts v. 29; Matt. xv. 9.) At Corinth several were visited with chastisement because they came with hearts defiled with sin, which they cared not to confess and judge. (1 Cor. xi. 31.) The Lord would not suffer them longer to dishonour His name (Ezek. xxxvi. 21); hence the premature death of some, and the bodily weakness and sickness unto death of others. (1 Cor. xi. 29, 30.) A solemn warning to all who hold the truth in unrighteousness; for though the long-suffering and kindness of God our Saviour will bear with ignorance, yet wilful disobedience in His children, who add rebellion to sin (Job xxxiv. 37), will receive rebuke and judgment in this life from Him whom they persecute. (Acts ix. 5.) From those who turn aside from the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness (1 Tim. vi. 3), shall be taken away even that which they have (Matt. xiii. 12); their works will not abide the trial at the judgment-seat of Christ (1 Cor. iii. 13, 14; 2 Cor. v. 10); they will not have confidence, but be ashamed before the Lord at His coming. (1 John ii. 28.) Instead of the abundant entrance promised to the obedient and faithful (2 Peter i. 11),

those who know the Master's will and do it not, will be saved; yet so as by fire. (1 Cor. iii. 15).

The Lord forbids us to sit down with the unconverted (Jude 12), or with believers who are walking disorderly (2 Thess. iii. 6-14; 1 Tim. vi. 5; 2 Tim. iii. 5); yet we are, in the spirit of meekness, to seek to restore those overtaken in a fault (Rom. xv. 1; Gal. vi. 1), and led captive by Satan at his will (2 Tim. ii. 24-26.) Thus serving one another in love, we endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. iv. 3, 4; 1 Cor. x. 16), and manifest the unity of the body by our care for all its members. (Rom. xii. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 13, 22, 26, 27.)

It is sad indeed to hear those for whom the Lord Jesus wept, and bled, and died, give as a reason for their disobedience to His word, especially in reference to baptism and the breaking of bread, that such are unnecessary, and not essential to salvation.

How dear every commandment, every word, every saying of our Lord and Saviour should be to His children (John xiv. 21, 23, 24), whom He bought with such a price, and for whose redemption He poured out His soul unto death.

Beloved, if others turn away, let us follow our Lord fully (John x. 27; Num. xiv. 24); and as Israel kept the passover with girded loins, with shoes on their feet, and with staff in their hands (Ex. xii. 11-14), so let us with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Cor. v. 8), keep the feast through the world's dark night till the morning (Rom. xiii. 12), our loins girded, our lamps burning, like servants who watch for their lord's return (Luke xii. 35, 36; 1 Peter i. 13), ever looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. (Titus ii. 13, 14.) Soon, very soon, He who shall come, will come, and will tarry no longer (Heb. x. 37); then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, so shall we be for

ever with the Lord—wherefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thess. iv. 17, 18.)

Search the Scriptures, and see if these things are so; then, whatsoever He saith unto you, do it. (Acts xvii. 11; John ii. 5.)

TO THE SAINTS IN CHRIST JESUS.

BELoved brethren, to you who profess to meet in the name of Jesus only, and to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3), I write in few words, beseeching you, by the gentleness of Christ (2 Cor. x. 1), that ye do nothing through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves (Phil. ii. 3); being of one accord, and of the same mind in the Lord: and seeking not your own: but the things which are Jesus Christ's. (Phil. iv. 2; ii. 21.)

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, as Christ forgave you. (Col. iii. 12.)

Mind not high things (Rom. xii. 16); neither seek ye great things for yourselves (Jer. xlv. 5): but in honour prefer one another. (Rom. xii. 10.)

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder, and all be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. (1 Peter v. 5.)

Concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant; wherefore know, that God hath given pastors and teachers, for the work of the ministry, and set them in the church, as it hath pleased Him, for the perfecting of the saints (Eph. iv. 11; 1 Cor. xii. 18, 28): wherefore acknowledge such; and remember those who guide you, and who have spoken to you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, and willingly submit yourselves unto such. (1 Cor. xvi. 16, 18.)

Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honour : especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. (1 Tim. v. 17.)

Obeys them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves : for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account : that they may do it with joy, and not with grief. (Heb. xiii. 17.) And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you ; that ye esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake (1 Thess. v. 12, 13), and be not ready to receive accusations against them. (1 Tim. v. 19.)

Little children, it is the last time. (1 John ii. 18.) The days have come, when men are lovers of their own selves, proud, heady, highminded : who will not endure sound doctrine, and turn their ears from the truth ; waxing worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived (2 Tim. iii.) ; and hearkening to the many voices that are in the world. (1 Cor. xiv. 10.)

But, beloved, I shew you a more excellent way (1 Cor. xii. 31) ; submit yourselves one to another in the fear of God (Eph. v. 21) : for yielding pacifieth great offences (Eccles. x. 4) ; and think not more highly of yourselves than ye ought to think (Rom. xii. 3) ; for when a man thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself, and the truth is not in him. (Gal. vi. 3.)

Wherefore, my brethren, be not many teachers, lest ye offend (James iii. 1, 2) : but let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak (James i. 19) ; for your lips are not your own (Ps. xii. 4), but the Lord's.

How is it then ? when ye come together : every one of you hath a psalm, a doctrine. (1 Cor. xiv. 26.)

There is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak (Eccles. iii. 7) ; keep then thy feet when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God.

(Eccles. v. 1.) When ye exhort, let your spirits be subject (1 Cor. xiv. 32), that ye exceed not your measure of faith; for love, not knowledge, edifieth. (Rom. xii. 6.)

If there be strife, envy, and factions among you, ye are carnal, and walk according to men (1 Cor. iii. 1-3): for they that sow discord among brethren are an abomination unto the Lord. (Prov. vi. 16-19.)

