

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.*

VOL. II. NEW SERIES.

LONDON:
JAMES E. HAWKINS, 36, BAKER STREET, W.;
AND 12, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.

1879.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Time and Eternity	1
Elijah the Tishbite 7, 37, 61, 89, 108, 136, 159, 182, 208,	234
The Feasts of the Lord	12
Grace, Faith, and Glory	22
"I come quickly;" or, Christ's Last Word	25
Purpose and Faith	33
The Lord Jesus Christ glorified in His Saints	44
A Commission from God	49
Paradise and Hades 54, 82,	97
Mites or Millions	67
Satan as "the prince of this world"	73
Satan as "the god of this age"	145
Dying Jacob's Worship	88
Manifested Life	103
David's Mighty Men	114
"The Coming One"	121
The "Better Things" of the Epistle to the Hebrews	128
Pride	153
Love's Lowly Service	154
The Word of God 157, 189, 213, 253,	279
On Assured Guidance	165
Resurrection of the Dead 169, 193, 241,	274
"Receive ye one another"	176
Circumcision of Heart	200
Tending the Flock	205
Creation's Title Deeds	217
The Church of God	227
Hebron	249
"The Lord is thy Keeper." "Keep Yourselves"	256
The Epistle of Christ	257
Thoughts on some of the Names in Romans xvi.	259
The Day of Atonement	265
 FRAGMENTS	 127, 175, 181, 207, 238
 POETRY--	
Enduring Love	81
Wondrous Love	128
"Heard . . . Came . . . Touched"	152
Satisfied	188
Daily	226
 NOTES AND REPLIES--	
Of what is <i>stoning</i> in the Levitical law typical?	23
Does a <i>year-day</i> theory of prophetic interpretation set aside the <i>literal-day</i> fulfilment?	71

	Page
NOTES AND REPLIES— <i>continued.</i>	
Is it according to the word of God to insure one's life for the benefit of one's family?	72
What is the believer's relation to the law of God?	94
Is "the kingdom" the portion of all believers?	95
What is the difference between the <i>Body</i> and the <i>Bride</i> of Christ?	119
What was the difference between Paul's teaching and Peter's?	144
What is the difference between "the kingdom of heaven" and the "kingdom of God"?	191
Is there any special guidance of the Spirit in the Assembly?	191
Are the Lord's words at the Supper to be used by us?	282
Gen. xv. 13.—How are the "four hundred years" of affliction to be reckoned?	71
Num. xxii. 20, 22.—Why was God angry with Balaam?	119
Deut. xxxiii.—Why was Simeon left out in the blessing of the tribes, and what are we taught thereby?	240
1 Sam. xv. 11.—How is God's <i>repenting</i> to be understood?	214
Job xxxviii. 2; xlii. 7, 8.—How are we to regard the utterances of Job's friends in the light of these verses?	216
Prov. iii. 10.—Can such a promise be laid hold of now?	192
Isaiah vii. 14-16.—How are we to understand this prophecy?	168
Matt. v. 32.—What is to be gathered respecting divorce?	283
Matt. viii. 12.—Who are the "children of the kingdom"?	70
Matt. xi. 11.—What is the meaning of "He that is least," &c.?	70
Matt. xii. 31, 32.—What is the "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost"?	93
Matt. xxiii. 35.—Who was Zacharias, son of Barachias?	240
Mark ii. 19, 20.—What is the <i>fasting</i> here referred to?	48
Luke vii. 37, 38.—What is the difference between this <i>anointing</i> of our Lord and that mentioned by the other evangelists?	24
Luke xxiii. 31.—What are we to understand by "the green tree" and "the dry"?	283
John xiv. 2.—What are the "many mansions"?	70
Acts xxii. 16.—How are we to understand this verse?	264
Rom. v. 14.—Would it be correct to understand "death reigned" as referring only to the body?	284
1 Cor. v. 8.—In what sense do we keep the passover?	144
1 Cor. ix. 20-23.—Does this passage justify a Christian in joining a worldly society for a philanthropic object?	120
1 Cor. xiv. 34.—What is the force of the expression "in the churches" in connection with women's speaking?	143
Gal. iv. 19.—What is meant by "I travail in birth <i>again</i> "?	264
Gal. vi. 2.—How are we to understand "Bear ye one another's burdens," in connection with verse 5?	239
Eph. iii.—What are the leading features of Paul's prayer?	284
Eph. iv. 30 and 1 Thess. v. 19.—What is the difference between <i>grieving</i> and <i>quenching</i> the Spirit?	94
Heb. vi. 4.—Can an unbeliever be a partaker of the Holy Ghost?	168
Heb. ix. 27.—Does this imply that those not looking for Christ will not be translated at the second advent?	215
Heb. x. 29.—How are the words "wherewith he was sanctified" to be understood of an unsaved person?	168
Jude 9.—When was Satan's contention about the body of Moses?	264

THE GOLDEN LAMP.



TIME AND ETERNITY.

FROM A NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS DELIVERED BY MR. H. DYER.

MAN'S power of marking the flight of time is a wonderful thing. At creation God formed a marvellous way of measuring time, by so arranging the machinery of the heavens as to furnish man with a *clock*. At the first day of creating heaven and earth God formed *light*, and there was then day and night, and the day might have served man for work, and the night for sleep; but the sun and moon, which were given on the fourth day, form his chief means of reckoning time. They are like two great hands of a clock, giving us the larger and the smaller divisions of years and months, and man fashions the dial-plates of his clocks and watches on the model of the time-keeping machinery of the heavens. God was about to make man not only erect in stature so as to behold the heavens, but intelligent also to know his Maker, and his responsibility to Him. When a loving father builds a house for a son, and furnishes it, he does not forget to supply him with a clock to warn him of his time, as well as a bed for rest, and a table for his food. The house would not be complete without it. So when God built heaven and earth as a dwelling-place for man, He gave him a great creation clock. All this might well have instructed our first parents.

There was a moment when Adam's eyes first saw the light, and creation's objects around him—both the earth beneath his feet, and the heavens above him; and we may be sure he beheld them with wonder and with delight. But what must have been the increased adoration of our first parents, when they observed the heavenly bodies in their motions? How they would watch the setting sun of that first day of their newly-created existence! And when the sun was gone down, and the pale moon appeared with all the stars of light, and they looked first at them and then at themselves, well might they have exclaimed, in the words of Psalm viii., “When I consider thy heavens, . . . the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” They had seen the earth and heavens as a “tabernacle for the sun” (see Psalm xix.) during the day, and now they saw the wonders of the night; and Adam might say, “This is the dwelling-place, the home my Maker has built for me.” And doubtless this worship of His favoured creature, man, repaid the Maker in some measure for having made it all. There need be no question that the sun and moon, and the vast starry firmament, were made for this earth—this small globe of ours—and for us as dwellers on it; and God reveals even a far greater wonder than that; namely, that the Maker of the earth and heaven became on this earth the Babe of Bethlehem, and died to redeem ruined man.

“I praise Thy name, O Jesus, Lord,
Almighty Son of God!
The world's Creator, by Thy Word;
My Saviour by Thy blood.”

As, therefore, the heavenly bodies were made for this earth and for man, and as we have by them our power of measuring time, a remembrance of this may well call forth

our gratitude and praise; and all the more because man being now a sinner, he has forfeited every good thing, and might have irretrievably lost this also. God did in many ways change creation when man sinned. He took away the earth's spontaneous fertility, and made it bring forth thorns and briers, and put mortality into man's frame; and all this it was well God should do, both for His own glory and for the sinner's good. He changed the soil beneath man's feet, to bind him to the earth by the sweat of his brow, and thus restrain his self-ruining wickedness; but God did not take from sinful man the clock of the heavens above him. As a *sinner*, man more than ever needed to be warned of the flight of his time, and accordingly the time-keeping movements of the sun and moon and planets are as accurate now, for aught we know, as when they were first made and sped onward in their courses. Time then, and the power to mark its flight, has great lessons for us from God, our God, who is Himself unlimited by time, and is "from everlasting to everlasting." (Ps. xc. 2.)

Warned by the solemn date of another year, we may well preach God's gospel with more solemn earnestness to the unsaved; for they are now nearer than they were last year to the sinner's hell. The child of God also needs the lesson, lest he yield to slothfulness; but if he be watchful and diligent, he may make fruit for eternity out of moments and hours of time. The secret of success in this is to abide in Christ, "the true Vine," who Himself abideth for ever, as doth all fruit borne by us through our abiding in Him. "I have ordained you," says the Lord, that during the little day you have below "you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should *remain*." And though our steps in time may be but few, it is His will that every step should bring forth some good thing

that should continue throughout eternity. Before our conversion, our moments were as worthless as the pebbles on the shore; but now that we are saved, they are as precious as the diamonds of Golconda.

Such portions of Scripture as link time with eternity, like Psalm xc., specially befit the children of God at this season; for they are the only people of all earth's millions who can link these two together. A man of the world lives for this mere span of time only, and would rather not hear of eternity; but a child of God loves to join the two, and rejoices both in his possession and his expectancy.

Let us now ask what it is that enables the Christian to link together time and eternity. First of all, because they stand linked together in the precious Lord Jesus Himself. As we behold Him seated now for ever at the right hand of God, we remember that He was once the Babe of Bethlehem, the "Infant of days." We are not speaking of Him now as the eternal Son of God, but as *the man Christ Jesus*, who "took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men," for our sakes. (See Phil. ii. 7-12.) As such, there was a moment when He was born into this world; then came His brief but blessed life, His time here below. But He is beyond all limits of time now, and is the Lord Jesus Christ for ever, and will never go back to His pre-incarnate state again. One precious verse proves this: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever"—the "yesterday," that is, of His days below; the "to-day," of His resurrection; and such as He now is, He abides "for ever." Eighteen hundred years have not altered Him, nor will the eternal ages change Him.

In Him then, the now Eternal One, we see time and eternity preciously blended for us, and for God's glory in and by us. They are blended also in the *work of Christ*

as truly as they are in His person. The fruit of that work wrought here below in time stands *for ever*. It was not all the days of His flesh that He was doing redemption-work. The mighty Samson at one midnight hour bore off the gates of Gaza to the top of the hill that is before Hebron; and it was in His atoning death that Jesus did the work that stands eternally. What fruit, and fruit *for ever*, from those three solemn (we will not call them *short*) hours of His midnight toil and woe! What an *everlasting* stream from the *once* smitten Rock! What salvation even now flows on from that hour when the sword of justice pierced Him, and the prophetic word was fulfilled, "When *Thou* shall make His soul an offering for sin!" At one mighty draught He drank the cup of wrath; one mighty stroke fell upon the head of that precious Sacrifice, and the work was done for ever.

Time and eternity are joined, then, as truly in Christ's work as in His person; but they are joined also in our souls' experience and knowledge of Him. Till we knew Him we cared not for eternity, but were the sport of a brief hour's pleasure; but directly that we knew Him, time and eternity were linked together in our souls. We now love to think of that one happy moment when the life-look was given us; that *moment* of joy opened to us an *eternity* of glory. We bless our Lord that *He* joined time and eternity together when He made Himself the Saviour, and *we* in like manner joined them when we believed on Him.

The same is true in our after experience. There were moments when we specially enjoyed His presence, and thought much of Him. Will anything ever blot out those moments from His book of remembrance? or those hours of godly assembling of which we read in Malachi iii. 16: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to

another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name"? All such fleeting moments, or passing hours, are indelibly recorded before God. Oh the value, then, of moments or hours of communion with God, and of abiding in Christ! Well has one amongst us asked: "Would all the gold of earth recompense you for the loss of five minutes' communion with God?" Ask Abraham the worth to him, even now, of those bright hours when he first entertained his divine guest under the tree, and afterwards pleaded with Him for Sodom; or the value to him of that solemn yet joyful hour when he offered up Isaac and received him again as from the dead! And oh, ask Lot whether the life he spent in Sodom ever recompensed him for the loss of the tent and the altar which he enjoyed with Abraham!

But the crowning moment of our joining time with eternity will be that "*moment*," that twinkling of an eye, in which we shall be changed; experiencing then a change that will last throughout *eternity*, for we shall pass from the brief-lived image of the earthly to the everlasting image of the heavenly! This last moment of our joining time with eternity in our experience will be the sweetest we shall have ever had, when we go up to be "for ever with the Lord." Oh, bless Him who is then to be our glorious dwelling-place for ever! and let us, at the opening of another measured year below, fervently ask Him that we may abide even now in the atmosphere of the "mountains of spices" (Sol. Song viii. 14), and in the sunlight of that heavenly Mount Zion which is so soon to be our eternal home.

But does time always seem thus short? Not always. Ask that suffering child of God who when it is evening wishes it were morning, and at morning wishes it were

evening. To such ones time moves on slowly. We would, then, exhort them to shorten the sorrows of time by gazing into our blessed coming eternity; as did Paul when he said, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are *temporal*; but the things which are not seen are *eternal*." And let us all, as children of God, bring eternity to bear on time; the joys of eternity to lighten the sorrows of time, and the rewards of eternity to influence us in our use of time while it is still continued to us. Thus let us be diligent and wise in "redeeming the time" this year, and let us improve its days and hours by winning from them eternal diadems for the Lamb once slain, for He is worthy.

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE.

THE word of our God records the names of many individuals illustrious by birth, circumstances, or character. In no case is there a complete history of any one. Several incidents are related of some, of others only a few. Some details of character are occasionally disclosed, and the rest concealed. But nothing is recorded by the Holy Ghost without a holy purpose of warning, reproof, correction, or instruction in righteousness.

One thing is very apparent; namely, the impartiality of the narratives given. Bearing in mind that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," it might have been expected that His searching eye could have discerned nothing of which it could approve, and that every human action, when weighed in the balances of the

sanctuary, would be "found wanting." Yet there are many notices of marked approval where the conduct was influenced by faith, and of equally marked disapproval where an act was in opposition to or in neglect of the divine command.

But in many instances there is no direct comment, either of approval or of disapproval. In these cases the thoughts of God are to be discerned by the principles or commands He has unfolded or enjoined in other parts of His sacred Word. It becomes therefore of great importance to gather up such disclosures, and bring them to bear upon the recorded facts, in order that we may not miss the instruction these histories are intended to convey, and that we may learn to approve that of which God approves, and to disapprove that which He condemns. Many of them seem intended as exercises for our spiritual judgment. For example, when many circumstances are related of David's life, our God would have us ponder whether each was in accordance with His mind or not. He does not intend us blindly to take for granted that He approves of all He relates, nor to suppose that He is merely making us acquainted with historical events, far less that we should exalt or seek to justify ourselves by discovering failures in others. His intention perhaps is the formation of character in us, partly by disclosing the pitfalls which Satan has set for those who have gone before us, and partly by stimulating the soul to imitate their faithfulness. More particularly, however, is it His desire that while we are constantly reminded of our sinful and self-willed nature, we should also learn the grace that fills His heart towards us.

In the record of Elijah we might have expected to find some declaration of approval, considering the very remarkable events in which he was concerned. He was no

common man, no "reed shaken by the wind." It was not from man that He sought strength. His whole soul was with his God. His trust in Him was almost unbounded. The consciousness of his position before God as His prophet seems ever to have been present to his mind, regulating all his conduct; and his being taken up to heaven without dying sufficiently indicates God's approbation of His faithful servant.

The condition of Israel in the time of Elijah requires notice. The two tribes had long been separated from the ten. The kingdoms of Judah and Israel were distinct. Israel, to say nothing of Judah, had become wholly idolatrous. Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, "did evil in the sight of the Lord;" indeed all Israel's kings were idolators. Omri, the sixth, was worse than any of his predecessors, and was only surpassed in wickedness by his son and successor Ahab, in whom, as the seventh king, it had reached its climax. The people in both nations seem all along to have been of one mind with the reigning monarch, the king's character and conduct being an expression of that of the people over whom he ruled.

In the midst of this, their deepest depravity and departure, the God of all grace raises up His eminent servant, and places him as His principal medium of communication with the ten tribes, the house of Israel, who had ceased to attend His worship at Jerusalem, and had therefore no means of access to His presence. It is to the ten tribes exclusively that Elijah belongs. He is never seen in Judah, nor in any intercourse with that branch of the nation.

Other prophets had already been sent to Israel. Ahijah the Shilonite, and Jehu the Son of Hanani, are mentioned by name. But beside these it would appear, from 1 Kings xviii. 13, that a very large number—probably

hundreds—of these special messengers of the Most High had already been sent to this portion of His rebellious people. Their God had not left them without witness of His desire that they should return to Him. The names of these faithful ones are not recorded here below, but are in the archives of heaven, and for them is treasured up the distinctive reward spoken of in Rev. xi. 18. Neither is the purport of their instructions made known to us, though easy to be inferred from what is revealed of God's messages, entreaties, and commands to the rebellious house of Judah. The tenderness of His heart towards the people whom He had chosen for His own inheritance was little appreciated by them then, and attracts too little of our attention or admiration now. Yet who on pondering it can fail to be astonished at the infinite condescension of that God who could thus persist, notwithstanding every provocation, in endeavouring to bring the perverse wanderers back unto Himself?

Truly the position of a prophet was not one that brought ease, honour, or worldly advantage, but rather hardship and danger. Those whom God called to this office became, as messengers of the Most High, separated from their fellow-men. We read of the "rough garment" as their costume; and, in the various instances of their being employed, how often had they to confront and rebuke angry monarchs, who had but to speak, and their lives would have been taken. Having to make known the threatenings of God to an idolatrous nation, they could expect nothing but bitter hostility. In Jeremiah's case this was long experienced from all classes; and though Daniel, by peculiar circumstances, became possessed of high dignity, it did not prevent his being cast into the den of lions. Under David and Jehoshaphat prophets were doubtless greatly esteemed; yet Nathan and Jehu

the son of Hanani, when they dared to rebuke them, had reason to fear lest their wrath might be to them "as messengers of death." (Prov. xvi. 14.)

Elijah the Tishbite stands out prominently among those who loved not their lives unto the death. His faith and boldness are marvellous. The Spirit of God has given three connected chapters in 1 Kings to describe a few events of his life, with two more in 2 Kings. The duration of his prophetic office was not long. From about the eighth year of Ahab, when it appears to have begun, to the first year of Jehoram, when he was taken up, comprises only fifteen years. Other prophets, such as Elisha, Isaiah, Hosea, and Jeremiah, seem to have continued to fulfil their office during fifty, sixty, or even more years. But Elijah's course, though short, was very eventful. All Israel had departed from God. His prophets had been destroyed. Baal's worship had become the established religion. His prophets, and the prophets of the groves, were numerous. Ahab, urged by his wicked wife Jezebel, had accomplished all this, and he and his people were of one mind and heart. Then it was that God raised up Elijah.

(To be continued.) 37

"How often we offer to our God the dregs of our time, the services of exhaustion, the very scrapings of our superfluities! Is not this to offer polluted bread upon His altar, like those who offered the blind, the lame, and the sick for sacrifice? (Mal. i. 7, 8.) The command of old was, "Out of *all* your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering of the Lord, of *all* the *best* thereof, even the hallowed part thereof out of it." (Numb. xviii. 29.) And these offerings were typical of what our services should be."

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD.

Notes of an Address on the First Four Feasts of Leviticus xxiii.
Given by the late Mr. H. W. SOLTAN in Devonshire, Oct., 1862.

THE twenty-third of Leviticus is a very remarkable chapter, because it contains the seven "feasts of the Lord." It is a chapter of prophecy, part of which has been fulfilled, and the remainder is yet to be fulfilled. My desire in drawing your attention to it is, that you may seek to read this book more attentively. The book of Leviticus and the book of Revelation seem to be greatly neglected by us, although one may be called the book of the sorrows of the Lamb, and the other the book of the glories of the Lamb.

This chapter begins with the "feasts of the Lord;" and depend upon it we never can have any real joy unless God can have it with us, and we with God. Another thing is true, that God must have His joy *first*. In all things Christ must have "the pre-eminence." Hence these are called the feasts, not of Israel, but *of the Lord*. The joy of these feasts God and Christ have first. Let us see if we can get it next.

Now I see that in the gospel by John these feasts of the Lord are called "feasts of the Jews." Jehovah's feasts have become Jews' feasts. That tells me a deep tale; it tells me that the Jews rested in these feasts instead of in Him to whom the feasts pointed. They rested in them as ordinances of their own, and so they ceased to be the feasts of the Lord. Just so do some deal with Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and thus they become to them the very worst things possible. The feasts of the Lord became

the greatest abomination to God, as we see in the first chapter of Isaiah. And I believe that God abominates "sacraments," as they are often used now, more than any other thing He sees in this world. Let us remember then, in considering these feasts, that we do not treat them superstitiously as the Jews did.

I. THE SABBATH.

The first feast is marked off from the rest, and is called "*the Sabbath.*" What, then, is the Sabbath? Is it the seventh day? No; it is Christ. This "feast of the Lord" is Christ Himself. We read in Col. ii. 17 that the sabbath, or the seventh day, was "a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." The very first feast was perverted by the Jews, and so it became an evil thing. Instead of a rest it was a bondage. We must first know what Christ is as our rest before we can know anything about a Sabbath. When God appointed the Sabbath He saw Christ in it, and therefore He appointed it. After sin entered Paradise God could not rest; nor has He ever rested since save in Christ. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," said Christ. Now if God has not rested, man cannot; so there has been no Sabbath from that day to this but in Christ. He rose from the dead on the first day of the week, and so became God's rest; and God said to Him, "Sit thou on my right hand." So Christ began His Sabbath, and God began His; then we as believers enter into it, and begin our rest, a rest from all servile work, a rest in our dwellings, not in any outward form or ceremony, but a rest in Jesus. A great theme of Christ's preaching was "*rest*;" not the Sabbath day, but, "'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' I will give you a Sabbath, you that work, you that labour. What are you working for?"

working to be better? Come unto me, you that are laden with the heavy burden of sin, and ‘*I will give you rest.*’”

To us as believers who have received the rest of salvation, another rest is spoken of. Christ says, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall *find rest* unto your souls.” Have we found this rest of soul? Have we found rest from all our circumstances and difficulties? Have we found rest from the evil-speaking and oppositions of men? Two things Christ speaks of here: “Take my yoke upon you,” and “learn of me.” Now if men speak a hard word, does *that* move us? It ought not to disturb our rest; and if it does, we have not taken Christ’s yoke; we have not learned of Him. If such things abide rankling in our hearts we have not *found rest* in Christ. We may have rest as to our salvation, but we have not the second rest, we have not the meek and lowly heart. Jesus was never disturbed; never, never was He ruffled in this world. He never lost His rest of soul, because He was never anything but meek and lowly. And be assured if ever we are ruffled it is because we are not enjoying that rest in Jesus. God has a feast in resting in Jesus, and Christ has a rest at God’s right hand, resting from His work; and we should rest as knowing God’s delight in resting in Christ, and as knowing also Christ’s rest at God’s right hand.

II. THE PASSOVER.

The next feast is “*the Passover.*” Read it in full in Exodus xii. You cannot read that chapter too often. It is a great dividing chapter of the Bible. Everything in that chapter is new. It begins with a new month; a new year; a new lamb; blood used as it was never used before; a new way of averting wrath; a new way of shutting out the destroyer; a new way of eating the lamb, with loins

girded, shoes on the feet, and staff in the hand; a new kind of bread; a new people—everything is new. The Passover was the great feast, the leading feast of redemption. Had you been in Egypt on that night you would have seen a wonderful thing: three splashes of blood turning aside the wrath of Almighty God against sin—a wrath that could know no abatement; a wrath that could not be satisfied in any other way; a wrath that must be met entirely; a wrath that could never otherwise be pacified; a wrath that could not come to its end except by being poured out to the full. Now the blood met this wondrous wrath of God. And depend upon it, the wrath of God is as wonderful as any of His attributes; it is as far beyond our comprehension as is His love. But I see in that night God's wrath exhausted by means of the slaughter of the lamb; I see God's wrath gone. Such is the Passover; it is the wondrous leading type in Scripture of the death of Christ. Nothing but blood could be presented to God. "It is the blood that maketh atonement;" and remember we are redeemed "with the precious *blood* of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish." It was not the lamb that met God's wrath, but the blood of the lamb. And what do these three strokes of blood that we see on the posts and lintel of the door speak of? One of redemption, another of reconciliation, and the other, I doubt not, speaks of remission. Thus the three tokens, or the three voices of the blood on the door-posts in Egypt, indicate the threefold cry of the blood of Christ on the cross to God.

Now, dear friends, if there is one of you that has passed by that blood, that is neglecting that blood, that has not believed in the efficacy of that blood, what a solemn judgment of God rests on that person! He surely is in a worse condition than were the men of Sodom and

Gomorrhah; he is worse than those on whom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven. Let me entreat such an one to flee to the cross of Christ, to that blood which was betokened by the passover in Egypt. God has kept that feast. It is a feast of the Lord. Oh, what must have been in the heart of God when He could keep a feast on the death of His beloved Son! What must have been His love to us! What must have been His longing to pluck sinners from the burning! What His desire for their salvation! It must be a marvellous feast, and it tells me what His joy is in the redemption of sinners.

III. THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD.

The next feast is "*the feast of unleavened bread,*" and it is so linked on with the passover that it seems nearly one. So in the New Testament: "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." It is not the table of the Lord only that is a feast, but there is a feast of unleavened bread which we have to-day and every day—"therefore let us keep the feast." Christ is here called "*our* passover." In the Old Testament the passover is called "the Lord's passover," but in the New we are taught to say it is *ours*; and that word tells that we value what God values, that we have been taught by God Himself the value of the blood of Christ. We are to keep the feast "*not with old leaven.*" Let us take care of the old leaven! An Israelite might have had some old leaven in his house, it might be about in the corners of his cupboard; but it must be searched out and put away, or he would be liable to have his unleavened bread corrupted by it. Just so is it with us. There are some old sins that are hidden in the corners of our hearts which

we thought we were free from. Let us take care lest they should spring up. Old habits will return without great watchfulness; they will show themselves again at every opportunity. We should remember that the roots of sin are not gone, and therefore we should be very watchful. Young believers especially are apt to think that they have lost their sinful nature. When I was first converted I thought that I had got rid of my old nature by the mighty power of God—and the breaking of the chains of the devil that have held us for years is a mighty power—but I soon found I was mistaken.

But there is a *new* leaven—sins which we in our unconverted state knew nothing about. I see in the Corinthians the old leaven; and I think I also see some new leaven—and what is it? A kind of spiritual pride; a boasting as if they were reigning as kings, as if they had a great deal of truth, and therefore might despise others. When we are converted we too have new temptations; but we are to put away *all* leaven, and to keep this unleavened feast all our days. Israel had to keep it seven days, and we find that they never ate leaven in the wilderness, because they had no bread, until they came to the end of their journeyings, and ate of the old corn of the land. So we in all our pilgrimage should be eating nothing but the pure “bread of God.” It is peace, it is joy, it is that which will enable us to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil.

IV. THE FEAST OF FIRST-FRUITS.

The fourth feast is that which we are reminded of by the harvest-field—“*the feast of first-fruits.*” Have you thought, dear friends, as you have reaped the first sheaf, that God has reaped into His bosom a sheaf of corn? that God has had presented to Him a sheaf from His harvest-

field? We should try to think of our daily matters, and see what we can learn of Christ from them. If you had been at Jerusalem more than eighteen hundred years ago, on the morning after the sabbath, the first day of the week very early, you would have seen the high priest take into the temple a sheaf of corn, and wave it before God. And then, if you could have looked out from that temple, not very far from it, on Calvary, you would have seen the first *new Man* that ever rose from the dead; the beginning of a new harvest; a sheaf that God had never had a specimen of before. You would have seen in the temple a figure; on Calvary a reality, *a Man*—a marvellous beginning of a feast of the Lord! God had for the first time reaped into His garner a Man that could stand there in full perfection; a Man that could stand for ever in the presence of God. The Lord Jesus could now go back and take His place in heaven as He had never done before; as the beginning of the new creation of God; as the specimen of every believer that is to be reaped in there at the resurrection, at His coming. The presentation of that “Sheaf of First-fruits” must have rent in twain the Holiest in heaven. Angels had long been there, and God had been at a great distance from them. They had seen God in a cloud. But there was now on the throne of God a new being—*a Man*. That is the meaning of the feast of first-fruits. But not only so, it was a Man that came from the very place of the wages of sin, from a place most hateful to God, from the grave. *From the grave to the glory*—what a change!

And, beloved, what shall we be by-and-by, when God reaps us, and gathers us home into His garner? And what will the stubble be when the wheat is gone? I see a harvest-field, and when the wheat is gone there is nothing but the stubble left. And when God reaps this world the stubble will be left for the burning. Be sure of that.

Again, after fifty days, there was another first day of the week called *Pentecost*; and had you been in the temple on that day, you would have seen the same priest with two cakes, waving them before the Lord, and offering at the same time many offerings. (*vv.* 18-20.) And if you could have looked into a room at Jerusalem at the same time, you might have seen some poor, weak, despised people; and just at the moment the priest was waving that new offering in the temple, you would have heard the sound of a rushing mighty wind come down on the house, and have seen cloven tongues as of fire resting on those assembled there, and thus they were presented to God as "a new meat-offering." (*Acts* ii. 2, 3.) This closed the feast of first-fruits. It began with the resurrection of the Lord, and ended on the day of Pentecost, by God's full recognition of this people as His own. In His Son God looked on them as He did on that risen sheaf, Christ; and therefore He gave them His Holy Spirit from the throne.

Beloved, the Holy Ghost is come down on us from the eternal throne of God as the Spirit of power, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of resurrection-glory. He is come down to tell a sinner that he is accepted in Christ, and made a partaker of the throne of His glory. Now, how are we, who have been marvellously baptized by that Spirit, living in the world? Are we living like the world around us? or are we living as having the Holy Ghost from the throne dwelling in us? Are we excusing ourselves for this or that failing? or are we living in the power of that Holy Ghost "sent down from heaven"? (*1 Peter* i. 12.) Are we debasing ourselves with the things of earth? or are we living as the sons of God? Are we reading the books of earth, or the book of glory? Are we joining ourselves with that which is to God as the stubble? or are we looking for Jesus, His beloved Son?

Are we looking on this world, and admiring the progress it is making, or admiring the glory of Christ? We are living in solemn times. I believe the Church of God has taken a backward step within the last ten years. I heard children of God protest against going to the Exhibition some years ago, and now they have gone to it! What does it mean? It means this, that the god of this world has got up something to entice God's children away from Christ; to draw them away from the cross of Christ and His glory. What are all these things? What are all the inventions of men? They are the devil's faggots for the burning. Men are now getting everything ready for the burning from the mouth of the Lamb; they will be cast into outer darkness, where will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. These things are Babylon's works, by which the prince of Babylon, Satan, is destroying souls. They are things by which men have been led away to the destruction of their souls. These inventions of man on earth—though we as God's children use them, and are allowed to use them—are too often the means of murdering souls. The persons who invent them may have gained their earthly object, but lost their souls. We shall see it by-and-by. Oh, we must take care of what we are doing!

What must be said of the dress and fashions of the day? Here also God's children are taking a backward step. They have not their eye upon the cross of Christ, nor their ear filled with His groans, nor their heart filled with His love; and so Satan is attracting them. Oh that there might be a restoration of souls—a looking steadfastly to Christ with the eye of faith! Oh that there might be a looking at things as Christ did on the cross! What must the world have been in His eye? How the things of it must have grieved His heart when He knew how they would rob His

servants of their value for His cross! Oh that we might know the meaning of the two crucifixions mentioned by the apostle Paul! First he was a crucified man: "I am crucified with Christ"—his old flesh, his evil heart, his wretched nature, that came from beneath, born of Adam; that was crucified. But he speaks of another crucifixion: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *the world is crucified unto me.*" Man's glory is in the inventions of the world. But the apostle says, "God forbid that I should glory in them; the world is crucified unto me." Self was gone, and the world was gone. Oh that we may know the cross in this twofold aspect! Oh that we may remember the blood of the passover, and the sheaf of the first-fruits! Oh that we may see the deliverance Christ has given us from ourselves and the world!

The next scene will be the return of the risen One to fetch us to Himself. And shall we have one lingering thought of this world then? Will there be one thing to take us away from Christ then? Will it not be our delight that we shall not be able to look at or think of any object save Christ, and what is connected with Him? Now may we live a life of faith on the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us!

"How often does the believer mourn over the loss of that the possession of which would be a calamity. Mary wept at the sepulchre of her Lord because she found Him not; but alas for her, and for you and me, had she found Him there! O Christian, is thy cistern broken, thy prospect clouded, and dost thou weep? Look at Mary, as she stands without at the sepulchre weeping, and enquire whether, like her, thou hast not cause rather to rejoice than weep."

GRACE, FAITH, AND GLORY.

"GRACE FOR GRACE."

"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth . . . and of His fulness" (*i. e.* out of His fulness of grace) "have all we received, and *grace for grace.*"

"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

"That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing *which is in you in Christ Jesus*"

"All things are yours." "All things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgiving of many, redound to the glory of God."

"The exceeding grace of God in you."

"I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

"Conformed to the image of His Son."

THUS Christ the Lord imparteth of the grace that is in Himself (and He is full of grace) to His redeemed, *that they may be gracious*; and whatsoever phases of grace are seen in Him are reflected also on His beloved ones, that He may be seen and known by His character stamped on them. "Grace for grace," then, is grace imparted to us, corresponding in character to the grace that He is "full of."

"FAITH TO FAITH."

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to *every one that believeth* . . . for *therein* is the righteousness of God" (*i. e.* the virtual, moral rightness or righteous character of God) "revealed from *faith to faith.*"

GRADUALLY, it may be, yet surely, does the believer in Christ apprehend the glory of the moral rectitude of God in his salvation. This he learns by the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. His faith is the groundwork on which fresh superstructure can be built. Having faith already exercised, it creates in him a fitness to receive fresh truths from God.

Thus he first learns what God *has done* in giving His only-begotten Son, then he learns what God *is*. To him, a man of faith, is the righteousness of God revealed "*in*

the way of faith unto (his already existing) faith;" and he becomes bolder and bolder to announce the gospel, because he understands God through faith—how it is written, "The just shall live by faith;" that is, their life shall be in the constant exercise of increasing faith. Faith in exercise fits us for fresh revelations of God's character, and these revelations increase already existing faith. "Lord, increase our faith."

"GLORY TO GLORY."

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory" (the moral glory) "of the Lord, are changed into the same image from *glory to glory*, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

"Whom He justified, them He also glorified."

"And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them."

WHAT is this glory? "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld *His glory*, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." This glory is the moral excellency of God manifested openly in Jesus Christ.

God has predestined His children to be conformed to the image of His Son, and, giving unto them exceeding great and precious promises, He makes them practically partakers of the divine nature. They then, gazing on the glory of the Lord as revealed (not veiled any longer) in Jesus Christ, are morally transformed into Christ-likeness, from one stage of moral glory unto another, even as by the indwelling Spirit of the Lord.

A. O. M.

NOTES AND REPLIES.

Of what is Stoning in the Levitical law typical? And is there any thing corresponding to it in Church discipline?

STONING, like the other capital punishments, speaks of righteous law, and not of saving grace. It was judgment "without mercy," and bears witness to the "much sorer punishment" which those shall be thought worthy of who reject the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost in their rejection of Christ and His work. (See Heb. x.

28, 29.) All discipline in the Church is with a view to restoration. God only can take up the "tares" (Matt. xiii.) and burn them. To Him alone vengeance belongs, the execution of which was commanded to Israel, and is prohibited to us; hence the fallacy of a claim to burn heretics.

In what does the Anointing of our Lord by the woman in Luke vii. differ from the anointing mentioned by the other evangelists?

THE anointing narrated in Luke vii. was (1) early in our Lord's ministry; (2) in the house of Simon the Pharisee; (3) the woman was a sinner; (4) she washed His feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair; (5) she only anointed the feet. The anointing mentioned in Matt. xxvi., Mark xiv., and John xii. was (1) just before His death; (2) in the house of Simon the leper; (3) the woman was Mary, whom "Jesus loved;" (4) she did it for His burial; (5) she anointed His head (Matt. xxvi. 7; Mark xiv. 3) and also His feet (John xii. 6), and wiped the ointment with her hair. The *first* anointing was the overflow of a poor sinner's love; she knew how much she had been forgiven, and had probably heard the "Come unto me" of Matt. xi. 28. In keeping with this the woman bedews the feet of her Lord with penitential tears, which she wipes off with her hair; and she then anoints the feet, but the feet only, with the ointment, which she does not touch with her hair, and hence she carries no fragrance with her, though she has found salvation. To her Christ is the sin-offering, and we hear nothing of sweet savour or perfume. In contrast with the woman stands the Pharisee in whose house the anointing took place. The *second* anointing was the outflow of a heart that had long known Jesus, of one who had "sat at His feet" (Luke x. 39) and "heard His words," and hence with characteristic propriety she anoints—without tears—His head, as seen by Matthew, and His feet, as seen by John, who lay on his Master's bosom. Each records what he saw. The confidence of acquaintanceship and love enabled her to presume to anoint the head, and the humility of grace led her not to forget the feet. (Alas, how common is this! saints forgetting their place as sinners!) Then she wipes the anointed feet with her hair, and carries away with her the fragrance of the anointing, as well as filling the house with its odour, as we are told. To her Christ is the burnt-offering, with its holy fragrance, and its precious witness to resurrection. In harmony with this it takes place in the house of a healed leper. The characteristic differences between the two anointings are very precious, and must by no means be lost sight of by confounding them together.

“ I COME QUICKLY ; ”

OR, CHRIST'S LAST WORD.

As the years roll over us it is well to ponder our blessed Lord's last utterance to His Church. It seems to have been left last on record that, whatever else might be forgotten through lapse of time, the blessed promise then given might linger on the heart and ear of His loving people. Like the last words of a valued friend, a parting legacy ever to be remembered, so should we treasure these words of our Lord, “ I COME QUICKLY.”

Not satisfied with giving them to us once, He utters them three times in the conclusion of the book of Revelation. The prophetic record closes at the end of verse 5 of chap. xxii., and the concluding sixteen verses contain mainly the words of our Lord Himself. As the Lamb before the throne, testimony has been borne to Him all through the book, and now He is again the speaker, as He was in chap. i., and He sets His seal upon all that has been said, by the assurance of His speedy return. Prophecies of woe untold, and of bliss unsearchable, had filled the wonderful “book of this prophecy ;” but it was neither the woe nor the bliss that was pre-eminently to occupy the mind of the reader, but his personal relation to Christ, and the pledge of His return. Hope and fear may alike forget this central object, the person of Christ, if love rule not ; and He knows how prone love is to wax cold, even as it had done in the Church at Ephesus, amidst her activities and zeal, her labour and patience. First love will only be kept alive as the person of the Lord is kept pre-eminently in view.

His personal appearing occupied the mind of the Lord when comforting His disciples in their sorrow at the prospect of His departure from them: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, ye may be also." (John xiv. 2, 3.) He does not say "I will come" in the future, as if His coming were to be thought of as far distant, but "*I come*" in the present, as if He would have the advent ever a present hope and present joy to the heart of His faithful ones. It is often asked, How could it be truly said eighteen hundred years ago that Christ was coming quickly? And some think the early Christians were deceived in their anticipation of the near approach of their Lord. Yet surely they were not; for nearly forty years after Paul wrote his epistles to the Thessalonians, Christ Himself tells the Church, through His servant John, "I come quickly." It scarcely satisfies some to say that with God "a thousand years are as one day;" but does not faith's estimate of time lead to precisely the same result? Thus when Paul, after a life of thirty or forty years of constant labour and suffering, began to make up his account of the length of time that it had lasted, he was able in view of eternity to say, "Our light affliction which is but for *a moment*." According to this apostolic mode of reckoning a century would appear but as three moments, and twenty centuries would make but an hour. But we can only so reckon "*while* we look not at the things that are seen, but at those that are not seen."

Love makes time fly. Jacob found the seven years pass away quickly which he served for Rachel, and we are told "they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." (Gen. xxix. 20.) There is deep spiritual philosophy in this estimate of time; and surely it is only to cold and laggard hearts that the time seems long. Love

and labour shorten time; and the Bride of Christ can say, “Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my Beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.” (Cant. ii. 17.) Thus is the spiritual communion of Christ with us described, until the time of unhindered communion comes, and we meet Him whom our souls love “upon the mountains of spices” (Cant. viii. 14), where as the Lamb in the midst of the throne He shall feed His flock, and “lead them unto living fountains of waters.” (Rev. vii. 17.)

Let us now consider the different connections in which the thrice-repeated promise, “I come quickly,” is found in Rev. xxii.; and may our hearts be stirred up to consider what our Lord would say to us in reference to His own coming.

1. It occurs first in verse 7, connected with *obedience*. “Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.” In the previous verse we read, “And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the spirits of the prophets [so the old MSS.] sent His angel to shew unto His servants the things which must shortly [or quickly] be done [or come to pass].” The book of the Revelation unfolds the crises of the latter day, and thereby reveals to us those characteristics which have been working all through the dispensation, as a *mystery* of lawlessness, and which issue in the development of the lawless one, the man of sin. Forewarned of the future, we must be armed in the present, to meet and withstand the various forms found secretly at work under false names (for Babylon is called the Church, and the world is named Christian), remembering that it is only the restraining or letting power that now prevents the full manifestation of open apostacy.

Hence the sayings and the warnings of the book of

Revelation are to be kept by the faithful soul, hidden as a treasure in the heart, as a safeguard against being led away by the present mystery of iniquity. Many are beguiled and deceived because they judge of things by the outward name and appearance, and not by the light of the sanctuary. This divine unfolding was given by God to Christ, by Him to the angel, and by the angel to John, *for us*, that we might not defile our garments, but be found in the day of His coming worthy to walk with Him in white.

Especially would we direct all hearts to a prayerful consideration of the teaching in the seven epistles that this book opens with, and which reveal a sevenfold condition of the Church up to the time of the end. There we shall find that declensions and apostacies that are often little thought of, and little seen by our dull eyes and cold hearts, are soon discerned by the "eyes of fire," and that God will make much of what we are often led to make but little, and will often estimate very lightly what we are disposed to value very highly. Oh to see as God sees, and thus to keep the sayings of the book engraven on our hearts!

Can we ponder Ephesus, Sardis, and Laodicea, and not tremble? Can we read and lay to heart what is written to those churches, and fail to raise the cry, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any way of grief [margin] in me, and lead me in the way everlasting"? (Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.)

What an estimate Christ made of the labour and patience and zeal for truth in the Church of Ephesus! But there was a canker at the root of it all: "Thou hast left thy first love." Ah, we are slow to learn the great truth, that we may give *all we have* instead of love, and "it would utterly be contemned." So the Song of Songs tells us; and

surely “the kisses of His mouth” tell us it is true. Sardis had a name, a great name, among the churches. She was spoken of and praised for what seemed the activities of life; but it was the galvanized action of a corpse, the result of outward organization, that seemed to indicate life, while death had really paralyzed the vital energy. And what of Laodicea? She had taken the heavenly truths of the grace of God, and boasted in their possession; could speak of heavenly calling, and of consecration to Christ; was enriched in goods received out of the agonies of the Son of God; and proudly boasted in them, and self-complacently said, “I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing.” Alas for us when the blessings of the gospel occupy us more than Christ! It bespeaks a lukewarm condition of heart which values the gift more than the giver.

We may especially notice how the Lord expresses a severer judgment on these three churches than on Pergamos and Thyatira, where outwardly there was much more to complain of. The Church of Laodicea reminds us of Malachi’s days, which were preparing Israel for the rejection and crucifixion of the Son of God. It is also worthy of remark that the two churches upon which our Lord pronounces no word of censure, or warning to repent—Smyrna and Philadelphia—are spoken of, the first as in *poverty* and *tribulation*, and the latter as having a *little strength*. It might be well if these features of Church life were more remembered; it would prevent much misdirected zeal, and encourage the weak and “the poor of the flock” to keep the Word, and to hold fast the Name. May the word to Philadelphia be remembered by us all: “Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”

But not only are these sayings to be kept. The un-

foldings of the ultimate conflict between light and darkness, between the Lamb and the dragon, have also to be kept and pondered over. The enmity between the Seed and the serpent, with its bruising and its victory (which has gone on all through these ages of the world's history), has to be understood so that the feet of His saints may be guided amidst all the present deceivableness of unrighteousness by which they are surrounded. It is because the prophetic word has not been kept, that so many are found in entire ignorance of the character of the times in which they live.

2. In verse 12 we read: "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." There the coming is connected with *reward*; and it will be well to have this aspect of the advent before the mind, regarding, however, the reward in the light of the precious token of the loving Master's approval; and hence the greater the reward the greater the unselfish joy of the thought—I have pleased Him who loved me, and gave Himself for me. He does not come empty-handed, nor with an indiscriminate bestowal of approbation, but with one marked and measured by righteousness. The reward is to each, and to each one "according as his work shall be." He is a righteous Judge; and to Him as such does Paul look when, in anticipation of the crown, he says: "Which the *righteous* Judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that *love* His appearing." Observe, not simply believe in it, but love it because it is *His* appearing, or epiphany, and the forthshining of His glory.

It is of much importance to realize the individual bestowment of the reward, as it brings each child of God face to face with his Lord. He calls us each by name here as He leads us on; and so will He call each one by

one to His judgment-seat, before which we shall stand. Ere then we shall have been changed into His image, each perfect in likeness to Him who is the Firstborn among many brethren, but each differing as “one star differeth from another star in glory;” for so we are told will it be at the resurrection from among the dead. *Grace* secures our being changed in a moment, before we are brought into the presence of our Beloved, and we shall be satisfied when we awake in His likeness; but *righteousness* measures the capacity of satisfaction and enjoyment, and fills it to each. All will be satisfied, all will be filled; but the capacity of each to receive the reward will depend on their growth down here. “To him that hath shall more be given.” Our Lord’s teaching is full and explicit on this point. Ponder the following passages: Matt. v. 18–20; Luke xix. 12–28; Rom. xiv. 10–12; 1 Cor. iii. 12–15.

This principle of proportionate reward and approval is beautifully illustrated in the divinely-given record of some Roman saints in Rom. xvi. We have an Aquila and Priscilla, who “laid down their necks;” a Mary, “who bestowed *much* labour;” a Tryphena and Tryphosa, who “laboured in the Lord;” and a beloved Persis, who “laboured *much* in the Lord.” A similar illustration is found in the mention of those who laboured in the building of the wall of Jerusalem, in Nehemiah iii. Some “repaired;” one “earnestly repaired;” some built up one piece, and finding more to do built up another; while some of the nobles, who may have approved highly of the building, and may have looked on, “put not their necks to the work of the Lord.” All is recorded now, and all will be made manifest then, when each shall receive his appropriate reward; a reward out of all absolute proportion to the work—a city for a pound—but in relative proportion to the service of each.

3. The last repetition of these precious words is in verse 20. "He which testifieth these things saith, Yea, I come quickly." And the response of faith, hope, and love is: "Amen; come, Lord Jesus." Here we have the *final assurance* of the Faithful Witness. They are the last words of the Son of God ever heard on earth, and left to linger on our too forgetful hearts, with His infinitely blessed assurance "Yea;" for in Him is the Yea and the Amen of all the promises of God; and as if centering all future promises in one, He says, "Yea, I come quickly." He would thus, by the addition of the precious little word "yea," cause His affirmation to ring in our hearts as year by year we are waiting and looking up; and may it sound louder and louder as this year rolls on. May we also add our "Amen" to the promise, and tell our conviction of its truth; and so shall the prayer ascend, as more or less feebly it has for eighteen centuries—"Come, Lord Jesus."

When we say these words, let us remember the Saviour who saved us from our sins, whose name was called JESUS on that account; but let not His lordship be forgotten. We look for Him alike as Saviour and as Lord; and in saying, "Come, Lord Jesus," let us remember our relation to Him as His saved ones and as His servants.

Against all the beguilings of the enemy, and all the seductions of the world, and against all the false security of many who ought to be awake, may the word "QUICKLY" sound in our ears, when in any moment of temptation we hear the satanic whisper, "My Lord delayeth His coming;" or when darkness and sorrow surround the path, then may the word "quickly" be whispered mightily by the Spirit of God, and so we shall be able to say again—"Our light affliction is but *for a moment*," for He is coming *quickly*.

H. G.

PURPOSE AND FAITH.

2 TIM. iii. 10.

THESE are two little words, but they are of deep meaning and of vast importance. Both are essential to growth in grace and service for the Lord.

Even in nature or in things of this life, a man without an object and a purpose, and lacking confidence, is not likely to succeed in anything, or to turn his life to good account. So also with the believer. It is essential to his enjoyment and usefulness that he should have a definite object, a godly purpose, and confidence in God for its realization.

Divine "purpose" accounts for everything that has been effected, is now being done, and that shall yet be accomplished by God, whether in creation or in redemption, in grace or in judgment. All is developing and accomplishing the "eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus" (Eph. iii. 11); for He has said, "My purpose shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." (Isa. xlvi. 10; see also Jer. li. 29.)

Knowledge of this, and faith in God's word, will prove the sheet-anchor of the saint; but if he be void of knowledge and confidence, he will be tossed and driven about like a ship without a chart, compass, or helm—without anchor or ballast. A remembrance of God's wise and gracious "purpose" in all things will stay his mind, giving him peace, "perfect peace."

But what is "purpose" as effected in us? It is not the rash, conceited resolution of the flesh, in ignorance both of God's claim and of our own corruption and weakness.

It is the development of the new life that has been imparted; it has its rise in divine love, made true in us by the Holy Ghost in regeneration. It is based on and directed by the word of Him whose grace we trust to enable us to carry it out; there being within us the determination of love, combined with dependence on God, and the desire to please Him in all things. This "purpose" may be traced in the life of redeemed men, and was perfect in the Son of man, who is of this, as of every good thing, the perfect example.

To it we are surely called by Peter's exhortation: "Add to your faith courage;" for "*purpose*" is an element of courage. A man could scarcely have been reckoned a son of Mars who was void of purpose, neither can we be soldiers of Christ without it—without a holy determination to stand and act for God.

The selection of a few passages of scripture in which this word is found, giving examples of it and of its power, may help us.

In the time of Job, Elihu spoke of God as withdrawing man from his purpose. (Job xxxiii. 17.) Man having determined to do something, God interposed, and, even by means of a vision or dream, withdrew him from it, thus preventing him from carrying it out. In Ps. xvii. 3 David said, "I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress." "I have determined (in dependence) to keep my mouth." In Isaiah xiv. 26, 27 we read, "This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth." "Jehovah hath purposed, and who shall disannul it?" Daniel, in Babylon, "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank." He determined not to defile himself with that which was connected with idolatry and voluptuous living, and chose the path of separation to God.

In the New Testament our calling is traced to God's purpose, of which it was the fulfilment. See Rom. viii. 28: "To them who are the called according to His purpose;" and 2 Tim. i. 9: "According to His own purpose and grace." In Eph. i., ii., iii., iv., our sonship, heirship, blessing, and glory are traced to the same source; and Paul, writing to Timothy, says, "Thou hast fully known my . . . purpose, faith;" that is, the object of his life, and his holy determination to pursue it, as also his confidence in the grace of God.

Let us dwell a little on this passage. Observe that Paul speaks not of purposes, but of *purpose* (prothesis), a word signifying a setting before, a predeterminate purpose, one all-comprehensive object and determination governing his entire life.

But what was that purpose? I imagine that Paul's whole life might be described (as might that of his Master) by one word—OBEDIENCE; and thus his life was an imitation, an exhibition, and an exaltation of Christ. That such was his aim let his own words to the Philippian believers testify, although somewhat differently expressed: "According to my earnest *expectation* and my *hope* . . . Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death."

Let us then, dear reader, so live; let true imitation of Christ, a walking as He walked, be the one purpose of our life. Let us study His footsteps as recorded in the gospels, and trace that blessed One through His life and in His death, remembering that He is our perfect example.

To one point I would call particular attention, and press its importance upon myself and you; that is, His use of the word of God, His appreciation of it, His confidence in it, and His subjection to it.

Beloved fellow-believer, if ever there was need for this

there is *now*; nor will the necessity diminish; but as this dispensation advances, so will the necessity increase.

In spite of the increase of knowledge, does not iniquity abound? In spite of activities and excitement, does not the *love* of many "wax cold"? Notwithstanding the multiplication of copies of God's word, and its increased circulation, are there not many—oh, how many!—who do not bow to its teachings, but corrupt it, and set it aside as the standard of either doctrine or practice? Is not this insubjection to the Word manifested both in the pulpit and by the press? Are not professors growing weary of sound doctrine, and heaping to themselves teachers, having itching ears? Are they not thus coming under the delusion already advancing, and which will terminate in the belief of a lie, to their own damnation or judgment?

From these evil thoughts and ways there is no preservation but by the simple reception of the Word, and an unqualified subjection and obedience to it; for the scriptures are being daily fulfilled which tell us that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse," and the godly who are on the watch are constantly grieved by that which they hear and read. This is indeed sorrowful; but if we read the epistles carefully we shall surely expect such things.

I do not think that any measure of development or exposure, either in this country or any other in Christendom, of Jesuitism, Arianism, rationalism, or bold unbelief, called infidelity, would greatly surprise me; for this simple reason, that I know the word of God is not duly honoured. (See Ezek. xx. 24, 25, 39; Ps. lxxxii. 12; 2 Thess. ii. 11.) If men set aside God's word as the standard of doctrine and practice, and an appeal to prayer-book, homilies, manuscripts, statutes, and human methods and arrangements be substituted for it, what can we expect

but that God, in jealousy for His own Word, will send the "delusion" on such, and then every false and foolish teaching is believed, and every evil thing is countenanced?

Yet let not this discourage us, but rather stir us up to watchfulness and prayer; let us honour the simple word of God the more, and stick to His testimonies (Ps. cxix. 31); then shall our joy be in proportion to our trials, and our honour in proportion to our dangers. For this we must look out of ourselves; we must draw from the resources that are in Christ, and hold to our *purpose by faith*. Let us, as trusters in the living God, gird up our loins, determined to cling to, submit to, and maintain the word of God, and so quit ourselves like men, and be strong. We know that it is written, "Them that honour me I will honour," and that ere long the overcomer will be rewarded. May we be such to the end.

H. H.

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE.

(Continued from page 11.)

THE earliest mention of Elijah in the Old Testament is his appearing before Ahab to announce the cessation of rain. Had it not been for a disclosure made very long afterwards in the New Testament we should have been much at a loss in this matter; but the apostle James, in a short passage, makes known several very important things. He says, "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth [or land] by the space of three years and six months."

In these few words lies the clue to much that follows. He prayed earnestly, or he prayed in prayer that it might not rain. "And the earnest prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Many have been the petitions presented

to God *for* rain; but never one that we are aware of but that of Elijah *against* it. Doubtless his whole soul was fired with indignation at the idolatry of his countrymen, and at their senseless superstition, and the grievous dishonour done to Him to whom as a nation they owed everything. Probably he judged that forbearance towards them had reached its limit, that indulgence only hardened them the more in wickedness, and that nothing but severity would induce repentance.