Ye need to be fed with milk, as babes in Christ; for strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, and have their senses exercised to discern good and evil. (Heb. v. 12-14.)

Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is (Heb. x. 24); for they who forsake their place are as birds that wander from the nest (Prov. xxvii. 8), and fall into the snare of the fowler (Ps. cxxiv. 7); but let us exhort one another, to continue with one accord, in prayer and supplication: being of one heart, and one soul, and having great grace. (Acts i. 13, 14; iv. 3; xii. 5, 12.) As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. (Gal. vi. 1.)

As every man hath received the gift, minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter iv. 10.)

If any be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. (Gal. vi. 1.) Ye that are strong, bear the infirmities of the weak (Rom. xv. 1): and in nothing wound the weak conscience of a brother, lest ye sin against Christ. (1 Cor. viii. 11.)

In marking those who cause divisions, and avoiding them (Rom. xvi. 17), be careful that ye cast no stumbling-block in your brother's way: for many have

not learnt the true doctrine; which teach, before ye judge them who know it not. Likewise, be not hasty to withdraw from weak or carnal brethren (Rom. xiv.), esteeming them, for whom Christ died, unclean: for this is the leaven of the Pharisees, of which the Lord Jesus bid us beware (Matt. viii. 15); which leads us to please ourselves. Rather learn to receive one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God: and pleased not Himself. And the God of patience grant you to be likeminded one toward another (Rom. xv. 3-7), after the example of Christ Jesus, who was as eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, who strengthened the weak hands and feeble knees, and recovered the fallen. (Job xxix. 15.)

This is the doctrine according to godliness: which if a man consent not to, he is proud, knowing nothing: but doting about questions, and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, and railings (1 Tim. vi. 3): from such withdraw yourselves. (1 Cor. v. 11.)

TO PASTORS.

BROTHER, if thou art a pastor, thou hast a good office, which fulfil with care. (1 Peter v. 2.)

Feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking the oversight willingly, and with a ready mind; in all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works; in doctrine, shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, and meekness to all men. (Titus ii. 1-7.)

Be thou blameless, not self-willed: but sober, just, holy, temperate, holding fast the faithful word, able to exhort and convince the gainsayers. (Titus i. 7-9.)

Take heed that thou give no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed (2 Cor. vi. 3): but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity; giving attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine (1 Tim. iv. 12, 13); that thou mayest be able to give the household

their meat in due season (Matt. xxiv. 45), and that thine own strength be not hunger-bitten. (Job xviii. 12.)

Preach Christ the hope of glory: warning every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom (Col. i. 27-29): striving according to his working, which worketh mightily. Be instant in season, out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering (2 Tim. iv. 2): for the servant of God may not strive: but be gentle to all, apt to teach, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves. (2 Tim. ii. 24.)

Take heed unto the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it. (Col. iv. 17.) And I exhort thee, brother, to rule with all diligence (Rom. xii. 8); warning them that are unruly, comforting the feeble-minded, supporting the weak, and being patient to all men. (1 Thess. v. 14.)

Feed the lambs (John xxi. 15), being gentle among them, even as a nurse cherisheth her children (1 Thess. ii. 7; Job xxxix. 16): and be not hardened against thy young ones, as though they were not yours. Suffer them not to wander abroad for bread, saying, Where is it? (Job xv. 23), neither for bread give them stones. (Matt. vii. 9.)

Overdrive not the children, for they are tender. (Gen. xxxiii. 13.) Have compassion on any that Satan hath wounded (Ex. ii. 9), taking care of them; for the Lord saith: "When I come again, I will repay thee." (Lu. x. 35.)

Beloved, I beseech thee, strengthen the diseased of the flock (Zech. xi. 16); visit those that be cut off; seek the young ones; heal those that are sick; bear with those that stand still; bind up the broken; bring back those which are driven away; seek out the lost; but use not force or cruelty: lest they become prey to the beasts of the field. (Ezek. xxxiv. 4; Gal. v. 19-21.) Be watchful, that thou tread not the green pastures with defiled feet, or foul the still waters; for in a little while, the Chief Shepherd will require the flock at thy hands, at His appearing; when, if found faithful,

thou shalt receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away. (1 Peter v. 4; Gen. xxxi. 39, 40.)

Take heed to thyself, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made thee overseer; and shun not to declare the whole counsel of God, keeping back nothing that is profitable (Acts xx. 27, 28), and holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. (1 Tim. iii. 9.)

Take heed that thou build upon the foundation that is laid, which is Jesus Christ; for thy work shall be tried with fire. (1 Cor. iii. 11-13.) Wherefore, lay hands suddenly on no man (1 Tim. v. 21, 22), whether he be as gold, silver, precious stone, wood, hay, or stubble. Do all things without partiality; in prayer lifting up holy hands (1 Tim. ii. 8), and thy face without spot to God (Job xi. 15); not seeking thy own profit, but the profit of many.

Let not thy heart be haughty, nor thine eyes lofty (1 Cor. x. 33; Ps. cxxxii. 1); neither sacrifice to thy net, nor burn incense to thine own drag (Hab. i. 16); bringing forth fruit to thyself (Hosea x. 1), and not to the Lord Christ; then shall thy work be blown upon by the Lord. (Hag. i. 9.)

Walk rather as the servant of the church, and the glory of Christ (2 Cor. viii. 23); giving thyself unto the Lord, and to the brethren: for them willing to spend and to be spent. (2 Cor. xii. 15.)

Charge the brethren that they be not men full of talk, striving about words to no profit (2 Tim. ii. 14, 15); for God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it. (Job xi. 2; xxxv. 13.) If thou put them in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine, and exercising thyself unto godliness. (1 Tim. iv. 6, 7.)