But why *this* description of severity? And why must Elijah select the discipline whereby to bring the nation to repentance? On these points nothing is revealed. Nor are we told of Elijah's having any word from God that there should be no rain; yet there can be little doubt that such was the case, from the confidence with which he said to Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, *but according to my word.*" From this remarkable statement we learn that God had now placed it in His servant's power to bestow rain or to withhold it, and in consequence to grant prosperity to the country, or to bring about universal desolation. Such power was never lodged in the hands of man before nor since, as far as we know, though a future similar use of power is foretold in Rev. xi. 6. God had in this respect delegated to Elijah the well-being of the whole community; for He had not only granted his request for impoverishing the country by drought, but added that the impoverishment should not cease till Elijah gave the word, though years might first elapse. This addition, tending greatly as it did to enhance the authority of Elijah, was yet, as the subsequent narrative shows, one of infinite wisdom and infinite mercy.

Elijah is now no longer a common person. He possesses greater authority than even Ahab. Confident in

his commission, he now stands before his Sovereign, and boldly announces the impending judgment of God and the authority conferred upon himself. Ahab may believe him or not. He may treat his assertion with ridicule as the assumption of a madman; and this would have been the natural thought of those who heard so strange a statement. They might receive it with shouts of laughter, and make it the passing joke of the day, so unlikely, so incredible would it appear; but, like the crackling of thorns under a pot, the laughter of such fools would be short indeed. It would only last till the season of the periodical rains came on. And when no "early" rains fell for ploughing and sowing, nor any "latter rains" for filling the ear, and the skies remained cloudless, some might perhaps recollect what Elijah had said, though others would still no doubt treat it as an accidental circumstance. The aged would very likely recollect by-gone years of similar scarcity. Men of science would of course explain why at that juncture there *could* be no rain. But as time rolled on, and distress accumulated, the word that Elijah had uttered would spread through the community, and acquire more and more attention and credit. At length it would gain the ear of the nation, and all they were passing through would be attributed to this cause.

From this moment the prophet is no longer scorned nor treated with neglect; he is wanted and is searched for everywhere. As soon as it is believed that he has the power to unlock heaven and do away with the universal distress, all thoughts are centred on him. The king would be prepared to treat him with respect, and even kindness. Under the persuasion that he is able to bring rain, should Elijah desire wealth Ahab would be willing to bestow it. Should honour be coveted, he is prepared to advance him to high dignity, even to humble himself before him, so

that his people may be relieved. But if Elijah be found unassailable by such motives, then peradventure an opposite course of treatment may avail. Stripes may succeed. If not, the dungeon may be tried, or the sword of the executioner may be brandished over his head. Or it may have been supposed that his heart might be softened were he conducted through the land, and made to witness the existing misery—everywhere living skeletons moving about, and men, women, and children dying of want. (See the description of a somewhat similar scene in the days of the prophet Jeremiah—Jer. xiv. 1-6.)

CHERITH.

But where is Elijah? He has disappeared; no one knows where! In vain the king searches for him throughout all his own territories. Then he sends to the surrounding nations, who were perhaps sharing the common calamity. All make oath that they cannot find him.

But where is he? The Lord his God has removed him out of Ahab's reach. Knowing that His faithful servant was "a man of like passions with us," He has not left him exposed to temptations arising either from the king's favour or his wrath. Elijah had been told to go and hide himself by the brook Cherith, which was one of the little streams running into the Jordan, not far off, and probably on the same side of the river where the king lived. Here did the Almighty God effectually conceal His servant; and though the beds of the streams and of the river, then drying up, would be even more frequented than the highways, yet his security was as perfect as that of Israel when passing the Red Sea. In vain did his enemy seek him.

Obedient to the word of the Lord, Elijah had thus gone away from the society of his fellow-men into solitude. There is no one here to be instructed, or warned, or encouraged by him. His prophetic office is for the time in

abeyance. He has no means of communicating with any one to learn the results of his prophecy, or to ascertain whether any have at length been turned to the Lord by the privation he had announced. As far as instruction of the people is concerned, he is as one dead.

But yet he is not entirely alone. A flapping of wings is heard; a flight of crows appears, each with something in his beak. As the Lord had said, they bring him bread and flesh. It may have been such as crows would be likely to pick up in times of scarcity, according to the habits of such birds. These they deposit before him. Instinct would have led them to devour these things as soon as found; but divine control overrules this, and while instinct induces them to collect, a power beyond compels them to bring and give up what they gather, in opposition to all their propensities. In the morning there is a supply for a meal, but no more, until the evening, when another supply is brought in the same way; and thus the prophet is daily supported. As he learns the progress of the drought by the gradual drying up of the brook, so perhaps he learns the progress of the famine by a diminution of his daily supply of food. Both appear to come to an end together; for when the brook dries up we hear no more of the birds. Their work was done.

But what was the cause of their being employed? The same power which afterwards sent an angel to supply his need with a cake baked on the coals, could surely have done so on this occasion. He who for forty years fed the whole of Israel from the skies, could have sent down manna for one of them here. They were rebellious; Elijah was obedient to the word of the Lord. The Lord God could, if He pleased, have supplied His faithful servant in his solitude with rich repasts. If birds were to be the messengers, why not doves? Above all, why the unclean

crow? (Lev. xi. 15.) For an Israelite to owe his subsistence to what an unclean bird brought him would be repulsive to his position and his feelings; and to Elijah as a prophet it would be especially derogatory.

Could there be any motive for subjecting a faithful servant to treatment of this kind? Undoubtedly there was, or it would not have been done. The Judge of all the earth will assuredly do nothing but what is right. In the midst of Elijah's righteous indignation, was there not one thing he had overlooked—the exercise of mercy? "And mercy rejoiceth against judgment." (James ii. 13.) Probably he considered that mercy had been long enough displayed. But had he read the heart of God, or had he acted upon his own conception of what the extent of its compassion should be?

The all-wise God deems it well to place him in circumstances somewhat similar to those in which He had placed his fellow-countrymen. In the solitude of the hillside he has time to contemplate what is happening throughout the land—men toiling in vain to obtain subsistence from the parched ground; the wife at home and the children starving; the cattle everywhere dying or dead; trees without a leaf upon them; birds and insects perished; the earth hard as iron; the sky bright like brass with the fierce heat. Not a sound is heard, save the low moan of anguish, or the death-gasp of one expiring! The whole region helpless and hopeless: activity and energy have succumbed, and universal apathy succeeds.

None of this, however, can be seen by the prophet, though the gradually failing water of the brook may sufficiently indicate what is passing. There is room also for apprehension that the crows may fail to find anything more to bring him. He may tire of inaction and of solitude. Ahab may find out his retreat, or passers-by may discover

and betray him. It might seem that God was putting pressure upon him to induce commiseration for his suffering fellow-creatures. If such were the gracious design, the means adopted failed to produce the effect. Thoughts and feelings which would have influenced an ordinary man did not disturb Elijah. He is firm of purpose—not to be moved by any personal hardship, privation, or peril. Human sympathies have been kept down under the steadfast purpose of his soul. Israel must either repent, and return unto the Lord, and be constrained to do so by the very means he had selected, and which God had placed in his hands, or they must sustain all the dire consequences. It is a trial of fortitude on his part, and of stubbornness on theirs. They must give way; he never will. The word for their relief shall never issue from his lips till this end be accomplished.

May it not be inferred that in this matter God was putting His servant through a course of discipline, in order eventually to instruct him in some points he had yet to learn? In contemplating the perfect character of Jesus the Son of God, we can readily trace what was deficient in Elijah. Jesus was ever the sinner's friend. He went about doing good. His path through the land left a train of blessings behind. Never did He plead for judgment upon the guilty. In the midst of extreme agony, when nailed to the cross by those who hated His Father as well as Himself, His petition was, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Who was so faithful as Himself? yet who so meek, so gentle, so forbearing, so loving? He came on earth as the herald of peace and goodwill to man; and though the rebellion of our poor ruined race was then at its height, Jesus does not pray to His Father to send sword, famine, pestilence, or other calamity. His mode of subduing their enmity was by

words and acts of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. And when He had endured the fiercest malignity of man's hatred, with all its bitterness and woe, it only drew out the deeper purpose of divine love in the disclosure then made that He had given His life a sacrifice for their sins.

But Elijah had yet more to learn. The brook dried up, and the birds ceased their occupation. Discipline in solitude apparently did not produce the desired effect.

(To be continued.) *bl*

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS GIVEN BY THE LATE MR. SOLTAU IN 1864.

Read 2 Thess. i.

THERE are two things in this chapter to which I desire to refer—the glory of the Lord Jesus when coming to be glorified in His saints by-and-bye, and the Lord Jesus glorified in His saints *now*. There is also His coming “in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We have here then a word for the believer, and an awful, solemn word for the unbeliever.

Blessed indeed is the prospect of the believer; for though tribulation is promised to him here, he has before him a “rest” which will be a recompense; and God says it is “a righteous thing” with Him to recompense rest to those who are troubled. It is a bad thing, then, to be without trouble now, if that trouble be in a right cause; for without it we shall get no recompense. If we are in trouble now because of our obedience to the Lord Jesus, we shall certainly have a recompense. And it is not said that it is a *gracious* thing (although it will be by the grace of God), but a *righteous* thing with God to recompense rest. There-

fore, beloved friends, let us never seek to avoid trouble on account of the name of Jesus. There is a great temptation to try and get on smoothly, to flinch from trial for the Lord's sake. It is an easy snare of Satan; for our flesh naturally shrinks from tribulation. But let us remember the coming rest. And oh, how blessed it will be to enter upon it! How blessed, like the apostle Paul, to know that we have fought a good fight, and have *finished* our course, and have not been cut short in it. How blessed to enter the rest with that joy in our hearts which he had in his!

The apostle speaks of the Thessalonians as going on in the path of tribulation; and he comforts them with the thought of God's righteous recompense when the Lord Jesus shall come. That is the time of recompense; not at death. God never puts death before us, although it is far better to depart and to be with Christ than to remain here. But our expectation ought to be the coming of our Lord Jesus, to see Him glorified in His saints. What a sight! A company of glorified saints casting back their glory upon their glorified Head!

But before that glory comes His name is to be glorified *in* us, and we in Him. "That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ." (v. 12.) This is what we should aim at *now*. There is no doubt but that He will be glorified in us *then*; but it will be no credit to us. It will be accomplished by the mighty resurrection power of the Holy Ghost. And let us remember that our bodies would not be raised *then*, but that the Holy Ghost dwells in us now; for "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. viii. 11.) This is another important aspect of the truth that the Spirit of God indwells us now.

Seeing then that the Lord will be glorified in us in resurrection, are we seeking that His name should be glorified in us here? His name is the expression of all that He is—His great and glorious character. Beloved, is His name confessed by us? loved by us? lived by us? Is He glorified in us now? I will venture to say that the world can tell in whom Jesus is glorified. But let us remember that His name may also be dishonoured by us. Think of the contrast, and that we are now doing either the one or the other! There is no half-and-half ground. There is no believer walking with God and with the world. No; God and the devil can never walk together. There is no concord between Christ and Belial. We may try to trim our ways, we may steer as near the wind as we can; but if we attempt to do this, we shall soon find ourselves on the wrong course. If we walk in a narrow path, and as near the ditch as we can, it will not be long before we are in the ditch. You cannot walk with one foot on the path; for both feet will soon be off. Beloved in the Lord, Jesus is either glorified in us, or He is dishonoured, and it is not for us to say how much or how little. It is in little things we have to glorify Him. We have usually no great things to do for Him; but many little ones, which make up the sum of our lives. Our daily round of duty may have little variation; then let us live so that Jesus may be glorified in us every day—in what we say, and in what we do. Let our secret thoughts be of Him, and then His name will be glorified in our ways. Let us make sure that we cherish the word of God within us, and its fruit will appear outwardly.

The other part of this solemn chapter speaks of the return of the Lord Jesus in flaming fire. What a contrast! Coming to be glorified in His saints, coming as the object of their longing and delight, and of their wor-

shipping admiration; and coming in flaming fire to others, to those who will not believe in Him, and who therefore know not God. Who would like to watch for His coming in flaming fire? Who that believe in Him, and love Him, would not like to watch to see Him, knowing that He is coming to recompense rest, and to be admired? But He *will* come to take vengeance on all those "who know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Mark, it is not to take vengeance on those who obey not the *law*, for the keeping of which many often pray, but on those who obey not the *gospel*. Men do not think that vengeance is coming for ignorance of God; they think it ought to come perhaps on a murderer or a thief, but not on a moral church-going or chapel-going person. But it is coming on those who *know not God*; and why? Because man is inexcusable for not knowing God. If God had lived all His eternity in the hidden glory, then there might have been an excuse. But God has come down here as man, and we can comprehend a man. God has therefore left all without excuse for not knowing Him.

If I want to know God, and go to Him confessing my sins, and pleading the atoning blood of His dear Son, He will reveal Himself, and send me away with the word, "*No condemnation*," and give me power over sin.

Let us, then, who through grace believe, remember that it is only a little while that the Lord Jesus can be glorified in us here, before He will be glorified in us in resurrection. May we therefore seek to know the meaning of that little word, "Redeeming the time"—buying it back; for His own words are, "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man [each one] according as his work shall be."

NOTES AND REPLIES.

What is the Fasting of Mark ii. 19, 20?

THE personal presence of the Lord was the time of joy to His disciples, and hence fasting, which belonged to sorrow and affliction, was out of place. In His "presence is fulness of joy." (Ps. xvi.) But the time of the departure of the Bridegroom would come. Of this we read in John xvi. 16-22, where Christ's absence, in going to the Father, is spoken of as the "*little while*" of their sorrow; or, as Paul says, the time of "light affliction, which is but *for a moment.*" However profitable and expedient it was for them, and is for us, that Christ should go away, it is not joyous; and hence the present time is one of fasting and of sorrow. In reference to fasting, it is well to remember the expression used for it in the Old Testament—"afflicting the soul"—lest we give it the too restricted sense of simply abstinence from food. In Lev. xvi. 29 and xxiii. 29 the fast of the day of atonement was a time when Israel was commanded to "afflict their souls by a statute for ever." (See also Isa. lviii. 3, 5, &c.) The more the soul enters into the real sense of what the personal absence of Christ is (however precious His spiritual presence), the more will the fasting place of the believer be realized; and it were well for us if our hearts better understood those words, "*Then shall they fast in those days.*"

To what does Satan's contention about the body of Moses, in Jude 9, refer?

THERE are two remarkable things connected with the body of Moses in which he stands alone—the one is the miraculous burial; for God "buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day" (Deut. xxxiv. 6); and the other is, that he appeared with Elijah, who never died, on the mount of Transfiguration. Does the latter imply a resurrection of Moses? It would almost seem to do so; and if so, Satan, who had the power (or authority) of darkness and of death, might well resist an invasion of his dominion till the risen Christ had annulled his power. Satan's resisting Michael in obeying the command of God may thus either refer to his burial or to his resurrection. Some would naturally object to the thought of any resurrection other than a simple reanimation of the dead prior to Christ's resurrection, as He is called the First-born of the dead. But does not God make exceptions to His most universal rules where a purpose has to be accomplished, the object of which we are little able to judge of? This answer is only conjectural.

A COMMISSION FROM GOD.

WE see in the Scriptures a *general* commission given to all who are God's people, and also a *special* commission given to His servants according to the particular service He would have them render. The *general* commission involves the carrying out of the precepts of the Word, and performing the various duties which devolve upon us, according to the different positions assigned to us by God, in the family, in the Church, and in the world. Thus we occupy ourselves for God in the holy discharge of our family obligations; in our ministry in the Church, whether in serving tables or in instructing saints; and in our service in the world, whether by alleviating its temporal miseries and ministering to its need, or in proclaiming to it the gospel of the grace of God. All this is done under the authority of such a precept as, "Do good unto all men, specially unto them who are of the household of faith."

But there may be also a *particular* commission, a call to a special service, that comes as a command from God. This is different from that described above, and it is of the utmost importance clearly to see and obediently to follow it out. Such a service was that of the prophets of the Old Testament and of the apostles of the New, and that of many who in all ages have been raised up and sent forth by God; and their work has witnessed to their call. We will place our remarks under the following heads: The character of this commission; the way to discern it; the result of it when carried out.

1. Its *character*. Its essential feature is a direct call from God to undertake some special work, either in or out

of the sphere in which the individual's lot is cast. The object contemplated must be in accordance with the revealed will of God in His word, and its carrying out must be in subjection thereto. Faith in God as to it is an essential feature, and this, not in the general only, as in one seeking to carry out the general precepts of the Word, but in the personal realization of a direct call from God to the work. Thus we have the commission of God given to Noah, to Moses, to Joshua, to the Judges, to David, to Elijah and Elisha, to Jeremiah and the prophets, to the apostles, and to Paul.

On this solemn subject we would direct prayerful attention to the following scriptures, among many others, Exod. iii. iv.; Josh. i.; Jer. i.; Gal. i. 15-24, which will show how clear was the call in each case, and how deeply it made itself felt as fire in the bones of the one called. There was in it no uncertainty, and in the after-trials and sorrows there were no misgivings.

2. Its *discernment*. In so grave a question as acting under the sense of a divine commission, it is of the first importance that we be able to discern what is of God, lest, led away by false assumptions, we fall into the snare of Satan. A commission from God is not maintained by an authority assumed, but has a power that is manifest; as Paul tells the Corinthians, he did not wish them to regard him above what they saw in him or heard of him. He claims nothing on the ground of his having been called of God to be an apostle, but on the ground of the works of an apostle, of which they were all cognizant. The refuge of all weakness is to fall back on a claim of *authority* received; but the evidence of strength is in the *power* manifested.

A commission from God is ever backed by power. The emblem of this in the case of Moses was the rod of God

in his hand, wherewith he was to do wonders. Paul's commission was borne witness to by a demonstration of the Spirit and of power. David's commission was manifest when he faced Goliath in the valley of Elah, and brought him to the ground with the sling and the stone. A commission from God demonstrates itself first to the individual and then to those around him.

3. Its *result*. It is backed by the word of God, and prospers in that whereunto God sends it. There will be no failure in the commission. The instrument may fail, as did Moses at the rock, when told to speak to it; like David, when he tarried at home instead of going out to war; like Peter, when he judaized in Antioch; or like Jeremiah, when he cursed his day; but the commission put into the hand never failed. God never disowned it; and His servants triumphed, and found God's word a hammer that broke the rock though hard as adamant. Success marked the course of each, whether Moses sang over a prostrate foe drowned in the Red Sea, or Jeremiah sank down in the mire of the pit; whether Peter was brought out of prison, the iron gate opening of its own accord, or Paul was carried in chains to Rome. God's power is manifest, and God's triumph is seen, though John the Baptist be beheaded, and Jesus Himself be nailed to the cross.

Let us now look on this matter in the light of very much that is going on around us. In doing so are we not painfully convinced that very many, on the ground of a *general* commission, have acted on a supposed call to a *particular and special* commission from God which they have never received? Through God's grace many have been brought to see the Babylonish character of all human commissions in the things of God, and in the rebound from human appointments made to an ordained few, have

taken up the idea of an especial divine commission given to all. Now that every believer in Christ has a commission from His Master to occupy till He come there can be no question; but for all this our appointed sphere is the place where God has put us, and the command is to abide in the calling wherein we are called so long as we can abide therein with God. (1 Cor. vii. 20.) The Thessalonians were commanded to work with their own hands. The rule in the Church was that all should work, and then they had the assurance that God who fed the ravens would feed such as made the preaching of the gospel their first object. The hands, the feet, the lips, the eyes and ears of all were to be consecrated to God; the result of the toil was His. In all this there was no special commission; they worked, they taught, they preached, as God enabled them; the gift and the will were God's ordainings, and no special commission was needed, for the general principle sufficed.

When, however, a man leaves the place wherein God has put him, and gives up the business that has been entrusted to him, he can only rightly do so under an especial call of God, which He will never fail to make plain, and which will be as a fire in the soul, that will testify to him of God's own presence, and make known His will. (Jer. xx. 9.) There was much true wisdom in the answer of an advanced Christian to a young man who told him of his desire to go out as a missionary—"Remain where you are till you can do so no longer."

When our Lord looked around Him, and saw Israel as sheep without a shepherd, there was no promiscuous command to rush to the rescue; but the disciples were told to pray the Lord of the harvest that He would *thrust out* workers and toilers into the field. It is well to stir up Christians to be ready to go into the harvest-field; but when ready, let each await his commission and his message, as did Isaiah.

The painful fact is that, owing to the low condition of the Church of God, there are but few qualified for special service, notwithstanding the abundant activities of the times in which we live. How much is there "in word only," and in that "talk of the lip that tendeth only to penury!" and how little that is followed by a demonstration of the Spirit and of power from God!

May God speak to all hearts; and may there be a listening to the Lord's counsel to Laodicea: "I counsel thee to *buy* of me gold *tried* in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed; and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." Would that the spiritual poverty of the Church of God were more taken to heart; but that can only be by the anointing of the eyes. Surely the devil is casting into our eyes the dust raised by our restless activity or self-satisfied indolence, and we see not what is the real state of things, and heed not the voice of the warner.

But the gold and the raiment must be *bought*. Are we prepared to pay the cost? The gold has to be tried in the fire, and the fire must be kindled around us, and we must be as an earthen crucible, in which the gold of heaven is proved to our experience and to our faith; for unproved gold is of no value to the receiver. There is a loud call to "*repent*," and happy are they who hear and obey. There will then be found those fitted to be entrusted with God's commission; and where there are called and chosen and faithful men, the commission will not be long wanting, and the live and burning coal from the altar will attest its reality and give burning words. Then God's results will be achieved, whether in converting or in hardening power, and in either case "a sweet savour of Christ" will be given.

Were these remarks followed out, the result would be that many would return to their original spheres of toil and occupation. It would thin the ranks of so-called "workers," but it would send all to their knees, and a great cry would rise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He is waiting and longing to hear; and until He hears it the heavens over will be brass, and the earth beneath iron. He will then arise and *thrust out* those in whom God's fire will burn, and they will run, constrained by God, because they are *sent*. H. G.

PARADISE AND HADES.

I. PARADISE.

THESE are among God's words for describing to us the disembodied state—that intermediate condition of men between their death and their resurrection. By tracing the use of these words in the Scripture some sure and reliable knowledge may be gained as to what that disembodied state is. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God [literally, is God-breathed], and is profitable for instruction," &c., was Paul's word to Timothy. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth," was our Lord's prayer to the Father. And this part of God's word will be found both profitable and sanctifying if learned and received in fellowship with Jesus and by the Spirit's teaching. The present "far better" of the disembodied state will be seen to be a distinct step and stage of the mighty triumphs of our Lord Jesus, and of God's glory by Him, although it be not equal, nor similar to, that of the coming resurrection morning. The disembodied state is only for this brief span of time; in eternity there will be no such thing. Adam and Eve and all their offspring will then have received either "resurrection unto life," or else

“resurrection unto damnation.” All will have bodies for ever, and thus differ from angels, unfallen or fallen, who are and ever will be spirits, and spirits only. But at present there is the disembodied state, and God’s word does give light upon it. Not much indeed, for God’s glory is in resurrection, and all His aims and ends concerning men are *there*. Jesus Himself is *raised* from the dead. All the fulness of the Godhead now dwells in Him *BODILY*; and God would hasten on our hearts to the day of all things being subdued unto Jesus, either in resurrection likeness to Himself of all the redeemed, or in “the second death” of the impenitent. But whatever knowledge is supplied us of the departed ones as they now are, must not be undervalued nor passed by. Also as time moves on the greatness of this matter grows, for the multitude of the dead, both believing and ungodly, immensely increases. In the present old age of this earth the *bodies* of the dead form no small part of the very soil we walk upon.

“Earth to her sons is but a grave,”

has indeed become solemnly true; and the raising of them all to life again is a correspondingly vast subject of faith and expectation. But meanwhile, where is the equally vast multitude of their disembodied spirits? What is their measure of happiness or of misery? And in and by whose power are they thus kept? Let us consider these questions so far as they can be soberly and clearly answered from Scripture.

The bright and happy word “paradise” occurs only three times in the New Testament. 1st. In our dying Master’s words to the trusting thief: “To-day shalt thou be with me in *paradise*.” (Luke xxiii. 43.) 2nd. Paul says of visions and revelations he had had “that he was caught up into *paradise*, and heard unspeakable words, which it

is not lawful for a man to utter." (2 Cor. xii. 4.) 3rd. Our Lord Himself again uses it in His message to His Ephesus saints: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the *paradise* of God." (Rev. ii. 7.)

This third passage differs from the other two. Here it is "the *paradise of God*;" in the others it is simply "paradise." This is important. "The *paradise of God*" would appear to be our Lord's name here for that "place" He has gone to prepare (John xiv. 2), where we are to be with Him in *resurrection bodies*—"that city," "the Bride, the Lamb's wife," "the holy Jerusalem," subsequently shown to John, and to us also in Rev. xxi. 9-xxii. 6, for there is the same mention in her of "the tree of life." It grows "in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river." (Rev. xxii. 2.) This identifies "the *paradise of God*" with "that city," and makes it to be the place and time of our being "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven;" *i.e.* the resurrection body. But this is yet future; it waits for our Lord's coming, and for His mighty "shout," as in 1 Thess. iv. 16. We do not therefore enter "the *paradise of God*" singly, nor as disembodied spirits, nor any of us one moment before others. "Caught up *together* to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with *the Lord*," are words which describe our entrance into "the *paradise of God*," and make it perfectly distinct from the disembodied state.

What, then, is "paradise," spoken of in the other two scriptures? It is the name given to those unseen, shut in, joys and delights that our Lord Jesus *already has*, and rejoices that His loved and ransomed ones should share with Him. He will make us share His kingdom with Him the moment He possesses it; but at present it is only His in prospect. He is the acknowledged Heir to it. As such God has seated Jesus at His own right hand

(see Ps. cx.), but He is at present only the "Nobleman" who has gone "into a far country to receive for Himself a kingdom, and to return;" but has not yet "returned having received the kingdom." (See Luke xix.) It is when as "the Lord Himself" He has descended "from heaven with a shout," and has caused all His saints to "meet Him in the air," in bodies like His own, that He can have *His kingdom*, and not till then. But to whatever joys and delights He now has, He can welcome His saved ones, and He delights to do so; and "paradise" is His own term to express them. Hence the perfect fitness of our Lord's reply to the dying thief. By precious faith he saw in Jesus not only a Saviour but a King, and said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom" (or rather, "IN thy kingdom;" that is, in all its pomp and majesty). Our Lord's reply was *not*, "To-day shalt thou be with me in my *kingdom*," for He had not His kingdom that day, nor has it even now. But Jesus knew that His mighty death would that very day give Him victory over death and hades, and would thereby make a "paradise" of rest and joy His own; and He delighted in His dying hour to assure this newly-saved sinner of a welcome into it. "Paradise," then, is the joy and triumph Jesus already has over death and hades, and all those pleasures that are His even now at God's right hand before His kingdom-day; and to be in paradise is to be with Him sharing those pleasures, as joint-heirs with Him of His kingdom when He has it. The word paradise in the Greek tongue means *garden*, or park, and expresses the enclosed and private pleasure-grounds belonging to any one of rank and wealth, to which he can welcome his personal friends, and which only they enjoy with him. Hence it has been commonly applied to the garden of Eden, but in Scripture it is used only of the shut in, unseen joys of victory over death

which Jesus has and gives His departed ones to share with Him. There was not a paradise till there had been a Gethsemane, and its bitter cup of death had been drunk at Calvary. The garden of His agony, where His sweat was as it were great drops of blood, stands in precious but solemn contrast with His paradise-garden now ; for one deep joy there, both of Jesus and His saints along with Him, is this—"the bitterness of death is past."

To depart then, and "to be with Christ" in what is to Him the garden of His present occupations and delights, is paradise. Even in earthly kingdoms the acknowledged heir to the throne is a nobleman before he is a king, and as a nobleman has a park and pleasure-grounds of his own in which to receive his friends and make them his guests. Just so with Jesus our Lord, as Heir of the kingdom for which He so patiently waits. He knew that instantly upon His death God would acknowledge Him as Heir, and would give Him a nobleman's honours and wealth ; and He speaks to the trusting thief in nobleman's language, and calls paradise and all its pleasures His own. A previous passage in Luke xix. prepares us for this language of our Lord. He was even then "nigh to Jerusalem," and with His soul filled with "His decease" (His mighty *exodus*) which He should accomplish there, He even then described His pathway through death and out of it as that of "a certain NOBLEMAN" who "went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return." This only place of His ever calling Himself "a nobleman," perfectly agrees with His speaking of "paradise" as His in chapter xxiii.

It is then as "Nobleman," and Heir of His yet future throne, that He thus takes us with Him now one by one as we depart. And it is as this crowned One, even now with the victor's crown, that we by faith see Him. "We

see not yet," says Paul, "all things put under him: but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, *crowned* with glory and honour." Not with the king-crown, for He waits for that when He shall return, "having received the kingdom;" but with the glory and honour garland of being Victor over death and as the acknowledged Heir. "We see Jesus" with the "nobleman" coronet of heirship already His, and we rejoice to depart and to be with Him, which is "far better."

And what a token it is of our Lord's most warm and tender love to us, that He should be so ready to welcome us to whatever His death has already procured! Soon will come the resurrection morning of our complete likeness to Himself, and in that prospect He rejoices, we are well sure, even more than we do; but this is not enough for Him, He must also make us sharers with Him now of His present joys and riches. And what better pledge could He give us of our sharing His kingdom when He receives it?

Observe also it was a *thief*—a dying robber—newly pardoned and saved, to whom this word of a paradise-welcome was first spoken. Not an Abel, dying at the altar of his believing worship; nor a John the Baptist, suffering for his faithful testimony; but a just-rescued sinner, washed in the fountain of the blood of Christ, and his heart only then and there subdued. He it is who is made in God's word to lead the way, as it were, into this paradise with Jesus. How like this is to God's steadfast purpose, "that no flesh should glory in His presence!" It was at the death of one of this world's *criminals* that all generations of the saved first heard the joyful word "*paradise*." Prophets, apostles, martyrs, and saints innumerable are there; but it was a common malefactor's entrance there that first gave us the knowledge of its name. Just as it

is by the death of David's child that the salvation of all the infant dead is first so clearly shown us in Scripture. A babe in Israel at whose birth shame had to be felt rather than joy, even by its own parents, is the babe chosen for teaching us this mighty truth. "*I shall go to him,*" said the believing and forgiven David, "but he shall not return to me." These words of David point us to our meeting again with all the infant dead, a marvellous theme of glory to God and joy to all saints. This is taught us too, not at the cradle of an infant Moses, "exceeding fair," and circumcised the eighth day, nor over the dead child of the woman of Shunem, where the mother's zeal and service might have seemed to give some meritorious plea; but taught us where no such idea could be entertained for either child or parent. Surely in every way God does "stain the pride" of human glory; and thus He makes the praise of His own grace the more fully appear.

The second mention of the word paradise is in 2 Cor. xii. 4. We are here reminded of quite a different use our Lord Jesus makes of His present joys and triumphs, whereby He instructs His servants in His Church, and strengthens them for their labours and their sufferings. Paul here tells us "that he was caught up into *paradise*, and heard unspeakable words" connected with his "visions and revelations of the Lord." The issue of it in his soul was this: "Most gladly will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." It was a blessed use for Jesus our Lord to make of paradise, to rest and to rejoice His departed ones; and now through His servant the apostle He would also use it to profit us who "are alive and remain."

The connection between paradise and hades, and the difference between the two, will guide us to other scriptures, if the Lord will.

H. D.

Autd P. 82

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE.

(Continued from page 44.) 89

SAREPTA.

THE lessons given in solitude to the prophet at Cherith having ended, he is now removed to Zarephath, or Sarepta, and in his journey he has to traverse Ahab's country, exposing himself to the risk of being discovered and seized. He does not however shrink from this fresh danger, any more than he did from the former. But now he is outside of Israel, in the midst of a Gentile population. Here, apparently, he is quite unknown. They too are suffering from the famine; but little do they suspect that they have now among them the man through whom their miseries have come upon them. Were this understood, they would not be long, we may be assured, in showing their feelings towards him.

He is both hungry and thirsty after his wearisome journey of about a hundred miles, during which he must have seen the wretchedness of the people, and tasted in his own person somewhat of their bitter experience. Here he is constrained, in consequence of his own unmoved steadfastness of purpose, to become a petitioner for food and drink to one who, through him, had been brought to the last stage of destitution, and whose life, with the life of her son, is just about to sink under the prolonged trial. She is a widow. Recognizing him as an Israelite, she makes the touching reply, that he has asked for their last meal—the only portion of food left to them—after partaking of which she and her son must lie down and die! The sight of their wasted forms, and the consciousness that

all was in a manner owing to him, were enough surely to have weighed down any ordinary mind. What an opportunity for presenting his prayer, that the Gentiles might be spared the infliction brought on by the delinquency of Israel! But he has no room for any other thought than that Israel must be restored to God. If the Gentiles are relieved, Israel will obtain nourishment from them, and still persist in idolatry. It cannot be; both must therefore suffer.

He is however empowered to tell the widow that her small supply of meal and oil shall last until the famine comes to an end. At the same time he makes a very heavy demand upon her faith in the God of Israel by requiring that the last handful shall be given to him, after which she will find more for herself and son. Amid the pangs of hunger, and probably with some hesitation, did she mix and bake this last morsel, and then carry and give away to a stranger their only remaining sustenance. But she, Gentile that she was, like Rahab of old, had heard of the might of the God of Israel. The tale of the manna in the wilderness had perhaps reached her ears. She had learnt to confide in Him, and at once she reaped the blessing attached to the act of relieving the distress of one of His people. Her faith was largely drawn upon; but it was immediately rewarded, strengthened both by its exercise and by the reward it secured.

Great was indeed the privilege of having Elijah as her guest. He does not seem to have disclosed to her his name or his object. To have done so would have been to defeat his purpose. The people of Sarepta would soon have heard. The tidings would also have reached Ahab, who would presently have sent to seize him. He is known to her at first as an Israelite; afterwards, on better acquaintance, as a man of God. "She, and he, and her

house, did eat many days." But the tidings of the miraculous cruse and barrel could not have been allowed to transpire, otherwise, during the rage of famine, the house would have been besieged by the starving multitude, and perhaps destroyed, through eagerness to possess what it contained. At such a season the miracle, if known, would have travelled like wildfire through the land, and Elijah would no longer have found Sarepta a place of concealment. But more was yet to be accomplished there.

The question now arises, Why was Elijah placed in these fresh circumstances? What end was to be brought about by his being ostensibly made a dependant on the bounty and benevolence of a poor Gentile widow? For an Israelite to inhabit the dwelling of an unclean Gentile, be a pensioner on the generosity of one whom his nation regarded as no better than a dog, and that person a widow who had no visible means of sustaining her own life, must have been very humiliating, very degrading to him. That Elijah himself felt it to be so will be seen presently. But he was a servant of the most high God, and having received His command to place himself under this widow, he obeys without a murmur. Passing up and down the streets of the town he would probably hear many a bitter taunt, and many an insulting remark. In time of famine to be supported by a rich Gentile would have been ignominious to an Israelite; how much more dishonourable to deprive a widow of a portion of her pittance!

There was one secret known only to himself and the widow; but there was also another known to himself and to God alone; and God was still seeking to act upon his heart and conscience by means of this fresh train of circumstances. Here he was no longer in solitude, shut out from sight of the famine, but he might constantly behold its effects in all their terribleness. It seems almost beyond

belief that any human being could day after day have borne up under this burden ; but that iron will was not to be moved by any such considerations. He still adhered, without wavering, to the great purpose with which his soul was filled ; and though this trial of his resolution continued for "many days," yet was there no sign of its being shaken.

"After these things, the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick ; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him." There had been a little object moving about the house in which he lived, with the artless ways, the winning smiles, and simple prattle of childhood. The man of "like passions with ourselves" could not but have his attention drawn to this little one, who was continually before him. The softening influence of a child is felt by the sternest. Perhaps he tried to awaken his infant mind to the knowledge of his God, the God of Israel. But now the child falls ill ; sympathy towards it is aroused, and increased as the illness increases, until at length the child expires.

The heart-broken, agonized mother at once turns round, and charges Elijah with having caused its death. She had by this time ascertained that he was a man of God. The constant replenishing of her meal barrel, according to his word, had proved this. That he must needs have access to God was self-evident ; and equally evident was it to her, from her consciousness of guilt (a consciousness that is lodged in every human bosom), that Elijah had discovered her sin, brought it to light before his God, and thereby drawn down divine vengeance upon her to the slaying of her son. Her words seem to imply, "Is this the return thou makest for all my care and attention to thee, a stranger ? Hast thou no pity in thine heart that thou canst act in this way, and requite my friendship by

destroying my son?" In the exasperation of her sorrow she loses sight for the time, as most of us do, of all the benefits received through him.

Though the charge in this precise shape was groundless, Elijah feels keenly the reproach. He understands the true cause of what has happened, which she cannot comprehend. He perceives it to be a visitation upon himself rather than upon her; but his resource is in his God. He does not stop to explain to her that she has accused him wrongfully, nor to describe the true state of the case, which she could in no way have entered into; but, taking the dead body from her bosom to his own, he carries it up to the loft where he abode, lays it upon his own bed (all which was at entire variance with his habits and feelings as an Israelite), and then, when alone, he thus pours out his heart before God: "O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?"

This was his cry of distress; deep and bitter was the moan. Full of meaning were the words, though no one but himself and his God could then comprehend their import. With great reverence and self-abasement he seems to say, "My God, thou knowest my earnest desire to see Israel restored to worship thee. Finding all thine indulgence towards them without effect, I considered that nothing but severity would suffice. I therefore besought thee that no rain might be given them, and thou didst accede to my request, adding that I should say when famine was to cease. Since then I have myself been made to experience some of its results. Thou hast afflicted and humbled me in various ways, all which I have borne without a murmur; neither do I count my life of any value to myself, so that my countrymen may be brought back to thee. But now I know that the death of this child is

only part of the affliction thou hast been following me with; yet the mother, to whom I am so much indebted, charges it upon me. My name will become a byword of contempt, as requiting all this kindness with grievous injury; and thy name also, O Lord my God, be in disrepute, since I am known to be thy servant. So shall the Gentiles also be turned further away from thee, as well as thy people Israel."

If thoughts such as these did really pass through the mind of Elijah, they evince much distress of spirit, but no change of purpose. His own language does not show that he knew for what object God had thus been visiting him. He felt that the hand of God was against him, yet says nothing of the reason. Perhaps he was not aware of it. Firm and ardent in his zeal, he might not have discerned that there was anything in his conduct or motives capable of being amended, and therefore this discipline also failed to produce its effect. The aspect is rather that of a ship yielding to the blast, but again resuming its erect position as soon as it has passed.

But now Elijah is greatly moved about the child. He breathes on it three times, desiring as it were to impart of his own life to it; and, calling on the Lord, he prays that its life may be restored. The Lord graciously heard and granted his request. The dead one now lives again, and with joy he carries him down to his mother. Her exclamation is remarkable, "Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth." It was not judgment that drew from her the acknowledgment, but mercy; not the death of the child, but its restoration to life. Elijah might with advantage have gathered up the intimation her words conveyed. If death had hitherto by his prayer stalked through the land without any amendment in the people, what might

not a prayer in their behalf accomplish? Hitherto his prayers had been for the outpouring of judgment, not for the extension of mercy. Passing by his own kinsmen according to the flesh, it is this little Gentile child that evokes from his heart the first recorded plea for mercy. The tender chord had been at length touched. It responded, though the vibration was but for a time, and soon ceased.

(To be continued.)

89.

R. N.

MITES OR MILLIONS.

“AND Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.”—MARK xii. 41, 42.

“Now, behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver” [together about £889,500,000*].—1 CHRON. xxii. 14.

“Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, even three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses withal” [together about £18,500,000].—1 CHRON. xxix. 3, 4.

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 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.”—MATTHEW vi. 19-21.

“Mites” and millions. What a contrast—the smallest coin of earthly value, and the mighty numbers which drown our thoughts with surprise! The former was the widow’s portion cast into the treasury of God, “*all her living* ;” the latter was the measure of David’s gift for the building of God’s temple. Both were gifts according

* See the *Englishman’s Hebrew Bible*.

to the measure of faith; both were presented as the portion due to God, and both were accepted—the “two mites, which make a farthing,” as well as the hundreds of millions of pounds.

“The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.”—HAGGAI ii. 8.

Church of God, where is thy King’s gold? Where are the coffers of thy Master’s silver? Where are His jewels from the bowels of the earth? Do they adorn thy body? Can they adorn thy spirit? Canst thou wear a necklet of earthly pearls, or a tiara of earthly brilliants, before the throne? If thou couldst, their dazzle would fade before the light of the glory of the Lamb, and thou wouldst hang thy head with shame at thy pride.

“All that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine. . . . Of thine own have we given thee.”—1 CHRON. xxix. 11, 14.

Oh, brother in Christ! oh, sister, what a lesson David is teaching the Church of God! “*Thine own.*” Not a talent of the five thousand five hundred tons of gold has got the name of David or the princes upon it; the house of his God was near to the king’s heart, the glory of God was dear to the king’s soul. Brother in the living temple, wilt thou let David shame thee? Wilt thou, on whom the brighter rays of redemption so fully shine, withhold that which David so freely gave—God’s gold?

“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.”—MALACHI iii. 8.

The tithes were stopped, the blessing failed; thus it was always. But shall saints bought with the precious blood of Christ begrudge to God that which He claimed under law? Alas, so it is! Is not the ten per cent. often pared down to five per cent., or less, and this meagre portion given grudgingly to God? Oh, brother,

the claims of law are far below the privileges of grace! The tithe is a small and menial thing for Him who sits "*over against the treasury.*" Let us reach up to the higher standard of grace, and measure the gold for God as He has measured the love to us.

"Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

What a responsibility is silver and gold! It is the mammon of unrighteousness, which, when given to God, becomes an "odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." (Phil. iv. 18.) "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive . . . *riches.*" (Rev. v. 12.)

"Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."—PROVERBS iii. 9, 10.

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"—LUKE xvi. 10, 11.

"Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."—MATTHEW x. 42.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."—ROMANS xii. 1, 2.

"IN Him dwelleth all fulness.' How little can we fathom the meaning of this! What words for empty creatures! To him who has discovered this fulness, the world is nothing but emptiness. The higher we ascend towards the heavenlies, the less the things of earth appear. When our desires after heaven are great, a little of earth will suffice to supply all our wants; but when that desire is small, nothing earthly will satisfy our cravings."

NOTES AND REPLIES.

What is the meaning of, "He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he?" Matt. xi. 11.

THIS verse looks at the relative position of John, and of those in the kingdom, dispensationally; and our Lord states that those least in the kingdom are in that respect greater than the greatest of those who came before; as in chap. xiii. our Lord says, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things that ye see, and have not seen them," &c. John wound up the previous dispensation, and by his baptism virtually set it aside.

Who are "the children of the kingdom" spoken of in Matt. viii. 12?

OUR Lord is drawing a contrast between the portion of unbelieving Jews, to whom He was speaking, and believing Gentiles in the future day of His kingdom. To Israel the promises had been given, and they were therefore called "the children of the kingdom," as those who ought to have received the King and entered the kingdom. Our Lord commends the faith of the lowly Gentile centurion, who evidently discerned His kingly grace and power—"Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel"—and then, turning to the blind and high-minded Jews, He tells them that not only this stranger, but many more from the east and the west, would come and sit down in the kingdom with *their* fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while they who were rejecting Him as King would themselves be cast out. It is a solemn warning as to neglected privileges, applicable to those who now vainly profess to be of Christ's kingdom, and who will find their portion to be in hell.

What are the "many mansions" in John xiv. 2?

WE would illustrate the "many mansions" by the several circles that surround the throne in Rev. v. The inner circle is that of the church, (vv. 8-10); then there comes the angelic circle, (vv. 11, 12); and then an outer circle of "all creation" (παν κτισμα). The ark had its "lower, second, and third stories." (Gen. vi. 16.) We also read of "three heavens." And in Amos ix. 6, God is spoken of as the builder

of "His stories or upper chambers in the heavens." In the temple there were also three tiers of chambers round about, enlarging as they ascended. (1 Kings, vi. 6.) The "house" probably includes all that God has made in the light of His ultimate purpose, having its higher and its lower mansions with different measures of nearness to the throne of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Of these the "place" that He went to prepare is the highest, occupying the circle immediately around the throne.

How are the "four hundred years" of affliction in Gen. xv. 13 to be reckoned?

It will be remembered that in Gal. iii. 17 Paul places four hundred and thirty years between the making of the covenant with Abraham and the giving of the law. (See also Ex. xii. 40.) The covenant of Gen. xv. is connected with the promises made to Abraham when called to leave Mesopotamia. (Gen. xii. 1-3.) If from that time, B.C. 1921, we take off 430 years, we have B.C. 1491, the year of the Exodus. "Four hundred years" are probably used to signify not an exact but an approximate number. If we consider it as commencing from the feast at the weaning of Isaac, when he was recognized as the heir of the promise and Ishmael was cast out, B.C. 1893, we have exactly thirty years between it and the call of Abraham. Four hundred years are also reckoned as four generations; that is, as four average lifetimes. The word for generation in Hebrew is *dor*, which signifies a circle, and has nothing necessarily to do with the length of time from father to son, though often used for that period. Further, these four hundred years must not be supposed to indicate the time of the affliction in Egypt, for it probably lasted less than a century; but they plainly refer to the whole period of stranger-ship during which the seed of Abraham were strangers in a land that was not theirs. It would be better to read the verse as follows: "Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land not theirs (and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them) four hundred years." This accords with the Hebrew punctuation. Exodus xii. 40 is explicable in the same way—"Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years;" not that they dwelt all that time in Egypt, but that it embraced the time of their stranger-ship. Stephen quotes Gen. xv. in Acts vii. 6.

Does a year-day theory of prophetic interpretation set aside the literal day fulfilment?

It need not necessarily do so, inasmuch as that which takes place in a sudden crisis is but the development of principles that have been

long at work. Thus the manifestation of the lawless one of which Paul wrote to the Thessalonians will be, as he shows, but the outcome of a long-continued inworking of a mystery of lawlessness which has been going on from the commencement of our dispensation. Thus as from the mother comes the child, so there will come from the mystic whore of Babylon the beast who first carries the woman, and then destroys her. But not only *à priori* might this process have been thought probable, but there is very much in the history of the last two thousand years that shows that such will be the case. It does but manifest the infinite foreknowledge of God, who links the past and the future together in a way that bears witness that He has foreseen it all.

1. *Ought not a Christian, to the best of his ability, to Provide for his own, by laying up in store for them according as God prospers him?*
2. *Is it according to the principles of God's word for a Christian to Insure his life for the benefit of his family?*

THESE questions enter upon a wide subject, the making provision in case of loss, sickness, infirmity, or death. That a father should provide for his own is clear (1 Tim. v. 8); but the manner of making provision for the future must depend on knowledge of the mind of God, and on the measure of faith in each case. Scripture speaks of a doing "well," and of a doing "better." A thing may be not *wrong*, and yet not *Christ-like*. One person may seek faithfully to serve God, and to lay up in store in heaven; and God may prolong his life, or may marvellously show Himself as the husband of his widow and the father of the fatherless. (See also John xix. 27.) With much human prudence another may amass for children, only to their hurt; another may "insure" for them (as may be done in some lands); but let us not forget that God may bring "insurances" to nought. Another may make no provision, condemn those who do (Rom. xiv. 4), and make his boast in God, and yet not be "rich toward God" by laying up treasure in heaven. Alas, for such a case!—not uncommon, we fear, in these days of much talk of the lip. It is very important for us to bear in mind, that when the apostle spoke of fathers laying up for their children (2 Cor. xii. 14), it was not the laying up of earthly, but of *spiritual* treasure, that occupied him; and to do this he was ready "very gladly" to spend *himself*. May we all take heed to this manner of "laying up," in this time of spiritual impoverishment. Let us seek faith, and faithfulness to God. "According to your faith be it unto you."

SATAN AS "THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD."

BEFORE threading our way through the dark subject of Satanic power and rule, it will be well to draw courage for our investigation of this terrible reality by seeing what Scripture says of God's relation to this world which He made to show forth His praise.

Let us begin with this. All authority and power is from God. He it was who divided to the nations their inheritance, and set the bounds of the peoples, placing some north, some south, some east, and some west, with relation to Israel's land, which was to be in the midst. (See Gen. x. 5, and Deut. xxxii. 8.) It was God who gave mount Seir to Edom, the land of Egypt to the son of Ham, and the countries of the western seas to the sons of Japheth. Hence when Daniel stood before the king of Babylon, and told him his dream, he drew from him the confession, "Your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings;" and afterwards, when Nebuchadnezzar had reaped the fruit of his pride in a seven years' deposition from his kingly throne, he learned that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will;" for His "dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation." (Dan. iv. 32, 34.) And Daniel told godless Belshazzar, as he interpreted for him the handwriting on the wall, that it was the Most High God who gave Nebuchadnezzar "a kingdom and majesty, and glory and honour."

Thus the nations of the earth hold their power at the will of God. Paul tells us in Romans xiii. that their rulers are His ministers; "for there is no power* [authority]

* *εξουσια* (*exousia*); it is well to render this word always "authority," to distinguish it from "power" as an act of might. Authority points to what is according to law and under its restrictions.

but by God, and the powers [authorities] that be are ordained of God." The actual holder of the authority may be a Pilate or a Nero, and yet of each we may say, "Thou couldest have no authority . . . except it were given thee from above." (John xix. 11.) They hold their authority from God, and we are bound to submit to it in all that contravenes not His supreme will. At the same time, each act they perform, each command they give, emanates from themselves, and is the outcome of that which is of the earth. Hence unregenerate man rules his fellow-man by the appointment of God, who yet overrules all, to the accomplishment of His purposes. It is thus that God is the ultimate Governor of nations, though man "meaneth not so." (Isa. x. 7.)

It may be asked, If man's will acts, how can God rule? With the *how* we have nothing to do. It is impossible for us to say *how* wicked hands of sinful men, carrying out to the very fullest their own will, were nevertheless fulfilling God's predetermined counsel at Calvary, but so it was. (Acts ii. 23.) Pilate was acting on his own authority, the chief priests were carrying out their own designs of envy and murder, and Judas was acting his own part of covetousness and treachery; but while the sin and wickedness rested solely with man, we see in the cross of Christ God's act as well as man's; for He who had taken upon Himself our sins, and was unrighteously smitten of man, was righteously smitten of God because He became the sinner's substitute. The smiting was the same, the object essentially different.

Extend this principle through the whole course of human affairs, and it will be found to satisfy the Christian, who is willing to guide his thoughts by the written Word, although the infidel may seek thereby to make God the author of sin.

Hence is it not true that *all* authority and *every form* of government, good or bad, is subject to God? The unrighteous rulers of nations, the most highly civilized (or "Christianized," as some would say), are "God's ministers," and so are the lawless rulers of savage tribes; for God has no more resigned His government in one corner of the world than He has in another. He rules through His appointed ministers as much in Central Africa as in Europe, whether they be the occupants of a Roman throne, or the wielders of a savage despotism. Authority, power, and rule are either of God everywhere, or of God nowhere. From the fall, when God subjected the woman to the man, and Abel the younger to his elder brother Cain, authority has been from God, whether in the hand of the murderer Cain, or in that of David, the man after God's own heart.

God even says, "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" (Amos iii. 6); and, "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I Jehovah do all these things." (Isa xlv. 7.) The moral evil rests with the creature, the physical evil with God, either directly as the result of His immediate action, or indirectly as the result of those laws which God has implanted in nature.

Let us now consider what Scripture says of Satan, and of his relation to the government of the world. God has not left us in darkness on this important matter. Our Lord gives us the key to it when He three times calls him "the prince of this world." (John xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11.) The word here translated "prince" is *archōn*, also frequently rendered "ruler," "chief;" it is likewise employed by the apostle Paul when he says, "Which none of the *princes* of this world knew" (1 Cor. ii. 8), referring to this world's kings and rulers. Our Saviour's use of this word

prevents our regarding it as an empty title or an assumed authority not possessed in reality.

He who is "prince of this world" is also called "the prince of devils" or demons (Matt. ix. 34; xii. 24, &c.), and "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." (Eph. ii. 2.) In connection with this word (*archōn*) we have the corresponding word principalities (*archai*), used alike of God's dominion (see Eph. i. 21; iii. 10; Col. i. 16; ii. 10), and of Satan's. (Eph. vi. 12; Col. ii. 15.) Paul tells us that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood" (that is, human enemies or human rulers), "but against principalities [*archai*], against powers [authorities—*exousiai*], against the rulers of the darkness of this world [world-rulers of this darkness], against spiritual [hosts of] wickedness in high [heavenly] places." Thus we see that Satan's relation to the world, and to man, as well as to evil spirits, is one of authority, of power, and of rule.

We cannot now enter into what Scripture says of *the way* in which he became possessed of it, but content ourselves with the *simple fact* that the devil has an authority and a principedom acknowledged by the Son of God, who, as one "mighty to save," came to deliver His *lawful* captives (see Isa. xlix. 24) from his grasp. Pharaoh as a type very clearly explains this. Israel went down into Egypt, into Pharaoh's land, sent there by God for discipline; and when the time of the promise drew nigh, we read that Pharaoh sought to destroy the male children; but doubtless the devil had a deeper purpose, and sought in this way to destroy the promised Seed. Pharaoh here becomes the type of Satan, the prince of this world. As a ruler he exercised a lawful right over those who dwelt and had multiplied in his land. But God holds His claim as paramount, and sends the message, "Let my people go."

Still He does not ignore the fact that Egypt was Pharaoh's land ; and it was not until He had in type redeemed Israel by blood that God put forth His mightier power and brought them out of it. Thus Israel could sing, "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou has *redeemed*." Pharaoh and all his host dead on the sea-shore presents to the eye of faith all Satanic claims against us answered, and all his authority over us set aside for ever. In Exodus xiv. we see in type the fulfilment of what we read in Col. ii. 15: "Having spoiled principalities and powers" (or better, *having divested himself* of them as a man divests himself of a garment), "He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (the cross). Thus God triumphed over Pharaoh in the Red Sea ; and God's ultimate triumph for us is eternally *secured* in the cross, and will be manifested in fact and by power in the fulness of time. For this Jesus is waiting, as He sits at God's right hand, till His enemies be made His footstool.

While, however, Satan's authority and power are now, by the cross, set aside for all who have come to Christ, it is otherwise with those who are still Egyptians in nature, and of the seed of the flesh. Of all who believe in Him, we are told that the Father, who made them "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," hath already delivered them "from the power [authority] of darkness" (*i.e.* of Egypt, the world, and Satan), and translated them "into the kingdom of the Son of His love: in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." (Col. i. 12-14.)

Of this Satanic "authority of darkness" it is hard for us to write. Our blessed Master felt the terrible coils of its serpentine power when He said to those who came to take Him in Gethsemane, "This is your hour, and the power [authority] of darkness." This power is acknow-

ledged in the first communication made to Satan in Genesis—"Thou shalt bruise His heel." It is a power and a right exercised by the prince of darkness on the heel of the Seed all through the ages; for though the first advent has secured the redemption, it is only the second advent that can secure the establishment of God's final dominion. Till then the prayer is, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done;" for all creation groans under the tyranny of Satan, as John writes, "The whole world lieth in wickedness," or "the wicked one," as in the embrace of a serpent. "The strong man armed keepeth his palace," and "his goods are in peace." The world is the palace of the great enemy. Individuals innumerable are being taken out of his dominion and translated into the heavenly kingdom of God's dear Son; but the great dragon, "that old serpent called the Devil and Satan," still wears the "seven crowns [diadems] upon his heads." (Revelation xii. 3.) Those diadems are the emblems of a regal authority over this world, which is not set aside till the Lamb comes forth with His "many crowns" (or diadems) on His head, and sends His angel to lay hold on the dragon, and bind him a thousand years. Revelation xii. carries us back to the woman and the serpent in Genesis iii.; and the points of resemblance between the dragon in that chapter and the last beast of Rev. xiii. 1 (the final head of the Roman world) are very significant, as linking him with the temporal power of the earth. He who will give the beast "his power, and his seat [throne], and great authority," has all through the groaning ages of a world's misery given these in a greater or less degree to Nimrod, to Sennacherib, to Nebuchadnezzar, and to others afterwards; albeit God claimed them as His ministers. It is thus that the simple human form of the great image of Daniel ii., representing God's will in govern-

ment, becomes, under Satan's controlling influence, the bestial forms of power of Daniel vii. In the former chapter we read, "The God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory;" in the latter we read most significantly, "The four winds of heaven strove upon the great sea." Here it is as if Satan and not God had the arrangement; and out of the storm of angry and hateful passion came up the four great wild-beasts, fit emblems of the source whence they came, and of him who used them as his slaves to do his will.

Truly we see divine instruction in these things, and heavenly distinctions, if we are prepared to heed them. Thus we can understand Satan's showing our Lord "all the kingdoms of the world," and saying to Him, "All this power [authority] will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it." (Luke iv. 6.) The liar never lied to the Son of God, knowing full well the lie could have no weight with Him. Truth might influence, and truth he told. Satan did hold a delegated authority, and this it is he here offers; but this was purchased back at the cross, and is claimed by our Lord after His resurrection in those ever memorable words, "*All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*" (Matt. xxviii. 18.) It is *given*; but He has not as yet taken it, nor will He till the seventh trumpet shall sound, when it shall be said, "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned." Then, and then only, will it be true that "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our God, and of His Christ." (Rev. xi. 15.) Till then the "prince of this world" rules, though his doom was sealed at the cross; and the Holy Ghost already come from heaven testifies, not only of sin and of righteousness, but also "of judgment, be-

cause the prince of this world is judged." The time for the execution of this judgment (*i.e.* the day of vengeance) has not yet come. It commences with the casting out of Satan from heaven, as seen in Revelation xii. He will then be cast upon earth, when the time of woe to the inhabitants of the world will take place, of which we read, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." (Rev. xii. 12.) Meantime every spirit cast out, and we may say every soul converted, is an earnest of the triumph that awaits the cross of Christ after the accomplishment of God's purposes in the present dispensation. From earth Satan is cast into the bottomless pit, after the destruction of the beast and false prophet, and their followers. There he is bound for a thousand years, and is no longer allowed to deceive mankind till again he is loosed for a little season to rally around him those who remained his during the millennial reign; and then he is finally cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet already are, and where all will be cast whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life.

Satan's moral relation to man as "the god of this age" (not "of this world") is another and a very different subject. This he will more fully assume when he brings in "the man of sin." (2 Thess. ii. 9.) Then we read: "All the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon." (Rev. xiii. 3, 4.)

Many important practical considerations in connection with our relation to the world, arise out of the rejection of the earth's lawful King by Satan as the prince of this world, and the god of this age, and of these we may write another time, if the Lord will.

H. G.

ENDURING LOVE.

I WANT love that can bear
 All the rude wear and tear,
 The weary battle of life ;
 That vanishes not
 When the fight is hot,
 But glows in the wildest strife.

I want love that can rest
 On my Saviour's breast
 While tossing on life's rough sea ;
 Like an infant child
 That heeds not how wild
 The storms and the waves may be.

I want love to abide
 At His own dear side
 'Midst tumults of busiest thought ;
 That can labour still,
 And yet feel no chill,
 Though work is with dangers fraught.

I want love to contend
 For my heart's best Friend ;
 And to watch, lest aught beguile
 While maintaining the right
 With all truth and might
 From a worshipping spirit the while.

I want God alone
 For my all—my own ;
 I want Thee, O Christ, in me !
 And that hush of soul
 Under love's control,
 To adore and yet work for Thee.

PARADISE AND HADES.

II. HADES.

THE Scripture uses of the word "paradise" have been considered in a former paper. (See page 60.) It has been found to set before us all those joys which our Lord Jesus already possesses as the Overcomer of death, and as Heir to His kingdom. And He calls each saved one of His who dies to share with Him these His "nobleman" riches and joys, and thus gives them a pledge of reigning with Him when He receives His kingdom.

Such is paradise; but what is hades?

It is the name given in the Old Testament, and also in the New, to the state and the place of those who have departed this life. In this respect it is of the same use as the word "paradise;" but there is this important difference: "*hades*" in the Greek of the New Testament, and its equivalent "*sheol*" in the Hebrew of the Old Testament scriptures, present to us the whole of the human dead—godly and ungodly—as in a common abode, while "paradise" is the bright and joyous dwelling-place of souls of Christ's saved ones only. *Paradise* is a New Testament bright resting-place from both sin and sorrow along with Christ, and has not one unhappy, doomed soul in it; *sheol* (or hades) expresses simply the idea of the region of the dead, whether godly or ungodly. Old Testament saints understood that in it there was a difference between the two—a sheol and a lowest sheol. The latter was distinguished as the part assigned to the wicked, those who had died under the wrath of God—see Deut. xxxii. 22: "A fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell" (sheol). Still it existed then as one abode for all, and was so known to the faith and intelligence of God's

people. And this side-by-side position of the dead in sheol (or hades) was suitable to Old Testament times. In the *living* world God had not then called out His own believing ones into outward and visible separation from the unbelieving. All Israel went to the earthly "house of God in company." All the circumcised were entitled and were commanded to come up to Jerusalem and keep the feasts, whether they were regenerate or not. Hence when death took them they had all gone down from this *upper* scene of light and activity to a common *under-world* (sheol), a dark unseen and unknown, (ha-des means in Greek "unseen,") the highest advantage of which was rest, and that only obtained by loneliness and loss of all fellowship with the living. But this New Testament age is the time of God's calling out and *visibly separating* His own from the unregenerate, by gathering them unto Jesus Himself, the great Shepherd of the sheep. How natural, then, that when any of His own now die, they should go to be "*with Christ*" in a "paradise" entered by *none but themselves*!

Yet the use of the word "paradise" in the New Testament does not cause the word "hades" to cease; but it greatly lessens its use, as compared with the Old Testament, and limits its meaning. In the same "days of His flesh" in which our Lord, as He was dying, promised paradise to the trusting thief, He had on three occasions spoken of "hades." Once to tell of the eternal punishment of Capernaum: "Thou shalt be brought down to hell" (hades; Matt. xi. 23; Luke x. 15); once to warn His hearers of the individual bodily torments of the finally impenitent: "In hell (hades) he (the rich man) lift up his eyes being in torments" (Luke xvi. 23); and once to express the living activities of Satan and his followers: "The gates of hell (hades) shall not prevail against it" (the Church). (Matt. xvi. 18.) These are before "paradise" had been

named. We next have Ps. xvi. quoted by Peter in Acts ii. 27: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell" (hades); here it is simply Old Testament language. But Paul uses it in 1 Cor. xv. 55: "O grave (hades), where is thy victory?" Here the paradise or disembodied happy state is passed by, because *resurrection* is the subject of the chapter, and a death term is used. The same also in Rev. i. 18: "I (Jesus) have the keys of death and of hell" (hades); for Jesus the Conqueror brings us through both death and the grave; the one when any of His saints die, the other at the first resurrection. There is likewise a similar use of the word in Rev. vi. 8: "His name (the pale horse rider) was death, and hell (hades) followed with him;" and in Rev. xxii. 13-16, "death and hell (hades) delivered up the dead which were in them . . . and death and hell (hades) were cast into the lake of fire." That is, at and after the great white throne day the grave will cease to be; there will not thenceforth be an individual of Adam's race lying in either the grave or in hades.

All this distinguishes most clearly hades in the New Testament from its contemporaneous paradise; turns our thoughts into two most *opposite* directions for the godly and the ungodly dead, and not to one and the same sheol, as is the case in the Old Testament.

But if paradise has now in it all the disembodied spirits of the righteous, and hades has none but the wicked now remaining there, there must have been a time and a means of removing the righteous from the one to the other. As to this also Scripture guides us.

Paradise as an abode for departed believers instead of hades, was first named by Jesus at His mighty death; hence Heb. ii. 14, 15 may be named first: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through

death He might destroy (frustrate) him that had the power (authority) of death, that is, the devil; and DELIVER them who through fear of death *were all their lifetime* subject to bondage." It is those, then, whose days on earth are *past* who are here spoken of as *delivered*; and the deliverance is accomplished by Jesus at His death. Their deliverance, then, can only be from the hades, the state of the dead, in which Satan as an adversary and an accuser has held them, and has made the same claim over them as he also did over the body of Moses when contending with Michael. (Jude 9.)

Jesus, our Lord, thus in measure fulfils His own parable: "When a strong man armed (*i.e.* Satan) keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he (Jesus) shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and *divideth his spoils.*" (Luke xi. 21, 22.) Compare also Eph. iv. 8: "Wherefore he saith, When He (Jesus) ascended up on high, He led captivity captive (or, he led a multitude of captives, see margin) and gave gifts to men." "Gave gifts to men" means the endowment of the Spirit on living believers at Pentecost and subsequently (see *v.* 11); but the "captivity led captive" may well point us to the deliverance of departed saints from hades through Jesus' mighty work on Calvary.

"By weakness and defeat
 He won the meed and crown;
 Trod all our foes beneath His feet
 By being trodden down.
 "He hell in hell laid low;
 Made sin, He sin o'erthrew;
 Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,
 And death by dying slew."

And it is only natural to suppose that the Saviour's victory by dying would as surely and as really add to the joys and blessings of His departed saints as we well know

it did, and still does, to the blessing of His living saints. To us, the living, it is by the "gifts to men" at Pentecost; to the departed it was, and still is, by captivity being "led captive." It would appear, therefore, that Christ did immediately upon His death pass through hades, claiming as His own all there who had from the beginning ever believed in Him, and bore them at once with Him to the paradise that He had gained by dying. His soul could not be *detained* one moment in hades, any more than His flesh could see corruption. (Acts ii. 31.) Also, even His passing through must be that of a conqueror, a mightier one than Satan—the "strong man armed." And this speed of His delivering work agrees with the *time* He spoke of to the dying thief, "TO-DAY shalt thou be with ME in paradise."

But there is yet another scripture very definite on this precious subject. It is Romans xiv. 9: "For to this end Christ both died and revived (omit "and rose"—see Greek Testament), that He might be Lord both of the *dead* and living." We are here distinctly told that lordship over "the dead" was one object of Christ's dying; and by "the dead" is meant *His own servants* who die, or have died; for the subject-matter of Romans xiv. is Christ's own servants, and the widely different and even opposite ways in which they truly serve Him. One eats "to the Lord;" another equally "to the Lord" refuses to eat. One serves Christ in his regarding of one day (some Jewish day) above another; whilst another serves Him in not any longer so regarding any such day. But the domain of Christ as a Master is wide enough for Him to own both of them as serving Him; for He has a power and a liberty which the strictness and letter of Jewish ritual could not allow Israel's service to have under Moses.

But the subject still enlarges, and takes in the *dying of believers* as well as their living; "for," says Paul, "whether

we live, we live unto the Lord ; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord : whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

Under Moses, as God's "king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together" (Deut. xxxiii. 5), if any died, they passed from the domain of Moses and the reach of his authority. They had been "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and the sea" as they left Egypt; but by death this link was severed. Not so, says Paul, with Christ as a Master and Lord. His care of His servants, and His authority over them, is with them even in death, and after it. The date and the means of Christ's obtaining this wide dominion are then given; viz., He "died and revived," *that He might have it*. It dates from Jesus' mighty death, and springs from it as from its only possible source.

The truth is, Jesus our Lord is Captain and Leader of His saints on both sides of the Jordan stream, taking Jordan, for illustration' sake, as an emblem of the death of believers. Only Jesus could be this; for He only can say, "I am He that liveth, *and was dead*; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and *have the keys* of hell and of death." Moses was leader of an earthly Israel up to Jordan, but could not cross it; Joshua had to be captain through it and on the other side. Aaron was high priest on this side the stream; but it was Eleazar who went with the ark through it, and knew its triumphs at Jericho. And of "the Israel of God" of our time, it is true that

"Part of the host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now;"

and Jesus only can be Captain and Priest, both for them and for us also "that are alive, and remain." His power as Captain, and His sympathy as High Priest, avail for ALL His servants; for he has died and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living.

How this great change for us of this age from hades to paradise should affect our souls and our service may be the subject of another paper, if the Lord will. H. D.

July 1 77

DYING JACOB'S WORSHIP.

“By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, *leaning* upon the top of his staff.”—HEB. xi. 21.

THIS dying act of Jacob's is specially singled out for commendation when he is placed in the roll of those who by faith obtain “a good report.”

In his closing hours he is no longer burdened with cares. His heart is now at rest, free from the anxious thoughts that had so troubled him throughout his pilgrimage, and he can *worship*. Still, owing to his weakness, he needs support; and he “worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.”

It was a precious *end* to a weary life; but shall not we seek to be worshippers *on the way*, as our time shortens and the coming of the Lord draws nearer?

Do we, like Jacob, feel our weakness, our readiness to break down? How blessed to know we have one close at hand (better than Jacob's staff) able to support us, so that, feeble and tottering as we are, our worship may not be hindered. Is not our worship often interrupted through forgetfulness of this? May we so feel our weakness that, like Jacob, we may gladly *lean*; then will our worship flow out and flow on, and make glad the heart of our God.

We are more apt to think of leaning in connection with wilderness journeyings than of leaning in our worship. Yet surely *in each* we need the upholding of our God. Jacob had doubtless proved the value of the staff in his pilgrimage, but to lean while worshipping was a deeper lesson; and this added to the joy and blessing of his last hours.

H.

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE.

(Continued from page 67.) 108

HIS INTERVIEW WITH OBADIAH AND AHAB.

“AND it came to pass after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the land.” (1 Kings xviii. 1.)

It was now the third year of the famine. No rain had fallen; the springs were drying up. There was now no grass for the cattle, nor were there crops for the support of man. Moses of old had told them, “The land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: a land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.” (Deut. xi. 11.) It was specially a good land, selected by the Creator of heaven and earth for His favoured people Israel, and incessantly watched over by Him. But Moses had also forewarned them what God had said if they would not hearken unto His voice—“Thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.” (Deut. xxviii. 23, 24.) This fearful penalty had now come upon them; the desolation was universal. Still there was no appearance of repentance in Israel, nor any sign of relenting in the spirit of Elijah. But God is more merciful than man. It was He who of old was grieved for the misery of Israel (Judges x. 16), and it is He who first relents, according to the announcement He had been

pleased to make of His character—"Merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth."

God now interposes with a fresh act of sovereign grace, and directs His servant to leave his place of concealment at Sarepta, re-enter the desolate land, and place himself within the grasp of his enemy. Perhaps this fresh command may appal him. It seems like sending him to certain death, either from the fury of the king, of his soldiery, or of the idolatrous multitude. But he shrinks not from the danger. Forth he goes to meet it at the command of his God. He is made aware that God has overruled and virtually terminated the peculiar power He has hitherto held; but this does not in the least interfere with his course of unflinching obedience.

The scene now changes to the court of Ahab. So sore is the famine that the king, conferring with his steward Obadiah, sends him in one direction to survey the land, in the hope of finding pasturage for the horses and mules that yet remain alive, while he himself takes another direction. The risk of losing them all is too pressing to allow of inferior officers being employed.

Strange as it may appear, there was in the palace of this notoriously wicked king, and even at the head of his household, one who "feared the Lord greatly." Obadiah's fear of God was so great that, like Elijah, he feared not the face of man. By what providential arrangement God maintained him in this office against the influence and power of Jezebel we have yet to learn; but as Daniel was afterwards kept by God in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, so was this faithful servant upheld here. Obadiah's fear was an active principle within him. The queen had set herself to destroy all the prophets of the Lord that there might be no obstruction to her idol worship. The steward of the household, at the risk of his life, succeeds

in saving not one or two individuals only, but as many as one hundred, concealing them from her fury in two separate caverns, and is even able to supply them with food and water in the midst of the raging famine. If they had been discovered there was no hope of life for him or them. But the power of God not only protected them all, but the very stores laid up by their deadly enemy were made to furnish them with nourishment, Obadiah probably impoverishing himself to maintain the servants of Jehovah. But while Obadiah was thus striving to preserve their lives, Elijah's conduct increased the difficulty tenfold.

The hand of God now brings together His two servants. Obadiah recognizes Elijah, and falls at his feet, doing him homage. The steward of the king worships the proscribed wanderer, calling him "my lord." He had perhaps seen Elijah during his former interview with Ahab, and had heard the declaration about the rain. The resulting famine had impressed him with the exalted position held by Elijah, in reference to the prosperity of the kingdom, and his power with God; and he therefore humbles himself before him. But when Elijah directs him to tell Ahab of his being there, Obadiah thinks he is sending him to certain death. From his knowledge of the great pains Ahab had taken to apprehend him—having searched every corner of his own dominions, as well as sought for him in the neighbouring states—he is persuaded that the Spirit of the Lord alone could have concealed him from his grasp; and now he dreads that, if he goes to acquaint his master that Elijah is discovered, he will again be removed elsewhere, and so the wrath of the king will fall upon himself. Earnestly does he plead for his life, telling him that from his youth he has feared the Lord, and making known to him the protection he had afforded to the hundred pro-

phets, and the imminent risk he had thereby incurred. He cannot refuse however to do what the prophet directs, but at the same time has no confidence in his good intentions, looking upon the command as a snare to take away his life.

In order to reassure and comfort him in doing what he is told, Elijah now makes oath, by a most solemn asseveration, that he will surely show himself to Ahab that very day. Obadiah therefore departs to seek the king, and communicates to him these tidings. It may be that God had arranged this preliminary meeting between his two servants, in order to do honour to Obadiah by making him the instrument of discovering Elijah, and also to render more easy the interview with the king.

On receiving this intelligence, Ahab's anxiety about saving the horses for a time ceases, and he goes to meet Elijah, feeling that he has at last got him within His power. As soon as he sees him he exclaims, "Art thou he that troubleth [or, "is perverting"—Greek version] Israel?" Baal's worship having become the established religion of the land, and Elijah being known as the prophet of the Lord, into whose hands the rain had been delivered, Ahab addresses him as a rebel against the god he worships, against himself, as well as against what he chooses to consider the orthodox faith—as one striving to pervert the people therefrom by starving them into surrender. Elijah might well anticipate that an order to put him to death would immediately follow; but far from being moved by any such apprehension, he boldly replies, "I do not pervert Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the Lord your God, and thou hast followed Baalim." This was the true accusation. Ahab and his family were the perverters, and "did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him." (1 Kings xvi. 33.)

There must have been something either in these words, or in the mode of their delivery, which struck upon the conscience of Ahab. Perhaps the ruin around him had by this time told upon his spirit. It may be the boldness of Elijah awed him. The fulfilment of his prediction on their former interview was manifest. The strength of his kingdom had departed. The only hope seemed to be in listening to what the prophet might now have to say, since he had sought this meeting. The guilty conscience submits to hear while the prophet speaks again, saying, "Now therefore send ; gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, who eat at Jezebel's table." (1 Kings xviii. 19.)

This was an extraordinary injunction, and from a subject to his sovereign! Yet such was the fearlessness of his character, and reliance upon the living God, before whom he stood, that he is able to speak as with authority. The crisis is momentous. It might be inferred that the great question was to be decided, whether famine, with all its attendant horrors, should still prevail, to the destruction of multitudes, or whether it should cease. Elijah makes no mention of the promise of the Lord to send rain; neither is it declared that God had ordered this gathering; nor is the purpose Elijah had in view shown. Having made this communication, the intercourse comes to an end.

108

R. N.

NOTES AND REPLIES.

What is the "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost?" Matt. xii. 31, 32.

It is the rejection of the Holy Spirit's testimony to Jesus as the gift of God, and is the same as doing "despite to the Spirit of grace." In Heb. x. 29 this sin succeeds the treading under foot the Son of God (thereby rejecting God's gift to the world), and the counting the blood of the covenant as a common thing (and thereby rejecting Christ's

dying love.) This threefold rejection—first, of God's gift of His Son; second, of Christ's redemption-work; and third, of the Spirit's testimony to that work—leaves the soul where Pharaoh was when after repeated warnings he hardened his own heart; then, and not till then, did God harden it (Exod. ix. 12), and thus a judicial blindness sealed him for his final overthrow in the Red Sea. (Exod. vii. 13, "And He hardened Pharaoh's heart," should be rendered as in verse 22, "And Pharaoh's heart was hardened.") Judas Iscariot's case solemnly explains what this sin really is; it lies beyond all repentance and forgiveness, and can never be committed by one born of God. Judas never "repented." The word so rendered in Matt. xxvii. 3 should be "*regretted*," as a man may regret an evil done, and yet never repent of it towards God. Of such blasphemers against the Holy Ghost were probably those who went from the grave of Lazarus to join Caiaphas in a determination to kill Jesus, among whom may have been some of those addressed in Matt. xii., who had been hardening their hearts all through our Lord's ministry, while of others who rejected Him we are told they "did it ignorantly." (Acts iii. 17.)

What is the difference between the grieving of the Spirit in Eph. iv. 30 and the quenching of the Spirit in 1 Thess. v. 19?

THE former is personal, and in it the Holy Ghost is regarded as a friend who may be grieved by sinful words or ways in any of those in whom He dwells; for He seeks not only a dwelling-place, but a sanctuary. With this connect all that is said in the Old Testament of defiling the camp of Israel by uncleanness, either great or small. But as no defilement drove God from the camp, as long as the altar remained in it, so now in the case of the believer the blessed Spirit remains. (In Exod. xxxiii. 7 the tabernacle and altar had not been set up.) The *quenching* of the Spirit in Thessalonians has to do with the Church, as the next words show: "Despise not prophesyings." The Spirit is connected with the pentecostal gift and the tongues of fire of Acts ii. We are called to stir up our own gifts lest they die out, and encourage the divine gifts of others. Herein we are terribly faulty. How easy it is to discourage a brother in the exercise of some small gift which, if not quenched by others, might become a gift of exceeding value to the Church of God! Yet while we are not to quench, we are to "prove all things," and to hold fast only what is good, abstaining from every form of evil.

What is the believer's relation to the law of God?

THE law of God to the natural man is a *rule of life* which can only produce condemnation, but to the renewed man the law of God is *the*

power of life; for it is written on his heart by the finger of God, according to the promise of the new covenant. (Heb. viii.) He is not *under* the law because he walks in the Spirit, and is led of the Spirit (Gal. v. 16, 18); but even the believer who is walking in the flesh is under the rebuke of the law, and will find its righteous penalty laying hold of him. David found this when the sword of God followed him and his house to his death, even though forgiveness had been sealed to him by God through the prophet Nathan. The law of God has become "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" to the believer in Christ, giving freedom "from the law of sin and death" by the indwelling Holy Ghost, and God's law is *within* his heart. (Ps. xl. 8.) The law is not changed; it ever was, and is, "holy and just and good;" but from being a fearful penalty of cloudy blackness and darkness over the unrenewed man, as mount Sinai's thunder and cloud and lightning was to Israel, it becomes a joyful sunshine of brightness and peace from mount Zion to the Christian, witnessing to him of resurrection and power and life. Hence the contrast between Israel's Pentecost in the third month before Sinai in Exod. xix., and the Church's Pentecost in Jerusalem in Acts ii., of which the precious burden was "the remission of sin" and "the gift of the Holy Ghost." There is a sad amount of antinomianism propagated by false views of this important subject.

Is "*the kingdom*" the portion of *all believers*?

It is deserving of notice, when considering this question, that the *direct* statements of Scripture answer it in the affirmative, and that arguments for the negative are usually drawn from *inferences*. In 1 Cor. xv. 23, in reference to the first resurrection, we read, "*They that are Christ's* at His coming;" and in verse 51, "We shall not all sleep, but *we shall all* be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;" and this "all" was addressed to a church, very many of whose members were reckoned not as spiritual, but as carnal. In 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17, it is stated, "The *dead in Christ* shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up *together* with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." The weakest believer, or the most inconsistent saint, is "*in Christ*," if a believer or a saint at all, and if so, must rise and join the ransomed throng, who sing the song of the blood that saves. (Rev. v. 9.) When, in Rev. xix. 5, 6, "the great multitude" in heaven is seen, the voice comes from the throne, "Praise our God *all ye* His servants, and ye that fear Him both *small and great*." Again, if we turn to Old Testament types, we see that while Reuben, Simeon, and Levi suffered

irreparable loss in their position as tribes, at the prophetic judgment-seat of Jacob's death-bed, they were nevertheless equally with Judah and Joseph on the high priest's breastplate; and we find their names ultimately on the gates of the New Jerusalem. But not only is the supposition that a part only of the church will participate in the glory of the kingdom opposed to plain and direct Scripture, but it also violates the unity of the body of Christ. For if the body is the Church, the bride of Christ, and if the Church of God consists of those "who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with *all* that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. i. 2), then must all who are such, as an unbroken body, an undivided church, and a prepared bride, meet the Bridegroom, the Head of the Church, when He comes, and so "ever be with the Lord." Read Eph. v. 22-33 in the light of this mistaken theory. The arguments derived from the conditional utterances of our Lord and His disciples assume that some believers fail to meet those conditions. But God's love sees farther and deeper than our cold hearts do, and often discerns the faithful side of hidden communion, when all we see is some outward inconsistency. Christ's loving estimate of His failing disciples was, "They have kept thy word." (John xvii. 6.)* In regard to inferences drawn from the use of such words as "servants," "guests," "virgins," &c., used in the parables of our Lord, it has to be remembered that nothing is more hazardous than drawing inferences from parabolic teaching. Parables and typical analogies can only be used as illustrations of what has been proved elsewhere, and never as the basis of an argument. Further, let us bear in mind on this point that God deals with men according to the character which they assume. In conclusion, we would remind all believers that if we are "sons," then are we "heirs" (see Rom. viii. 16, 17; Gal. iii. 26-29), made "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;" for God has already "delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love." (Col. i. 12, 13.)

* The lamentable extreme to which this "conditional" argument is pressed is seen when godly men soberly assert that those who rise in the glorious likeness of their Lord at the resurrection will, from the judgment-seat of Christ, be confined in the prison of Matt. v. 25, and be subjected to the fire of hell of verses 22, 29, 30. Surely this is sufficient to prove its unscriptural character. The judgment-seat of Christ becomes then not simply a judgment of works, but of persons, whereas we know that for those who are in Christ Jesus there can be "no condemnation," though their works, if like wood, hay, and stubble, will be burned up.

PARADISE AND HADES.

III. PRESENT APPLICATION.

IN previous papers the difference between hades and paradise has been shown from Scripture, and the transition of Old Testament saints from one to the other. It only remains to bring the subject to bear upon our souls and our service.

One instant effect of "paradise," and not hades, being now recognised as the abode of any of us who depart until the resurrection morn, is the joy thereby afforded to the feeblest child of God at the prospect of dying. To Old Testament saints, dying was as a rule a gloomy thing, because it removed them from all that was bright and active in the earthly scene around them to the sheol or under world of silence and solitude. Its very tranquillity was inseparable from its darkness. Hence it needed the sorrow of a Job and a Jeremiah to make death seem to them preferable to life. It was only when Job had lost his property, his children, and his bodily health, and in the bitterness of his grief cursed the day of his birth, that he ever spoke of longing for death, and of men being "glad when they can find the grave," or described it in the attractive words, "There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest." (See Job iii. 3, 17, 22; also Jer. xx. 10-18.)

Nor was its near approach under more ordinary circumstances a thing of gladness. In Ps. xxxix., where David is submissive under the hand of his God—is "dumb," and opens not his mouth in any murmuring like Job or Jeremiah, he yet ends by saying, "O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I *go hence*, and be NO MORE." These

last words were the brightest he had to say of the disembodied or hades state. Similar were the thoughts and feelings of king Hezekiah when he was "sick unto death." It does not appear to have been a mortal sickness on him as any special rebuke from God, and therefore causing him gloom. On the contrary, Hezekiah was himself able to plead, "Remember now, O Jehovah, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight." But "Hezekiah wept sore," and his own subsequent "writing" was, "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 Jehovah, even Jehovah, in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world." (Isa. xxxviii. 3, 10, 11.) Such was the prospect of death to Old Testament believers. It was to them a passing away into an unknown and a gloomy region—of safety, it is true, and of rest, but of solitude and silence and inactivity; and they shunned it, and preferred "length of days" in this world not only as a well-known Old Testament token of God's favour, but as in itself preferable to departure.

But how changed is all this now! It has now become easy to die, but hard to live—"easy to die," one has well said, "because of the blood, but hard to live because of sin and temptation;" and not only because of the blood, but also, as Paul says, because "to depart" is "to be WITH CHRIST, which is far better." Just as our Lord's words, "*with me* in paradise," gave to the dying thief the double joy of not only

"There is no condemnation; there is no hell for me,
The torment and the flame mine eyes shall never see;"

but also that his approaching last breath would usher him

into the presence of his new-found Saviour and Friend for ever.

Death is therefore now as truly without terror, or even repulsiveness to the believer's *feelings*, as it is without a sting to his conscience. If he dies he does not even "see death;" bystanders see it (and perhaps in some painful bodily form), but the dying one sees Jesus, and sees the paradise to which Jesus welcomes him. This makes dying to be only a step of nearer approach to Jesus for the saved one than he ever knew before. Whatever had been his enjoyment of *believing* nearness whilst still in the body, his dying moment is to him an increase, a vast increase, of that same kind of joy. Nor is death felt by the believer's soul to be even a rough or difficult passage into Christ's presence; for the same Holy Ghost who now "witnesses with our spirits" all our believing lifetime "that we are children of God," is no less divinely "with our spirits" also as we leave the mortal frame. With utmost liberty do our souls "enter into the holiest" now by *faith*, by day or night, through the *blood* of Jesus; and with utmost joy can the believer now depart to be with Christ by dying, because His power has made "death" as truly ours as "life." (1 Cor. iii. 22.) Thus joy in departing and the welcoming of death, so far as our own soul's happiness is concerned, is one blessed effect to us of paradise being ours instead of hades. In the lit-up evening sitting-room, with its pleasant company and cheerful surroundings, a child dislikes the very mention of the dark and solitary sleeping chamber to which the kind parent bids it go, and wishes bedtime were not come; but another evening, when for some reason the child is to have the unusual pleasure of sharing its own mother's chamber and bed, it will be found wishing the bedtime were come, even though the sitting-room company and

surroundings were the very same as before; and this simply because of the great change which its dearly-loved mother's company has made in the matter. Such is the difference proper to the child of God in this age between a paradise of being "with Christ" and the dim sheol or hades of former ages.

And if throughout this whole age this joy in dying is proper to the saints, it is still more true as its *guilty close* draws on. The thickening of sin and temptation around, which makes it harder still for us to live in it as saints should, makes it more and more blessed to depart. This seems the meaning of the word "*henceforth*" in Rev. xiv. 13, and the reason of the express command to John to write it, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord *from henceforth.*" Ever since Jesus by His death became "*Lord* both of the dead and living," it was always blessed to "die in the Lord;" but Rev. xiv. is the first mention of Babylon in the book of Revelation, and no sooner has that harlot iniquity appeared, both secular and religious, than it is *emphatically* declared *from thenceforth* to be blessed to depart. "Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may *rest* from their labours; and their works do follow them." This rest they could not know as long as Babylon's defilements were always surrounding them with sin and temptation. Such too was Daniel's experience in Old Testament Babylon from the outset of his godly life, when in youth he had as a Hebrew to watch against defiling himself with the "king's meat," on to his old age, when he would still pray three times a day to Jehovah only, spite of the atheistic edict of Darius. No wonder his gracious dismissal from a life of such spiritual toil and conflict is thus worded, "Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou SHALT REST" (which he had never been able to do in Babylon),

“and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.” (Dan. xii. 13.) How like are such words to the corresponding New Testament comfort in Rev. xiv. 13. (Compare also Isa. lvii. 1, 2.) Surely therefore in the deepening evil of the nineteenth century our individually departing to be with Christ should be joy to any of us, and be reckoned “blessed” indeed. Well may one of our own time say,

“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.

“Ceaseless my new and holy song,
And sung with heaven-born skill,
Of Christ the Lamb, that soon shall be
Enthroned on Zion’s hill.”*

But paradise in view, instead of hades, also *strengthens* us for present spiritual conflict, and in two ways. First, by weaning us from our natural love of this present life ; for it shows us how near to us our Lord Jesus is to receive our spirits, and how short and easy, as well as blessed, the step for us into that “far better” state. “He that loveth his life shall lose it ; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal” (John xii. 25), was our Lord’s word to His own who would serve Him and follow Him ; and again, Luke xiv. 26, “If any man . . . hate not . . . his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” Whatever therefore helps us to let go present life, and, Paul-like, not count it dear to us, nor yet the things of it, also arms us for our warfare, and makes us joyful to end our pilgrimage at any moment ; and paradise being

* *Hymns*, by R. C. Chapman. J. E. Hawkins, London.

ours, does this. To the Old Testament believer death was terrible, because *dispensationally* he had such hold on present life, as well as by a soul that naturally cleaved to the dust; but to us death is but the stepping into a luminous chamber, the light from which has already reached us in our present house of clay by chinks which service to Christ has made.

But secondly, paradise also guides us in the *character* of our service, so that in that service we may not spend time or strength amiss. Had Martha been in our privileged time, her somewhat missing the mark in the aims of her service to Christ would have been with less excuse; for paradise in view teaches us not to be cumbered with "much serving" of viands for the body. The supply of only needful food is surely taught us, by the fact that we may at any moment be taken where our pleasing of our Lord "far better," and loving Him far more, than we possibly *can* do here, will be without any use of the mortal body at all. And since to be "with Christ" is now shown us as the very essence of our joy should we die, are we not thereby guided to an abiding *in Him*, and a communing *with Him*, as our highest present service, and as our best and our only successful attitude of soul against all present spiritual foes? Certain it is that Paul, who had so distinctly known what it was early in his ministry to be "caught up into paradise," and to hear its unspeakable utterances of joy, was so marked in his subsequent service by keeping his body under, and not beating the air; and it is to him we are indebted for the expression "FAR BETTER," as to departing this life at any time.

If then our Lord should call us to depart ere He comes, may every view we have of paradise as ours instead of hades guide and strengthen us during our short remaining time below. Amen.

H. D.

MANIFESTED LIFE.

“The Life was manifested.”—1 JOHN i. 2.

“I AM come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” (John x. 10.) “You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” (Eph. ii. 1.) “Your life is hid with Christ in God.” (Col. iii. 3.)

There are three blessed realities attendant upon our life in Christ. We are made alive, kept alive, preserved unto life. But do we not often live as though eternal *life* were some mythical attainment, instead of a life which we have already received? Is not our *faith* often as feeble as though our souls were paralysed, and unable to trust God for anything? our *hope* as uncertain as if there was nothing definite in eternal purposes? our *thoughts about God* as vague as though He were a being of unlimited uncertainties, and our estimate of the *glory* as though it were a material existence of our own creation? Our God delights in *manifested* life, the shouting of the sons of God, the singing of the “morning stars,” as well as all the multitudinous developments of creation; and shall we spend our life in Christ in an undeveloped chrysalis monotony, asleep in the dark chambers of carnal selfishness? The Lord forbid it, and this very hour mightily awaken within us the *sevenfold* quickenings necessary to real spiritual life.

1. “*Quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.*” (Ps. lxxx. 18.) Is there not need for this cry to go up from our hearts as children of God? Is it not too true that the complaint lodged against Job may in very deed be made against us, “Thou restrainest prayer before God”? Alas, it is! “*Quicken us;*” it is a Holy Ghost taught

prayer for our hearts and lips. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." But oh, how much of this unprofitable flesh there is that grieves this Holy Spirit, so that the quickenings are often smothered, and in His grief He utters the solemn sentence, "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone!" And are not many of the Lord's own "let alone" to wandering, to self-will, to pride, to ambition, to the world, and even to die without any clear testimony for God, or true joy in the Lord, with scarce a right to God's own epitaph over them, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them"? Verily we need quickening of our life—quicken- ing, lest by our apathy or sloth we should make our faith appear a sham, and while professing to have life in Christ, live as if our God was our belly, our glory in our shame, and we were minding earthly things. Oh that our hearts may really cry out, "Quicken us, and we will call upon thy name!" then, and only then, shall we walk in the light, and have our souls filled with the joy of real communion with God.

2. "*Quicken thou me according to thy word.*" (Ps. cxix. 25.) Life according to the Word: our food the "bread of life," our drink the "living water," our will the mind of the Spirit, our ways the footprints of Jesus, our heart burning within us as He talks to us by the way. Quicken thou me, so that I may hide thy law in my heart that I may not sin against thee; that the word of Christ may dwell in me richly in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that the Comforter may take of the things of Christ, and show them unto me. Do we not need this second Holy Ghost taught petition continually? We are elect unto obedience (1 Peter i. 2); therefore if we live in disobedience, we are a lie unto our election.

3. "*Quicken me in thy righteousness.*" (Ps. cxix. 40.) "Awake to righteousness, and sin not." Dear child of God, suffer a solemn question, Which is our code of morals, the ministration of death, which is from Sinai, or the ministration of life, which is from Calvary? In the light of which are we called to walk? and in which are we walking? Does not the lower standard of the law condemn us daily? Are not its compassions, the compassions even of law, more than we are willing to exercise? (See Deut. xv. for example.) Are not the probings of its precepts often too painful? Does not the outward abstinence from the violation of its commands too frequently satisfy our benumbed consciences? Shame, shame upon us that we aim not higher! Let the word of the Holy Ghost speak loudly to our hearts, "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. 3, 4.) "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." (1 Tim. iv. 7.) What a calling! Elected unto sanctification of the Spirit; "holiness to the Lord" written upon spirit, soul, and body.

4. "*Quicken me in thy way.*" (Ps. cxix. 37.) "He made known His *ways* unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel." How solemn! Of Israel's six hundred thousand men *only one* who entered into the secrets of God, *only one* who could be trusted with the mind of God, the reasons of His workings, the ends to be attained; *only one* who saw the heavenly pattern given for the establishing of divine worship on earth—the symbol of the mystery of eternal counsels? And why? Moses was *alive* to the ways of God, his soul was on the alert to catch the mind

of his Lord, and to get his own will absorbed in that of God. "Shew me thy way" was the essence of his heart's desire. It was a spiritual atmosphere to his soul. Oh to get right up into the full sunlight of fellowship, to read the expressions of our Father's mind in the beamings of His face, and there to find that communion is not a thing of theory or name, but a real, true, blessed experience of soul, which will fill us with surprise, and wonder, and worship, and also with shame, that we have lived in such comparative strangership to such a precious privilege!

5. "*Quicken me after thy lovingkindness.*" (Ps. cxix. 88.) What an infinite resource of vitality is embodied in this word! What an ocean, whose tides never recede, are we launched upon! What ceaseless watch does the eye of love keep over the creation of His power and the new creation of His grace! Oh, what shall we say of ourselves that we ever need reminding of it? How *can* we forget it? How sorrowful that we should grow dead to it! How grieving to such love to receive so little response! Oh, if God could say of Moab, guilty, proud Moab, "My heart shall cry out for Moab; my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab." What must the sorrow of His heart be over the paucity of the Church's return of love to Him who gave her to Jesus, to share His everlasting joy, and to be folded in the arms of His eternal embrace! Oh, with such a God, such a Father, such a future, surely we should be *fully alive*, and seeking to rejoice His heart! And if we come short of this, let our prayer with each breath and each heart-throb be, "Quicken me after thy lovingkindness."

6. "*Quicken me according to thy judgment.*" (Ps. cxix. 149.) What a blessed attitude of soul, so truly alive to God as to be of one mind in judgment! yes, even of one's self. But what an abasing process this poor self has

to go through—a poor limping Jacob, a vile, loathsome Job, a weeping, heart-broken Peter, a blind and helpless Saul. But oh, the end is worth it all! yes, worth all the crushing, bruising, smiting, humbling of His love or judgment, if we thereby learn His thoughts about our sins, and in the light of His holiness see that the very motions of sin, the secret, hidden thoughts which may have lain unuttered and unknown are all alike the fruit of our own polluted, abominable flesh, and demand the righteous judgment and wrath of a holy God. Oh for the heavenly rays of God's truth and Spirit to show us the hatefulness of sin in the light of Sinai, Calvary, and the judgment-seat of Christ! a threefold judgment—sentence upon sentence, doom upon doom, against all that is not of God in our hearts.

7. "*Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake.*" (Ps. cxliii. 10, 11.) The first and last quickening connected with the *name* of the Lord—every aspect of the glory is associated with His name. Who can describe the degrees of majesty which exalt that "holy," "reverend," "great," "dreadful," "glorious" NAME of our God? and we are called to contribute to the glory of that name which is essential glory. Surely that name is worthy; and shall we think lightly of it? Shall we be indifferent to the honour of that name? Shall we not "rather lay aside every weight," and "press toward the mark," and "put on the whole armour of God," and "fight the good fight of faith"? Oh, may the love of His name be superlative in its demands on our affections! and henceforth may it be true of us, "Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ LIVETH IN ME."

"Quickened by Thee, and kept alive,
I flourish and bear fruit;
My life I from Thy life derive,
My vigour from Thy root."

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE.

(Continued from page 93.)

MOUNT CARMEL.

It was in the third year of the famine that Elijah's interview with Ahab took place. We learn from the epistle of James that there was no rain for three years and six months. Now as the rain fell on the same day as the sacrifice on Carmel was made, it is evident that six months must have elapsed after Elijah had spoken to Ahab before the great assemblage took place. There were doubtless many obstacles. There was the king's own unwillingness; and also the opposition of Jezebel, of the king's courtiers, and of the false priests. No wonder that it took six months or more to humble the pride of the nation, and induce submission to the word of the prophet. But at length the king gives the order, and the people obey. Where Elijah remained during this interval we are not told.

At length the multitude is seen flocking together to mount Carmel, a hilly range overlooking the Mediterranean—hungry, thirsty, emaciated, worn down by disease and sorrow, uncertain for what purpose they are thus assembled. Baal's prophets and those of the groves are there in full number; and there is the king, his court, and retinue. Elijah, too, reaches the place. He alone seems at ease, and master of the position. He passes among the crowds, exclaiming, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." The people make no response; afraid, it may be, to avow Baal after his failure to provide them bread, and also afraid, perhaps, to acknowledge the Lord,

partly from natural love of idolatry, and partly from fear of man.

By this time the nation seems to have stood much in awe of Elijah. The very fact of being summoned to meet him would establish his importance in the minds of the people and of their rulers. Had they known that all their wretchedness was attributable to him, other feelings would doubtless have been stirred up. But it is evident that the power of God kept down all hostility, constraining them to listen to what he said. His preliminary exhortation was calculated to make them think over the claims of Baal as contrasted with those of the true and only Lord God, and prepare them for what was to follow.

Never surely did mortal man stand in a grander position than Elijah on this occasion. One man, without friends, or followers, or human authority, confronts a whole population. All are his enemies. King, priests, people are all opposed to him and his object. They had, they believed, slain all his fellow-prophets, and were quite prepared to take his life also. Any one of the multitude might have done this, and considered it good service to his king and to him whom he worshipped. Ahab might have ordered him to be put to death, and so have rid himself of all further trouble and opposition. But Elijah cares for none of these considerations. His trust is in the living God, whose service he is occupied with. He knows Him, and the strength of His arm; which, though unseen, is not only able to protect, but to give him the victory.

He now makes his magnificent proposition. "Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire: and I will

dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire: and call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." (1 Kings xviii. 23, 24.) Fully persuaded is he, not only that all the gods whom his countrymen have so ignorantly and foolishly worshipped are unable even to kindle a fire, but that the Lord God both can and will then and there answer the cry of himself His servant. And further, though Baal's prophets, and those of the groves, are eight hundred and fifty men, he is fully persuaded that their combined supplications will obtain no reply; yet that his solitary voice calling upon Jehovah will bring down the very answer he seeks. He is willing to stake his life upon these issues. The people with one voice accept the proposal, agreeing to the terms. The trial speedily comes on.

Strong in faith, Elijah yields the precedence to the false prophets. Their number seems to demand it, whilst their confusion is thereby rendered the greater. Had he commenced, the victory over Baal would not have been so conspicuous. They begin. "They took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they ran about* the altar which they had made." Several hours do they occupy in this way; increasing in earnestness of supplication, and seeking to draw more attention as well as to encourage one another by running in masses up and down in front of, or round their altar.

Then Elijah begins to mock them. "Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is hunting, or he is on a journey. Peradventure he is sleeping, and must be

* "Ran about" rather than "leaped upon." To leap upon the altar would be to show contempt, not reverence.

awaked." To do this to disappointed and exasperated men was still more to endanger his own life; but he was fearless. By thus stimulating them to do their utmost in imploring the aid of their false god, his utter inability to help them was made more apparent to the bystanders. "And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them:" denoting thereby the extremity of their distress; intimating that they were dying men; would not their god interfere in their extremity? But no help came.

After the whole day, from morning until evening, had thus passed, giving ample time for assistance if any could be rendered, Elijah proceeds to build an altar to the Lord; making round it a trench to hold fifteen gallons. And having placed thereon the wood and the bullock, he directed the whole to be saturated with water thrice over, and the trench also to be filled, so as to obviate any suspicion of underhand practices, and the more fully to display the power of God.* Such was his calm and fearless confidence in Him whose servant he was.

And now approaches the triumph of his faith. Having thus made his preparations, he calls aloud, in the presence of the whole multitude, upon the unseen God; the God who had been pleased to make Himself known as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. In behalf of the people he now pleads; asking Him to make it apparent by fire that He is the God of Israel, that Elijah is His servant, and that he has done these things by His command; that by this public display the people may know that He is their God, and—marvellous grace!—that He Himself has turned their heart back to Him.

* Because of the drought sea-water may have been fetched from the Mediterranean, which was not far off.

To comprehend the force of Elijah's petition it seems needful to take a glance at the past. When the Almighty God first took Israel into fellowship with Himself, and had displayed His majesty in the tremendous scenes at mount Sinai, the first injunction He gave was that they should have no other God but Himself. This command, together with those which followed it, they had set aside and forgotten. So utterly had this first command passed away from their memories, that Jehovah is the only God whom they will not acknowledge. All the idol gods of the surrounding nations are welcomed and worshipped; but He who pitied and loved them, who delivered them from Egyptian slavery, and gave them the country they occupied, Him they altogether disown. Thereby they had rendered themselves liable to every extremity of His just indignation, long since denounced against them.

But when the God of Israel condescended to take up His residence in their camp, in the tent He had ordered to be constructed, it pleased Him to indicate His acceptance of their offerings by causing fire to proceed from His presence and consume the flesh of the victims on the altar. This sacred fire was to have been continually kept burning; but it seems to have been soon neglected and extinguished. Again, when David to avert the pestilence had built an altar in the threshing-floor of Araunah, and offered sacrifice thereon, the blessed God answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar. On a third and grand occasion, when Solomon had built the temple, offered his burnt-offerings, and made his prayer, the fire came down from heaven, accepting and consuming the sacrifices.

On each of these occasions the Lord God graciously indicated His acceptance and appropriation of what His servants had presented to Him. But now the ten tribes

had broken off from the rest, abandoned the temple and the priesthood, rebelled against and rejected their God, substituting the work of their own hands for Him who made the heavens, who had "comprehended the dust of the earth in a balance, weighed the mountains in scales," and measured the vast ocean in the hollow of His hand. They had slain all His prophets except the one now standing before them. Could it be expected that God would show any signs of recognition to rebels so outrageously criminal? Could it be anticipated that any favour whatever would be shown to them? Might it not reasonably have been looked for, now that they were all assembled and had just offered a solemn sacrifice to Baal, that pestilence or fire would issue forth to the destruction of the whole multitude, even as in days of old their fathers had been destroyed?

Such might indeed have been expected. But the one prophet whom they had not slain was standing there before God. He had just offered sacrifice. No priest of the Lord was there to present it in the orderly and prescribed way. It was not the spot where God had placed His name, but another, an unconsecrated spot. No ark was there, no mercy-seat, whence, from between the cherubim, God might look upon what was passing. All was confusion and disorder as respected His arrangements. But the God of Israel had long before revealed Himself as gracious, merciful, long-suffering; and this His blessed character He now again signally displays. According to the prayer of Elijah the fire once more descends from heaven. That which Baal's prophets had in vain been seeking for now comes down upon Elijah's altar. The fire of God consumes the burnt-offering and the wood; not these only, but likewise the water, the stones, and the very dust.

After this exhibition of power and goodness, heightened

by contrast with the failure of Baal's votaries, what could the people do? Could they persist in their rebellion? Their hearts are melted within them; with one voice they shout, "The Lord, He is the God; the Lord, He is the God;" and they throw themselves on their faces before Him. They worship Him. Doubtless they were sincere, their minds deeply impressed with what they had seen; but, like all other miraculous displays in their behalf, the effect of this one did not continue long. As the Lord said of them afterwards by His servant Hosea, "Your goodness is as a morning cloud, as the early dew it goeth away."

For the time being, however, it is sincere. Elijah at once takes advantage of it to put in force the law of Deut. xiii. 5 against the false prophets. At his word they are taken down to the bed of the Kishon, and there slain. The succeeding flood in the river swept out their bodies into the sea.

(To be continued.) 136

DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN.

Read 2 SAMUEL xxiii. 8-23.

DAVID had thousands of soldiers about him, but they were not all of the same rank; and there are differences of rank in God's army now. All were warriors of David, but some among them are described as "mighty" men. Let us therefore not be content with being Christians only, but rather seek to be *mighty* ones—not in the world's judgment, but in God's estimation. If the world says "Well done," it is worth nothing; but if the Lord says "Well done," it will be unmingled joy to us. This chapter not only encourages us to be mighty, but shows also *how* we can be so.

First of all we have the account of Adino the Tachmonite, who did a wonderful thing in slaying eight hundred

men at one time. How was he able to do it? A verse in the preceding chapter may help us: "Thy gentleness hath made me great." (*v.* 36.) It seems strange to speak of gentleness when describing the character of a warrior; but whenever a Christian has no power, one thing is certain—he lacks the sense of God's gentleness; that is, of His grace and tenderness. We seldom attach the word "gentleness" to God. We see His works in creation, and talk of His power, and we may even prove it ourselves; but we need to know something more. The machine which can flatten iron by its crushing weight is able also to crack a nut without breaking the kernel. If a Christian gets true thoughts of God's forbearance, love, and tenderness, and is bowed down by them, he will become mighty. "Thy gentleness hath made me great," or, according to the margin, "has multiplied me." Adino was multiplied in his victory that day.

Eleazar smote the Philistines "until his hand was weary." Is that how we use the sword of the Spirit? We have the same sword that the Lord Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, used, and His strength is ours also. This man grasped the sword, and his hand so clave to it that he could not open his fingers. We are apt to say, "I cannot do that; I never think of a text at the right time." Is not this because we do not use the sword at home and in daily life? It does not need cleverness or a specially retentive memory for this; the spirit of a child, and sitting at the feet of Jesus, is what is wanted, and we shall find that God will honour His word. Many got the profit of Eleazar's victory; for we read, "The people returned after him only to spoil."

Shammah the son of Agee defended some ground against the Philistines. It was full of lentiles, which seems to show the poverty of the place. Why then did Shammah

stand to defend it? Why was it so valuable in his sight? Because he looked at it from God's side. It was God's ground, and so he would not yield an inch to the enemy. Is that how we stand when the enemy comes to get a corner of our hearts? God says, "My son, give me thine heart," and He wants it *all*. He has purchased it, and wants it to be filled with Christ. Others may little know what a conflict is going on when the enemy comes and we will not yield in the slightest degree to him; but God will not forget, nor allow our fortitude to pass unrecognized. If we stand firm at the outposts when the enemy approaches, all will be right, even though he comes in "like a flood."

We have next the remarkable account of the "three mighty men." The first words about them are important. They "went down" to David. David typifies Jesus as the rejected one, and the friends of David typify the friends of the Lord Jesus; and the time is coming when He will sit on His throne in power and great glory. But is Jesus now the one attraction for us? Is His presence enough for us anywhere? Certainly it should be. Observe also *when* these men went to David. It was in harvest time. They must have had an interest in the harvest. Perhaps they had helped to sow the seed, and were looking forward to the time of reaping; but just at this time the call came for them to go to David, and they turned their backs on everything and went. God's saints have often to do that now. Where, then, did these men go, and to what company? To the cave of Adullam, and to the most discreditable people (see 1 Sam. xxii. 1); and such may be our lot now if we desire to company with the Lord Jesus. It is well to make a good beginning, as these men did, and to take fully the place of rejection. The time came when they had an opportunity of showing how deep was their attachment to their lord. "And David longed, and said,

Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" But the enemy had it! Is not that true often of the well in the Christian, that it is not available for the Lord Jesus, because the enemy has it? David "longed" for the water, but gave no command, and these three men were determined to get it. Why? Because they loved him. They must have kept close to him, or they would not have heard his longing. It was only a breathing out of his heart; but that was enough, and they were ready to break through every opposition and face every foe. It was not a question of defending David against the enemy, but they had got into the secret of his heart about the water, and then said, "We *must* get it!" and down they went. We may learn something from this. Do you know a Christian who was once happy, but who has turned his back upon the Lord, and is in the power of the enemy? If so, will you not break through the ranks of the foe, that so this soul may be brought back to Him, because you love Him? This would also be a sacrifice acceptable to God. David did not drink of the water, but poured it out before the Lord. If an effort is made to bring back a wandering soul, it is a draught for God, and such a service will be owned before the throne of God; "Verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

Abishai's lifting up his spear against three hundred, and slaying them, was a mighty thing, but not *so* mighty; it was a different degree of faith. We might have judged that Abishai's act far exceeded that of getting a draught of water for David, but yet it is written, "he attained not unto the first three."

Wondrous exploits are related of Benaiah. He did "many acts," the first of which was that he slew two lion-like men of Moab, Moab being an illustration of the flesh

and its power. There was no delay about Benaiah's work. He slew these men; wounding would not do. Do we seek thus to meet the flesh? Let us never spare it. Benaiah next slew a lion in a pit. He was not like the sluggard in the Proverbs, who says, "There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets;" but he went "in the time of snow." He tracked the marks of the lion in the snow, and went down into the pit and slew him. The whiteness of the fields may remind us of a conscience made "whiter than snow" by the blood of Jesus; and if it gets defiled, let us trace the evil, and not be afraid to meet it in His strength. "I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men," says Paul.

This was a second victory for Benaiah; but he did not stop there. The next foe was an Egyptian, the type of the world. He was a "goodly man" too, like the world in its attractiveness. Many who overcome the Moabite and the lion fail here. The Egyptian had a spear; Benaiah a staff. A Christian in a right spirit can say, "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Benaiah plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear. The world comes before a Christian with some specious-looking word from the Bible, and perhaps says to him, "There is a time to dance." The Christian can say, "There is a time to kill" too, and so pluck the spear from his hand, and turn it against him. The devil came to the Lord Jesus, and said to Him, "It is written," and the Lord plucked his spear from him, and thrust him with "It is written" too. A Christian does not want the world; he has something better, something new, which pushes out the old thing which he now hates.

"These things Benaiah did," and we might add, he teaches us how to get the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. In 1 Kings we see what service

Benaiah did afterwards at the beginning of Solomon's reign, which was the time of judgment. David's reign represents the long-suffering of God when the enemies were allowed to live, the time of grace; but when Solomon's throne was set up, Benaiah was used to cut them down. So with the saints of God; they are to judge the world. (1 Cor. vi. 2.) Shall we not seek to be preparing for that by becoming disciplined through secret victories now?—*From notes of an Address by the late W. H. W.*

NOTES AND REPLIES.

Why was God angry with Balaam for going to Balak? Compare Numbers xxii. v. 22 with v. 20.

BECAUSE Balaam went uncalled by the men. God had said, "If the men come to call thee." Balaam's obedience hung upon a trifle, so to speak; and little things often test uprightness far more than great ones. Let us never be satisfied with anything short of unreserved and implicit obedience. Further, Balaam was wrong in asking a second time when he had got the positive refusal in verse 12, "Thou shalt not go with them." Thus Balaam's history has an important bearing on the oft-recurring question of prayer for guidance. If we obtain a decided answer, and we still ask because our eye is not single, we may think we receive another answer from God; but it may be the answering of a fool according to his folly, and God may permit the devil to take advantage of us and deceive us because we are willing to be deceived.

What is the difference between the Body and the Bride of Christ?

THERE are three prominent figures of the Church of Christ used in Scripture, each of which has a peculiar beauty and significance. These are the Body, the Bride, and the Building. (1.) The *Body* tells of *union in life*, the Lord being regarded as the head, from whom each member draws life and nourishment. (Eph. iv. 4-16; 1 Cor. xii.; Col. ii. 17-19.) (2.) The *Bride* shows forth *fellowship, or union in love*. (See Eph. v. 23-33; Rev. xxi. 9.) There is precious typical teaching unfolded in the histories of the brides of the Old Testament, particularly those of Eve, Rebecca, Rachel, Asenath, Ruth. In all of them in various ways the idea of a "*helpmeet*" is illustrated. (3.) The *Building* points to a *dwelling-place for God*, and directs our thoughts

to the Rock of Ages, the Living Stone on which each believer as a living stone is built, to form throughout eternity His temple, His holy city. (See Eph. ii. 20-22.) We take this opportunity of referring our readers to *The Typical Foreshadowings in Genesis*, by W. Lincoln, the careful perusal of which will greatly help those who seek to gather out of the heavenly treasure-house things new and old. In pages 5-12, and elsewhere, the humble follower of Christ will find some of God's foreshadowings brought out in a way that will draw forth his heart in worship and in praise to Him who has revealed how nigh, how very nigh, He has brought us into the fellowship of His love; for as "the woman is *of* the man," so are we of Christ (compare 1 Cor. xi. 8 with Eph. v. 30); and as "the woman is *for* the man," so shall we be for Christ, a helpmeet for Him in the new heavens and the new earth, of which the new Jerusalem will be the centre and the glory. These "Foreshadowings" will open up to many persons fresh channels of precious thought in connection with the word of God.

Does 1 Cor. ix. 20-23 justify a Christian in joining any worldly society for a philanthropic object?

IN the first place notice that Paul became "all things to all men" for one object only—"that I might save some," as he became "servant unto all" (v. 19) that he might "gain the more" for Christ. His object was not to save the wreck, but to save out of it. So when Peter preached in Acts ii. 40, his testimony led those who were pricked to the heart to save themselves *from* that "untoward generation." In the next place it has to be remembered that 2 Cor. vi. 14-16 plainly shows that a Christian can legitimately have no such connection with the world as implies or involves "fellowship," "communion," "concord," "or agreement." But the question whether any particular thing involves a breach of this precept must be left to the conscience of each child of God as guided by the Word. We have to "do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith;" but to guard on the one hand against being persuaded by human reasoning into anything that would be an unequal *yoke*; and on the other against a fleshly carrying out of separation which lacks humility, and must therefore lack spirituality. To the single eye desiring to do right the line will be drawn right, for God will guide; to one seeking to do his own will no rule will be plain enough. It is the meek that God will guide in judgment (Ps. xxv. 9), and in all such practical matters we would remind fellow-saints of the precept, "Become not ye the slaves of men."

“THE COMING ONE.”

(Hebrew, מָשִׁיחַ ; Greek, $\delta \epsilon\rho\chi\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$.)

IN both Old and New Testaments “the Coming One” stands out as one of the many blessed titles of our Lord; and in this world of sin and sorrow it is

“A name He bears,
And a form of love He wears,”

most joyful to Himself, and most comforting to His people who are here below waiting for Him. It was so to Old Testament saints in the character of the coming in which they were waiting for Him, and verily it is so to us. Our “heavenly calling,” with its brighter hope, and the deeper troubles and darker guilt of the present age, unite to make the very name, “the Coming One,” dear to us. In the original Hebrew and Greek it reads more plainly as a *title* of our Lord than it does in our English translation.

The much-loved verse, Heb. x. 37, “For yet a little while, and *He that shall come* will come, and will not tarry,” should rather be, “and *the Coming One* ($\delta \epsilon\rho\chi\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$) will come.” “The Coming One” He was in the thoughts and hearts of all those who, Anna-like, of old looked for the redemption of Jerusalem; and “the Coming One” He still is to *our* thoughts and hearts, though in such a different way and for such a different work. Not again, as then, “to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself,” but “unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin” (*i.e.* without sin-offering) “unto salvation.” But in either case the title of “the Coming One” suits Him.

And as the Spirit in the saints uses it here below, it is

but the response to *His own utterance* above. "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me. . . . Then said I, Lo, I COME to do thy will, O God." This was His language before He came to suffer and die; and in our New Testament time He still says, "I WILL COME again, and receive you unto myself." Surely the Spirit and the Bride's crying "Come" is but the worthy and the suited worship of Him whose very title is "the Coming One."

Some passages in which this title may be fairly said to occur may now be pointed out; and first in the Old Testament. "Blessed be He that cometh" (or "the Coming One"—Hebrew, אָבִיר) "in the name of the Lord." (Ps. cxviii. 26.) This verse may be taken as expressing the hope of the godly in the Israel nation. They looked for "the Coming One" as a matter of deliverance, and of joy and blessing. The darker their troubles were—whether national or individual, or in family life—the more they *leaned hard* upon the expectation of "the Coming One." The 118th psalm shows this. It was written at a time of some deliverance, but tells of waiting for still more; and the cry (*v.* 25), "Save now, I beseech thee, O Jehovah," is instantly, as it were, answered to the sorrowing heart by the next words, "Blessed be the Coming One in the name of Jehovah." Thus inwoven was this title with every bright and blessed expectation that the godly ones in Israel cherished. From the moment of the promise of the woman's Seed in Eden's garden, faith and hope alike looked *onward*—Abraham, to the Lamb that God *would* provide; Moses, to the Prophet that *should arise* after him; David, to the Son who should be *heir* of his throne for ever; the prophets, to the Suffering One who was the subject of their own utterances; and here in Ps. cxviii. the returned remnant from the Babylon captivity still say,

“Blessed be the Coming One”—till it is left to Simeon in the temple to say at last, “Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” “The Coming One” was indeed then “what kings and prophets waited for;” and the darker grew the shades around them, the dearer did this title of their Messiah become to them.

But the Old Testament has *warning words* on the subject of “the Coming One,” as well as the language of hope and joy. We find it in such scriptures as Mal. iii. 1, 2: “The Lord, whom ye seek” (*i.e.* formally and hypocritically seek), “shall suddenly COME to His temple . . . behold, He shall COME. . . . But who may abide the day of *His coming?* and who shall stand when He appeareth?” We here have the *solemn* aspect of that day of “the Coming One,” as we before had its joyous aspect. The state of the nation required it. Their use of the 118th psalm in the synagogue and temple was always helping them to the laxest and most carnal repetitions of, “Blessed be the Coming One in the name of Jehovah.” Psalms cxiii.-cxviii. formed in Jewish usage “the greater Hallel” (answering to the prayer book of a modern national religion), and thus it was sung at the annual festivals, especially at the passover and the feast of tabernacles. Hence its closing words would remain in the ear and memory of a people who had but few copies of their scriptures in their own dwellings, and the most careless Israelite would carry away the words, “Blessed be the Coming One,” and use them as a mere chorus of the song. Thus it was that even the Samaritan woman at the well could say, “I know that *Messias cometh* . . . when He is *come*, He will tell us all things”—all careless and immoral though she was. No wonder then that prophets gave warnings of that day, as godly psalmists also sang of it. The very title, “The

Coming One," was the highest joy of the righteous, and the most awful warning to formalists and hypocrites.

The same double application of this title of our Lord is in the New Testament. There John the Baptist is the first to use it. See Matt. iii. 11. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me" (or, "*the Coming One* after me") "is mightier than I . . . He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire . . . He will . . . gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Here we again have the two opposite aspects of "the Coming One." To the submitting and trusting sinner, "the Coming One" brings the joy and blessing of the Holy Ghost, and heavenly fire—a "fire" that is kindled already in the souls of saved sinners, but will be perfected both *in* them and *around* them when they stand in God's own presence on the "sea of glass *mingled with fire* . . . having the harps of God." But John the Baptist warns the religious formalists, as Malachi did before him, that the day of "the Coming One" could bring them nothing but that "unquenchable fire" which would consume them as chaff.

But this faith in "the Coming One," and testimony concerning Him, both to saint and sinner, needs to be *sustained* in our souls, for prolonged sufferings will severely test it. We see this in Matt. xi. 3, the next place where the title occurs. The same John who had, at the outset of his public ministry, testified so blessedly of Jesus as "the Coming One" was now cast into prison, and, surrounded by every discouragement, his faith wavers, and he sends two of his disciples to Jesus with the question, "Art thou He that should come?" (or, "Art thou the Coming One?") "or do we look for another?" Who that listened to John's words at the bank of the Jordan would ever have expected this? Let all of us watch and pray; for, as our Master kindly said;

“The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” And especially do we need this watchfulness and prayer to keep alive in our hearts the hope of “the Coming One,” and our steadfast testimony to Jesus our Lord in this character. But John the Baptist had brought his drooping faith and hope to the right source for help; and perhaps no part of his Saviour’s answer would more revive these graces in him than the word, “The poor have the gospel preached unto them.” And so with us. It is patient ministry to “the poor of the flock,” and gospel labour to the perishing around us, which so helps to revive in us the confident expectation of “the Coming One,” and keeps it alive; whilst he who smites his fellow-servants with hard words—whether written and printed, or only spoken—and eats and drinks with the drunken, is the one who really says in his heart, “My Lord delayeth His coming.”

But John the Baptist in prison is not the only one in the New Testament who thus fainted and grew weary as to “the Coming One.” Paul had to speak to the Hebrews in the same strain as Jesus did to His ill-treated forerunner. The Hebrews were no longer *building themselves up* upon their “most holy faith,” as they had formerly done, and were not holding fast the profession of their hope; they were acting as if He who had promised that He would “come again” was not faithful. They began to think that confession of the Nazarene, “the carpenter’s son,” and going forth unto Him “outside the camp” of the national religion, was costing them too dear. They no longer “took joyfully the spoiling of their goods,” for Jesus’ sake, as they once did. Thus faith no longer grasped the “better and enduring substance” which they had in Jesus at God’s right hand; and their hearts no longer sang,

“The road may be rough,
But it *cannot* be long.”

It seemed to them both long and rough. Like John the Baptist in the prison, they were fainting under severe and lengthened trial; but Paul points to Jesus as "the Coming One," and says, "Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise; for yet a little while, and "THE COMING ONE" will come, and will not tarry." Thus it is again to fainting saints that the Holy Ghost gives this precious title of our Lord. Here also, as in Matt. iii., it is accompanied with a warning word of the "perdition" of those who "draw back," and thus show they never were Christ's.

There is yet another sense of Jesus our Lord, as $\acute{\omicron}$ $\epsilon\rho\chi\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$, "the Coming One." It is in the book of Revelation. (See Rev. i. 9, and iv. 8.) "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is and which was, and which is to come (or, "and the Coming One"), "the Almighty." And again, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" (or, "and art the Coming One"). This shows us God and the Lamb as still to us "the Coming One," even in the glory. For *faith*, which rests in Him as our present portion; and *hope*, which is ever expecting future good things from Him, not yet received, are as eternally abiding as love itself is. "Now *abideth* faith, hope, love, these three." (1 Cor. xiii. 13.) It is in this sense that Jesus our Lord will *for ever* be to us the one that is "to come." There is a sense in which we shall still for ever say,

"'Tis better on before."

More heights and depths, and lengths and breadths of boundless blessedness will still remain stored up for us in God, and in the Lamb! Do not the very words, "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall FEED them and shall LEAD them unto fountains of living waters," imply pastures ever new, and springs deeper than ever

before tasted, with which it will be His eternal joy to acquaint His redeemed?

If so, the Scripture teaches three different unfoldings of Jesus to the faith and hope of His people as “the Coming One”—one *in the past*, as “the Coming One” who should one day put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; another *now*, “the Coming One” who shall ere long call us to Himself in the image of the heavenly; and another that lasts for ever; for when bearing His own heavenly image we still shall joy in Him as the Lord God Almighty, who not only was and is, but is *to come*.

Well may Solomon say, “It is the glory of God to *conceal* a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter” (Prov. xxv. 2); for it is surely true that to all eternity there will be more blessedness *hidden* in God and the Lamb than any of us His saints will ever know—and our “honour,” who are His kings and priests, will for ever be to “search” it out.

May this be more our business even now. Amen.

H. D.

WORSHIP.—God is seeking worshippers—first, *in spirit*; second, *in truth*. A man may have great knowledge of truth, and yet know very little of the Spirit. Another may think he is worshipping in spirit, and yet be ignorant of much of the truth. The Jews had many synagogues where they might hear the word of God read and expounded, but they had to go to the temple to worship. In the synagogue they might learn the will of God in this matter, but they must go to the temple to do His will; and there they must bring an offering too—no one was to come empty-handed. Worship has to do with God Himself. It is the giving back to God what He has given us. It is the going out of the heart to God in adoring love and gratitude for what He is and has done.

H. D. R.

WONDROUS LOVE.

LUKE XV. 4, 5.

Thou needest me! And thus Thy wondrous love
 Could stoop so low for winning
 My soul from all its sinning,
 To set me with Thyself enthroned above.
 Then, Lord, since Thou canst claim me as Thy need,
 Oh, may I yield Thee all myself indeed!

JOHN VI. 51, 56.

Thou feedest me! And thus the life which came
 By Thy great woe of dying
 May find all rich supplying
 Of grace and strength to glorify Thy name.
 Then since Thou bidst me, Lord, on Thee to feed,
 Oh, may I feast my soul on Thee indeed!

PSALM LXXIII. 24.

Thou leadest me! And thus my glad heart knows
 Whither the way is tending,
 How at this brief life's ending
 All heaven shall open and *Thy face* disclose;
 And though the way be rough, since Thou dost lead
 Home to the Father's house, 'tis blest indeed!

A. L. B.

THE "BETTER THINGS" OF THE EPISTLE TO
 THE HEBREWS.

THE marked repetition of a word or of a sentence in the Scriptures is doubtless intended to attract our attention. Thus many have noticed the frequent use made of the word "precious" by the apostle Peter; and in the epistle to the Hebrews we find the word "better" meeting the eye again and again with reference to *person, place, and things*, and each connection is interesting and instructive.

Each day's careful reading of Scripture must convince

us of the importance and desirableness of accuracy; and I would press on young believers to seek after it, remembering that they are indwelt by the Holy Ghost, who inspired the word of God (both the Old and New Testaments), and who has been given them in order that they may *know* the things freely given them of God; as it is written, "He shall bring all things to your remembrance;" "He shall teach you all things;" "He shall guide you into all truth;" "He shall show you things to come;" in all of which He takes of Christ's things, and shows them unto us, so glorifying Him.

In this epistle, as in other parts of the Word, *person* takes the precedence of places and things, and gives interest and importance to both. In this respect the type and antitype differ, indeed are contrasted. Aaron and others who foreshadowed Him borrowed dignity from their *office and associations*. Apart from these they were mere men, nothing nearer to God than others, and nothing better in themselves as before God. But their antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ, stamps with dignity whatever office He fills, and gives glory to every relationship which He sustains, or work which He performs. The first example of superiority shown by the word "better" in this epistle is connected with the blessed person of the Son of God.

Before I proceed, let me notice the peculiar style of this epistle. It is remarkably Jewish, and just suited to those *to whom it was written*. No careful reader can fail to notice the difference between it and the epistles written to churches composed chiefly of Gentile converts. Whatever legitimate use we may make of it, I doubt not but that the Jewish remnant and the future nation will use it, under the Melchisedec priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be a Priest upon His throne.

This applies also, I judge, to the epistles of Peter and James, as well as to by far the greater part of the book of Revelation. *We* suck sweetness from *Israel's* promises, yet leave them intact for them; so also we use these epistles for our profit: "All Scripture is divinely inspired, and is profitable."

THE SON "MADE SO MUCH BETTER THAN THE ANGELS."

The excellence or better thing connected with THE SON is His position, "made so much *better* than the angels as He hath by inheritance *obtained* a more excellent name than they"—that more excellent name being "My Son," which God never gave to angels, not even to Michael; whilst His position is the right hand of God, a position to which neither angel nor archangel was ever raised.

Let us remember also that both the name and position are connected with His resurrection, and therefore presuppose and point to His humiliation, His cross, and death.

This little word "made" always refers either to His humiliation or to its results; never to that which was simply natural to Him as the eternal Son of God. He *is* in His simple excellency and dignity Maker of all things; but cannot be *made* anything, any more than He could have been exalted, unless He had first stooped.

He *was* equal with God, but "*made* Himself of no reputation;" "The Word was *made* flesh, and dwelt among us." "He was *made* a little lower than the angels in order to suffer death;" therefore He is "*made* so much better" than they—"made perfect through suffering;" "*made* higher than the heavens." "I will *make* Him, my First-born, higher than the kings of the earth"—the position He will *manifestly* occupy in the millennial kingdom; pre-eminent on earth, and first in heaven.

The value of this little word to us in association with Him is this, that we are *one* with Him. He was "*made*

sin *for* us, that we might be *made* the righteousness of God *in* Him." He is our righteousness. Grace has *made* us that which we were not by *nature*: "He hath raised us up together with Him, and *made* us sit together with Him in the heavenlies." He hath "*made* us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign over the earth."

Thus we see that this blessed One, who *being* the outshining of the Father's glory, and the express character of the Father's substance, and having by Himself purged our sins, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, was "*made* so much *better* than the angels, as He hath obtained a *more excellent* name than they."

God has spoken unto us by His Son; and He has revealed God to us, and that as *Father*. The Son alone could do this. "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." He is "*the only-begotten Son*," and He could say when on the earth, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

THE "BETTER THINGS" THAT ACCOMPANY SALVATION.

The portion of the epistle between chapters i. and vii. describes our increased responsibility under such a revelation, and given by such a glorious person. It contains also comparisons and arguments, doctrinal statements and exhortations, all in keeping and harmony with the one object of the entire epistle. In chap. vi. 9 "*better things*" are spoken of as characterizing the true believers, and distinguishing them from the apostate ones around them. The good ground brings forth good fruit, and receives blessing from God. He will not forget their work and love showed toward His name; and everyone is exhorted to diligence and patience.

"THE LESS IS BLESSED OF THE BETTER."

In chap. vii. the word "*better*" occurs three times. In verse 9 it is used to mark the superiority of Melchisedec

as compared with Abraham. His greatness is manifested by his receiving tithes from Abraham, and blessing him, for "without all contradiction the less is blessed of the *better*." Far more should He be magnified in our eyes who is made "a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec," to bless us and to receive our gifts.

"A BETTER HOPE."

In verse 19 the word is connected with *hope*: "The law made nothing perfect; but it brought in a *better* hope, by which we draw nigh unto God." The *moral* law could only show man his sin, and condemn him; and the *ceremonial* law could not make the comer thereunto perfect as pertaining to the conscience; but both made way for the "better hope," the one all-atoning sacrifice of Christ, by which through faith we draw nigh unto God, knowing that His one offering has both sanctified and *perfected* us for ever. To those under law the coming of Christ was indeed "a *better* hope," even as now His second coming is to us a "blessed hope."

"A BETTER COVENANT, ESTABLISHED UPON BETTER PROMISES."

Again in verse 22 we have the word in connection with *covenant*. Jesus, confirmed in His priesthood by an oath, is thus "made surety of a *better* testament" or covenant; and in chap. viii., the summing up of the previous arguments for the excellency of person and things, it is stated, "But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry,* by how much also He is the mediator of a *better* covenant [or testament] established upon *better* promises." It is a more excellent ministry, in the sphere of which the tabernacle, and therefore also the temple, was a pattern; as much more excellent as heaven excels earth. It is a

* *Litourgia*, a word used for ministry and serving in this epistle.

better covenant, established upon better promises ; that is, of *grace* and unconditional blessing. Of this Paul largely treats in 2 Corinthians iii. when he exults in the ministry of grace ; not of the letter, nor of condemnation, the glory of which was transitory (indeed no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth), but that of the Spirit and of righteousness, the glory of which abides shining in the face of Jesus Christ. When His glory is seen by Israel, it will turn them from the glory of Sinai, to which they now look ; and they shall be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Observe nothing is here said of *degrees* of glory ; the change is from one glory to another. Of course the contemplation of Christ must gradually transform us ; but I do not think that is taught here.

With respect to the “better promises,” I would observe that I do not think the law, strictly speaking, knows anything of promise, because it cannot *give*. It would reward the perfect worker, but does not give life. It neither *gives* nor *forgives* anything. If man fulfilled all that is connected with the word “*thou*,” he would have righteousness by the law ; but as he does not nor can fulfil it, God’s covenant of grace comes in—“I will give,” “forgive,” and “put my law into their hearts.”

God is the giver, man the receiver ; God is the worker, man the workmanship. “Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things : to Him be glory.”

“BETTER SACRIFICES.”

Chapter ix. describes the tabernacle, its furniture, priests, and sacrifices, all in character ; creation and created things yet used of God, and having value in their place and for the time. Then at the close we again find the repeated term “better” connected with sacrifice : “It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should

be purified with these ; but the heavenly things themselves with *better* sacrifices than these." The tabernacle not made with hands is heaven itself. The Priest is not a mere creature, yet a real man, and also the Son of God. His offering derives its value from the excellency of His person, and is the *better* sacrifice (all sacrifices in one), which, once offered, never needs to be, never will be, repeated, and leaves the believer nothing to look for but his Lord's second appearing unto salvation. The Lamb of God and sin were once seen together, but never more will they be so seen ; for "He hath in the end of the age put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

"A BETTER AND ENDURING SUBSTANCE."

In chapter x. this term is employed in connection with the believing Hebrews' joy in suffering and loss for Christ's sake : "Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a *better* and an enduring substance." All that they had given up for Christ was but as shadow compared with the substance in heaven. The persuasion of this enabled them to endure joyfully, while they were made a gazing-stock by reproaches and afflictions, or became companions of them that were so used.

"A BETTER COUNTRY."

In chapter xi. the word again occurs three times. In verse 16 it is used to describe the country, the heavenly country which was the object of desire and hope to those who for the sake of it had come out of their own land. They had not received the promises, but had seen them afar off, were persuaded of their truth, and embraced them, confessing they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Yes, such a hold had these things on their hearts, that they were proof against all temptation to return to that country which they had left ; for "now they desire a *better*, that is,

an heavenly." Such a confession rejoices the heart of God — "He is not ashamed to be called their God."

"A BETTER RESURRECTION."

"Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a *better* resurrection." (v. 35.) Resurrection was "better" in the eyes of those who thus suffered than restoration to life in this present scene, such as is mentioned in the previous part of the verse ("women received their dead raised to life again"); and the martyr's crown of life tells indeed of a "better resurrection."

THE "BETTER THING" PROVIDED FOR US.

Verses 39 and 40 connect this little word with that which God has provided for *us*. Those named in the chapter, by faith "obtained a good report;" that is, they proved fair witnesses to coming good, but did not receive the promise, "God having provided some *better* thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." The "*better* thing" is reserved for resurrection at the coming of the Lord. At His coming and kingdom the gathered Church, His body, perfected in His image, in everything conformed to Him (the best of blessings surely), will first have her portion. Such of Israel, and others referred to above, as have died, will, in raised bodies, have their promised "*better* things." Those of Israel who shall not have passed through death will possess their *better* millennial blessings on the earth, and the obedient nations also theirs through Israel.

THE BLOOD THAT SPEAKETH "BETTER THINGS."

We now come to the last time the word occurs in the epistle, and its connection is with blood—"the blood of sprinkling"—"the precious blood of Christ"—"that speaketh *better* things [or, "a better thing"] than that of Abel." (Chap. xii. 24.) His blood spoke of guilt, and called for judgment only. The blood of sprinkling speaks

peace, and delivers men from the fear of judgment. This peace-speaking blood is a part of the blessed association of faith *now*, to which restored Israel will yet come.

I have written these few thoughts in order to draw attention to the entire epistle, which will abundantly repay the prayerful, careful reader, with its precious and glorious truths.

H. H.

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE.

(Continued from page 114.)

JEZEBEL'S THREAT AND ELIJAH'S FLIGHT.

JUDGMENT having been executed on those who made it their business to mislead, the faithful prophet has reason to exult in the success wherewith the Lord has blessed his efforts. The king and all Israel now own Jehovah as their God. The prophets of Baal and of the groves are no more. By the special favour of the Most High, Elijah has brought it about and he alone. His faith has been greatly honoured before all Israel; and to his faithfulness they owe this restoration to the divine favour. He now says to Ahab, who was at hand, after sanctioning, if not assisting in, the execution of his prophets, "Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain." After the excitement and turmoil of the day, this direction, coupled with the important announcement, must have been most welcome.

But though the king's part is ended, that of Elijah is not. The Lord God had said He would send rain, but no rain comes. Perhaps the prophet judges that since Israel's heart is now turned to the Lord there is no further reason for withholding it. But not so. Has he forgotten his prayer that it might not rain? and that it was through him the heaven had been shut up three years and a half?

Perhaps God would have him intercede that the heavens might be unlocked; and likewise that He would honour him before all the nation by granting in response to his prayers the blessing they so much needed. But pray he must, in order that his first announcement to Ahab may be established.

He now ascends to the summit of mount Carmel, and there, away from the multitude, though within their sight, he bends down with his face to the earth, the head between the knees, the posture of the deepest and most humble reverence. From the apostle James we learn what he was doing—"He prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." But his prayer is not at once granted. He must learn the danger of shutting up heaven by the difficulty he experiences in opening it again. The servant returns, saying that nothing is to be seen. The command has not yet gone forth to gather the waters from the sea and pour them out upon the land. (Amos v. 8.) Seven times must he repeat his petition; and not till after the seventh time is the indication seen that the Lord has granted his request. The hand of the Lord at length displays itself; signs of the coming tempest increase. Ahab is told to hasten home, lest the rain stop him, being thus made the harbinger of the coming mercy, perhaps in reward for his submission, tardy though it had been. It was so like the grace of our God to make him ride home in the forefront, as it were, bringing the blessing with him, and thus to prepare the hearts of his household to receive the unwelcome tidings of the circumstances by which it had been brought about.

But how shall he meet Jezebel, the sanguinary murderer of the Lord's servants, and the instigator of her husband to all his wickedness? "The hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab

to the entrance of Jezreel"—about thirty miles. Though wearied by the exciting events of the day, during which there had been for him neither food, repose, nor relaxation of mind or heart, there is yet further work for his ardent spirit. He has to honour the king, and strengthen him in the maintenance of his new position, and assist him in carrying out the further destruction of the Baal worship. He therefore becomes one of his personal attendants, and runs before his chariot. Though unused to rapid movement, the hand of his God enables him to accomplish it, bearing him up against the fatigue. The rider in the chariot had just been vanquished by him who ran before him. Elijah had triumphed over him and all his people; but now he takes the place of one of his domestics.

Had Ahab thoroughly accepted his altered position towards God, it might have been anticipated that he would have invited Elijah up into his chariot, and made him ride beside him, that he might have the benefit of his counsel and his prayers. Now was the time to do him honour, that he might obtain further favours from his God. But the heart of Ahab was not thus moved. The impression produced on him seems to have been but transient; for in 1 Kings xxii. 6 we learn he soon surrounded himself with other false prophets, replacing those who had been slain.

But Elijah was rushing into fresh perils in thus honouring his king. He was not likely to find a friendly face among the relatives of those whom he had just destroyed; nor was it probable that he would be welcomed by Baal's votaries, to whose worship he had dealt what seemed to be a death-blow; nor is Jezebel likely to show him favour. He arrives in Jezreel before the multitude can return from Carmel to relate the wonders they had witnessed, and impress them upon the citizens. These might in the

meanwhile destroy him in an outburst of fury. But, like the apostle Paul, he could say, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy," &c.

That night Ahab relates to Jezebel "all that Elijah had done, and how he had slain all the prophets with the sword." Far from being subdued, far from acknowledging the God of Israel, who had by this marvellous miracle shown his power in contrast with the impotency of her idols, all that occupies her heart is the thirst for vengeance on account of the death of her prophets. For this she considers Elijah responsible, though her husband and all Israel had concurred in their destruction. She sends him the threatening message, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time." But what could her gods do? or what could she do? Did she feel able to fulfil her threat, there was nothing to prevent her messenger from at once putting him to death. In the bitterness of her spirit she denounces vengeance, probably not in any way calculating on the effect it would produce.

Could it be conceived that he who cared nothing for the frowns of man, who had so gloriously withstood the king and all Israel, the one to whom God had that day given such a mighty victory over them all, that *he* should fear the anger of a woman? Could it be imagined that with such important interests at stake, and the total rooting out of Baal worship within his grasp, that he who had braved so much and suffered so much through implicit reliance upon his God, to whom He had that very day appeared in a way never before known, that *he* should be deterred from the settled purpose of his soul by the threat of a woman? Nay, that he should abandon his victory, and hasten to conceal himself from her wrath?

Yet such is man! With firmness of purpose and zeal beyond measure, instability is yet mixed up. The longest persistence in a right course does not prevent a departure from it. The boldness of a lion does not preclude the timidity of a hare. The Creator has willed that the creature should see the necessity, the indispensable necessity, of His sustaining arm, both to keep him from falling and going astray, as well as to fight against Satan in his behalf.

One very striking lesson to this effect has He given us in this record of His faithful servant Elijah. "He arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there." It would appear that he departs that very night. Hastening out of Ahab's dominions, he passes onwards to the south, traverses the country of the king of Judah, with whom Ahab was in alliance, and remembering, perhaps, what Obadiah had told him as to the search Ahab had previously made, does not think himself safe while there. Apprehensive too that he may be discovered through his servant, or perhaps betrayed, he leaves him on the southern boundary, and passes alone into the wilderness. Not even then feeling secure, he makes another day's journey further into the desert.

There at length is his troubled heart freed from external disquiet. He is alone, without food, or the means of obtaining any; but these things disturb him not. He had come there to escape the wrath of Jezebel, and that fear is now removed. He is beyond her reach.

But now there is a sad tumult within. "He requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." Strange that he who had fled thither to save his life should now ask to have it taken away! How is

this to be accounted for? Elijah is not a man of vacillating mind, subject to sudden impulses. Among all the saints of the Old Testament it would be difficult to find one so resolute in purpose, so determined in carrying it out, and so regardless of consequences to himself, as he was. Yet now his mind has undergone a change. He asks for the very thing he had been so anxious to escape. He gives the reason, "For I am not better than my fathers." Had he then supposed that he was better than his fathers? If so, he did not differ in this from other men.

It may be that he hoped to surpass his fathers by restoring Israel to the worship of the true God, and this by the peculiar mode he had employed; that whereas others had failed to accomplish this great object, he expected to succeed. This high aim for the glory of God, and for the good of the people, was indeed always before him. But the language is that of disappointment, and so overwhelming that he desires death rather than life.

Elijah's distress was now very great, proportionate to the energy and devotion he had previously displayed. It may have been increased by the reflection that he had abandoned the field in the moment of victory—after it had been won, after the hardships and dangers of the campaign were ended. Noble was the prize he aimed at; deep and crushing the disappointment. God had not at that epoch so fully revealed His determination that "no flesh should glory in His presence;" nor was it then understood so perfectly as now that "of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things."

Wearied in body and dejected in mind, the Lord his God granted him the refreshment of sleep—that wonderful provision which His own skill, wisdom, and loving care has devised, and by means of which He alleviates so much of our sorrow. The same kind hand prepares a

meal for His faithful servant—sent not as formerly, by the birds, but by an angel. Again he sleeps, and a second time he is awaked to partake of more food, because of the distance he has to travel.

He is not told in what direction he is to proceed; apparently this is left to his own judgment and conscience. Belonging to the ten tribes, and having been appointed a prophet among them, where his influence had been greatly felt, and latterly had been very successful, perhaps the design of God was that he should return and complete the work so far advanced, but as yet unfinished. The instructions afterwards given to him at Horeb seem to strengthen this idea, which obtains confirmation by his course of proceeding during his subsequent stay on earth. But for the present this is not his mind. The alarm at Jezebel seems still to prevail. Strengthened and refreshed, he wanders on southwards, farther away from her, until at length he reaches Horeb, the mount of God. We are informed in Deut. i. 2 that the distance from Horeb to Kadesh-Barnea, close to the southern boundary of the promised land, was only eleven days' journey; and as Elijah had already advanced some part of the way, the forty days during which the strength of that food lasted would not all have been expended in reaching that place. It is probable the forty days included both his journey thither and the return to his own country. But, on the other hand, there is no reason to conclude that he went at once to Horeb. His object was concealment, and it is possible that he wandered from place to place till at length he is found there.

R. N.

(To be continued.)

159

NOTES AND REPLIES.

What is the force of the expression "in the churches," in 1 Cor. xiv. 34, in connection with women's speaking?

THE question of women's ministry requires more than a passing note, but for the present we would say that among the highest and holiest ministry in the gospels is that of the woman; yet it was ever in the woman's sphere of work. Man has his sphere, and woman has hers, as in the construction of the tabernacle wise-hearted women spun, and wise-hearted men weaved. Some would rob woman of her place in the church, as others would put her out of her sphere therein. The expression "in the church" means the assembly of believers gathered around the person of Christ and unto His name, the object of which, as in all worship and in all rule, is to own Christ as Head. There subjection and silence is the woman's place, and therein she has personally to manifest the church's subjection to Christ. The question here is not so much one of public or of private ministry, but rather of the manner of assembling, and the character of authority which all ministry then assumes. If this were sufficiently remembered, many difficulties would vanish, and many questions of conscience would be easily answered. Mistaken zeal and misunderstanding of the mind of God may lead many holy women to forget God's lines and measures; but there is a danger, on the other hand, of men with little grace robbing themselves and the church of much help and instruction, which the gifts and graces of godly women might minister outside the characteristic church meetings, and for lack of which assemblies of Christians may suffer weakness. Man's sphere is in the front, with its snares, its difficulties, and its dangers; the woman's sphere is in the background, with its Christ-like self-abnegation and self-forgetfulness, where she may anoint the head and feet of her Lord, and fill the house with odour, though the men may be seeking who shall be the greatest. Let men and women ponder the lessons taught in Matt. xxvi. 6-16 compared with Luke xxii. 24-34, and then neither the one nor the other would forget their places, and all would be harmony and peace.

In what sense do we keep the Passover? 1 Cor. v. 8.

ALL the feasts of Israel are—(1) A prophetic revelation of facts to be accepted, and (2) An unfolding of a condition that has to be entered into. The great truth of the Passover feast is redemption by the blood of Christ, which gives security when the judgment of God falls; faith accepts this, and the sprinkled blood gives peace. Our keeping of the Passover points to the condition of soul in which it has to be observed, of which the apostle says that it has to be kept “not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” As we are, in fact, ever under the shelter of the blood, so should our condition ever be an unleavened one, lest we defile the feast and dishonour “Christ our Passover,” who has been “sacrificed for us.” Some would make the Passover feast a type of the Lord’s Supper; but this would be incorrect, as both are alike types and shadows of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; and it is dangerous as giving countenance to the delusion of saving efficacy in ordinances, which is subversive of the all-sufficiency of the redemption once for all completed, and tends to encourage the soul-destroying doctrine of ritualistic grace, of which in the present day, when the “sacrifice of the mass” is coming in, we cannot keep too clear.

What was the difference between Paul’s teaching to the Gentiles and Peter’s to the Jews?

PAUL and Peter alike permitted to the Jew the observance of Jewish rites and ceremonies, and this was the character of their teaching to them. On this account Paul circumcised Timothy, that as a Jewish proselyte he might find a readier access to the Jewish people. But when speaking to Gentile Christians Paul says: “I testify again to every man that is being circumcised” (present participle), “that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are being justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.” (Gal. v. 3, 4.) That which was permitted, though we might not say commanded, to the Jew, was in the Gentile a sign of apostasy, and hence the decrees given to the Gentile believers in reference to things strangled and blood, &c., are not enjoined so much as a command as a recommendation, as indicated by the words “from which if ye keep yourselves ye shall do well.”

SATAN AS "THE GOD OF THIS AGE."

"All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."—MATT. iv. 9.

WE have already sought to consider the meaning of the description given by our Lord of Satan as "The prince of this world;" and we now come to a still darker page in the history of that mighty spirit, when we regard him as "The god of this age." By this title Scripture characterizes the energy and working which Satan has set up and maintains in the face of God over the moral and spiritual depths of man's fallen being. "If our gospel be hid," says the apostle, "it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this age [not world] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.)

Of this "age" Paul also writes to the Ephesians, when describing their former condition as dead in trespasses and sins, "wherein in time past ye walked according to the course [*age*, *αιωνα*] of this world, according to [*i. e.* in obedience to the will of] the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." How little man dreams that his self-will and pride is none other than a flame kindled in hell, by which he is set on fire by Satan! He thinks he is his own master, while he is really more completely a slave to an unseen, unknown master than ever man was to an earthly master seen and known.

The ordinary slave has some escape and some alleviations. There are hours and times when his tyrant sees him not, and can affect his happiness but little; and at length in

death the slave is free from the master. Not so in the tyranny of Satan. His agents can always influence for evil all who are his, and death but delivers his servants into his hands with a more terrible certainty.

Self in the natural man is but a cover for Satan; and whenever it asserts itself, there is behind it the old serpent, who is God's enemy, and the enemy of man also as God's creature. This awful truth is brought out in our Lord's solemn words to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence [a cause of stumbling] unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." (Matt. xvi. 23.) Peter's word to the Lord had been, "Be it far from thee," or "Pity thyself." But whatever in us pities self, and seeks its interest, is of man, and what is of man is of Satan, who worketh (energizeth) in the children of disobedience; and this, which we are ever prone to overlook, the Son of God detected and exposed.

The presence and power of Satanic working will be but little recognized, except as the power of the Spirit of God is known and felt. In these days of growing infidelity, when "the Spirit of truth" and "the spirit of error" (or of the delusion) are not only too often denied by unregenerate men, but are only feebly acknowledged by too many of God's dear children, it is of immense importance that this question be taken up in the light of Scripture. Beyond its pages nothing is known, or can be known, of the spirit-world by which we are surrounded, and of its mighty influence and control over human thought and action. Because unseen it is unknown, and the awakenings of good, and the stirrings of evil, are supposed to be purely from the creature itself. The consequence of this ignorance in the Christian is that he loses sight of the indwelling of the Spirit of the living

God, whose omnipotence and all-sufficiency are ever ready to make him more than conqueror over " manifold temptations " and trials (1 Peter i. 6), because of the " manifold grace " (1 Peter iv. 10) of which the blessed Spirit is the administrator. And, on the other hand, he fails to realize that the terrible stirrings and strivings of sin and evil in him after his conversion are caused by spiritual evil agencies working on the renewed soul; whereas before, these corruptions were only dormant because unroused by the malice of Satan. Again, this ignorance leads unenlightened men to regard what are really the stirrings of the Spirit of God, as the workings of the natural love of the good and the holy in the heart of man, as if any true light or life could burn or shine in him whom God describes as dark and dead. In other cases the sleep of death and the peace-dream of ignorance, which the wily one seeks not to disturb, are regarded as evidences of natural goodness and piety.

This rule of Satan is one of a positive blinding and darkening power. He now blinds the minds of those that believe not, as he bound with " a spirit of infirmity eighteen years " the woman whom our Lord healed. (See Luke xiii.) But in the days of the man of sin the mysteries of the present will be unfolded in the full manifestation of things as they *are*, and not as they *seem* to be; and then Satan's consummation of evil will be that all shall worship him. Now he works, not openly, but in mystery; and he seeks for worshippers, blinding them all the while as to the real object of their worship. He is thus silently preparing the world for the time when openly men will worship the beast, and worship the dragon (*i.e.* Satan) who gave power unto the beast, saying, " Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" (Rev. xiii. 4.)

In the reign of antichrist Satan will be owned and worshipped as God (2 Thess. ii. 4), and this terrible unfolding to us of *the future* is given that we may read aright the mystery of *the present*. Now Satan conceals himself under the name of the blessed God; that which is antichristian is called by the name of Christ; the whore of Babylon is known by the name of the Church of God, the Bride of Christ. The book of Revelation gives us the final form of these terrible realities of the future, that we may see more clearly than would otherwise be possible those *mysteries* of evil by which we are now surrounded.

Satan's being the "god of this age" is therefore the source and the substance of this world's idolatry, under every form of it, and by whatsoever name it may be known, whether that idolatry be gross or refined, whether heathen or Christian, whether outward or inward; and hence man's worship is called a sacrificing "to devils, and not to God." (1 Cor. x. 20.)

In Israel's days there were novelties—"gods that came newly up." And so it is now, for Satan has fresh forms for all developments of human life; and of his ways it is true, as of the ways of the strange woman, "They are moveable, that thou canst not [or mayest not] know them." It is these novelties in the worship of Satan that deceive the unwary. New names, new forms, new prophets, new Christs, and new idols come up; but the dark reality is unchanged. It is Satan instead of God, with a greater or less measure of the "form of godliness," the more completely to deceive. In order to expose this the prophetic word is given, so that, though specious and godly names are used, we may not be ignorant of the antagonism to God that underlies it all. Hence the prophetic portions of the New Testament, particularly the

book of Revelation, call for our prayerful study, if we would be wise and know the signs of the times in which we live, so as to avoid all the forms of evil which surround us.

In Babylon Satan is god, as in Egypt Satan was king, Pharaoh's great antitype; but He who led us out of the spiritual Egypt will lead us out of the spiritual Babylon if we are willing to be led. Our Lord is ever saying to us, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." This cry will be literal in the future. It is spiritual now, while "Babylon the Great" is still a "mystery" which the eye of faith alone can see, and which the spiritual mind alone will understand. To all others Babylon is that "Christendom" to which they attach the blessed name of Christ, and which they regard as the development of the kingdom of God; but those who say, "Thy kingdom come," know it has not come, and cannot come till the King of kings shall be revealed, to execute the judgment written, according to the estimate of God, and not according to the estimate formed in "man's day."

He will then lay "judgment for the line, and righteousness for the plummet," bringing everything to the test of God's straight lines and of His unerring plummet. The hail of the wrath of God shall then sweep away the refuges of lies, wherewith the god of this age has all along deceived the children of the age, and, alas! has well-nigh blinded many of the children of the age to come, on whom, as children of the light and children of the day, the light and the power of the coming world, to which they belong, should have shined with unerring clearness.

This false worship is among "the depths of Satan, as

they speak" (Rev. ii. 24); yet these so-called "depths" are to faith the shallows of human self-will; for to God alone belong the depth and height, the length and breadth, of what is real and eternal. Many phases of this idolatrous worship are embraced in the three leavens against which our Lord warned His disciples, and they form the real "will-worship" which stands opposed to the first three petitions of the prayer our Lord taught His disciples; for this will-worship dishonours God, and desecrates His name instead of hallowing it; hinders His kingdom instead of advancing it; and frustrates the doing of His will in the earth by the putting of man's will in its place.

The three leavens that describe the spirit in which the god of this age is worshipped are—1st, *Phariseicism*. This substitutes for the commandments of God the traditions of men, and shows itself in the ritualism of the day. It makes the religion of man one of form and superstition, and has in it nothing of reality, of truth, or of a living God. 2nd, *Sadduceeism*. This denies all that lies beyond the grasp and the comprehension of the creature, and makes the finite the measure of the infinite. We see it in all the religious free-thinking of the day, and we hear it in the "profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science, falsely so-called" (1 Tim. vi. 20), which proceed from those who exchange the truth of God for the lie, and who worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for evermore. (Rom. i. 25.) And 3rd, *Herodianism* is the hateful spirit of time-serving and of worldly conformity that prostitutes God's things to Cæsar's use, and profanes the hallowed things of "the Holy One of Israel" by making them subserve the selfish interests of human life. The leaven of Herod brings the church and its holy and heavenly realities into subordina-

tion to the world for its patronage, its emoluments, and its honours.

The three heavens bring God's solemn light to bear upon the *high-churchism*, *broad-churchism*, and *low-churchism* of the day, whether in the established or non-established forms of religious thought. These constitute the threefold form of man's will-worship, and they are the depths, the mysteries of the wicked one! The tangled thread of six thousand years of departure from God is alone disentangled by God's word with perfect distinctness! In Rev. xvi. 13 we see the same three forms of evil in "the three unclean spirits like frogs that come out of the mouth of the dragon [*i.e.* Satan and spiritual wickedness], out of the mouth of the beast [*i.e.* Caesar or political power], and out of the mouth of the false prophet" [*i.e.* intellectual power and false teaching].

In conclusion, we would earnestly say to all Christians, that bad as are the outer forms of this idolatry and will-worship, in virtual subjection to the god of this age, there is an inner working of the same that is found in the fleshly nature of every child of Adam, and has constantly to be guarded against. It forms the essential element of the unrenewed heart and the unbroken will, and those who have escaped *the outward pollution* have all the greater need to be on their guard lest they walk *in the inward corruption* of it.

Indeed this subject has bearings which are very far-reaching, and intricacies that call for much searching of heart. Let us set ourselves to learn the length and breadth of John's last command in his first epistle: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols," an epistle which has an additionally solemn significance as written by him to whom the visions in the Revelation were given.

God preserve us from worshipping the prince of darkness, by enabling us ever to walk in the light as He is in the light, and so to see the trail of the serpent in what surrounds us. Then the Spirit of truth will guide us into all truth, and preserve us from all the subtleties of the worship of "the god of this age." Let us live for the God of the age to come, "the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God," whose name shall be hallowed, whose kingdom shall come, and whose will shall be done as in heaven so on earth, when the god of this age shall be cast into the lake of fire.

H. G.

"HEARD . . . CAME . . . TOUCHED."

MARK v. 27.

"WHEN she had heard of Jesus"—only *heard* ;
 As yet she had not seen His gracious face,
 Nor listened to the wonder of His word,
 Nor proved His grace :
 Her heart despaired ; for rest she long had yearned ;
 But when she heard of JESUS, hope returned.

"Came in the press behind"—just simply *came* ;
 She fain would prove if all she heard were true ;
 As yet 'twas but the fragrance of His name
 Alone she knew.
 But still she came ; and though 'twas "in the press
Behind,"—'tis lowly hearts He waits to bless.

"And touched His garment"—only *touched*, her soul
 All trembling, yet in faith ; and at that touch
 Straightway she knew and felt that she was whole !
 Lord Jesus, such
 Thy changeless way of love : one touch of **THEE**
 Draws virtue forth, and we stand saved and free !

A. L. B.

PRIDE.*

“Pride, and arrogancy, . . . and the froward mouth do I hate.”

Proverbs viii. 13.

The life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ are a standing rebuke to every form of pride to which men are liable.

PRIDE OF BIRTH AND RANK—“Is not this the Carpenter’s son?”

PRIDE OF WEALTH—“The Son of man hath not where to lay His head.”

PRIDE OF RESPECTABILITY—“He shall be called a Nazarene.”

PRIDE OF PERSONAL APPEARANCE—“He hath no form nor comeliness.”

PRIDE OF REPUTATION—“Behold a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber.”

PRIDE OF LEARNING—“How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?”

PRIDE OF SUPERIORITY—“I am among you as he that serveth.”

PRIDE OF SUCCESS—“He is despised and rejected of men.”

PRIDE OF ABILITY—“I can of mine own self do nothing.”

PRIDE OF SELF-WILL—“I seek not mine own will.”

PRIDE OF INTELLECT—“As My Father hath taught me, I speak these things.”

PRIDE OF BIGOTRY—“Forbid him not . . . for he that is not against us is on our part.”

PRIDE OF RESENTMENT—“Father, forgive them!”

PRIDE OF RESERVE—“Tarry ye here and watch with me.”

PRIDE OF SANCTITY—“This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.”

“LEARN OF ME; FOR I AM MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART.”

“God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”—*GAL.* vi. 14.

* Abridged from a two-page Tract printed at the Boys’ Home, Deptford. Price 1s. 6d. per 100.

LOVE'S LOWLY SERVICE.

JOHN xiii. 6-17.

VERSES 6-11 contain the *incidental* teaching of the Lord Jesus concerning the washing of the feet and of the whole body, which was brought out by Peter's words, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" Much of the teaching of our Lord has this incidental character; for, as His ear was always open to hear, so His Father's teachings and words were by the Spirit always coming fresh to Him. (Isa. l. 4.)

But verses 12-17 contain the *direct* teaching of the passage—that which He had Himself guided, having washed the disciples' feet, that He might teach them. As He says, "Know ye what I have done to you? . . . If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet." The washing of the feet was then often a much-needed thing; for it was a hot climate, and they walked in sandals. It was an act of hospitality (Luke vii. 44), and it was performed by a menial with a basin of water and a towel. And Jesus says, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

In His kingdom the rules are different from those of all other kingdoms; so much so, that trying to exalt one's self is only going down in His sight, and going down into the low place is really going up in His sight. (See Matthew xviii. 4; xx. 20-28.) "O Lord, open thou mine eyes!" As going up is a great thing in the world, so coming down is a great thing in the Church. The coming down of Emmanuel can only be measured by God. It was infinite.

(Phil. ii. 5-8.) The highest point was equality with God. The lowest the cross.

If I want to be like Jesus, I must come down. When a Christian forgets what he was, yea, what he is as regards his flesh, and becomes conceited and proud, he is only like a beggar on horseback, or a man walking on stilts, uncomfortable and unsafe; and when he falls into sin, as he is pretty sure to do, he cannot rise till he takes off his stilts.

If Jesus, their Lord and Teacher, washed their feet, they surely ought to wash one another's feet: and the instruction to us evidently is, that we are called to be servants to each other; that we are responsible to the Lord that our words and ways be such as ever to help, and not to hinder, our fellow-Christians—in holiness and love esteeming them better than ourselves; taking our place at their feet; seeking to raise them up if fallen; to urge them on to glory; and to help them onward through this dark and dirty world.

There is sometimes in the Word a general address to all who read or hear it; there is also a particular application of it to us individually by the Holy Spirit. Then it is quick and powerful. It is said of the apostle Paul, when the Lord spake to him as he went to Damascus, that the men who went with him heard a voice, but saw no man. It is also said, "They heard not the voice of Him that spake to me." (Acts ix. 7; xxii. 9.) If we want power to follow Jesus, we must hear Him speaking in our hearts; the word must come to us individually.

If I am rich, if all things are mine in Christ, then surely I should help my poor brother. If the Lord bears my burdens, then I should bear my brother's burden. (Gal. vi. 2.) If the Lord lifts up my weak hands, then I should also lift up my brother's weak hands. (Isa. xxxv. 3.)

As Jesus surrendered all for us, and sought always to please the Father, and serve His disciples, so should we seek always to please Him who served us well at Calvary; and as He still, although our Lord, is serving us in heaven (Heb. iv. 14-16; Rom. viii. 34), we should serve His people on earth.

Oh, let us be greatly afraid of becoming big talkers and low walkers, destitute of practical love, which is the only love Jesus acknowledges. What can big talk and low walk do but grieve the Holy Spirit, hinder God's children, and make us stumbling-blocks to the world?

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord." And if I do not get into this place of lowly love and service, then I am taking a place higher than my Lord! A proud servant of a lowly Master and Lord! Worshipping Jesus as Lord, and then taking a place above Him!

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." It is our Lord's will that we should, each of us, be found taking the lowest place; and if we know our own sin and shame, and daily, hourly needs, and our obligations to Him, we shall find ourselves in it. But it is also His will that we should imitate Him in lowly, loving service to His members. This thing has almost vanished from the world, yet still it is His will. He knocks by His word. (Rev. iii. 20.) When the word comes home to the heart, that is a double knock. When it is accompanied with warning, that is a danger signal. (Rev. ii. 5; iii. 15-19.) In Eli's case, the Lord at last gave such an awful ring in his heart that he never spoke again. Brethren, we are in a drowsy world. Let us awake to righteousness, and let us be real; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

J. P.

THE WORD OF GOD.

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

IN the present day, when many treat the word of God with little reverence, it is of unspeakable importance, especially for the young believer, to have correct conceptions of it according to God's own estimate. Only thus shall we be delivered from man's "profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science [or knowledge] falsely so called." The essential connection between the *living Word*, CHRIST, and the *written Word*, the Scriptures, cannot be too deeply pondered.

I. THE LIVING WORD.

The living Word is Christ Jesus, the Son of God.

(1) He is "the Word" (John i. 1), from eternity, the full and perfect expression of God's eternal purpose; and hence He is the Creator. (v. 3.) Compare with "Wisdom," in Prov. viii. 22-31.

(2) He is also "the Word made flesh" (John i. 14), the manifestor of God to man, the revealer of His name (John xvii. 26); "the Word of life" which, John says, "we saw, and our hands handled; for the life was manifested." (1 John i. 1, 2.)

(3) He is also "the Word of God" of the future, the final accomplisher of God's purposes, as He has been the revealer of them, and as such He is seen coming forth from heaven, in Rev. xix., having this name again named on Him—"The Word of God."

This illustrates the meaning of the appellation "Alpha and Omega" (corresponding to our A and Z). He is the

first and last letter of the divine alphabet, the incarnate Word. Compare with this Heb. xiii. 8.

The living Word "opens the Scriptures" (Luke xxiv. 27, 32), as He also came to fulfil them (Matt. v. 17; John xix. 36), and to have them fulfilled in Himself; and He also testifies that "Scripture cannot be broken" (John x. 35), and that not "one jot or one tittle" can pass away (Matt. v. 18), but that "all things *must* be fulfilled." (Luke xxiv. 44.) The Scriptures again testify of Him. (John v. 39.) Note the connection between the living Word and the written Word in Heb. iv. 12, 13, as also between the Sun and the Word in Ps. xix.

II. THE WRITTEN WORD.

It is designated "*The Scriptures*;" that is, "The Writings," by way of pre-eminence. (Matt. xxii, 29, and frequently.)

"*The Holy Scriptures*" (2 Tim. iii. 15), or *sacred*, when applied to persons, places, and things as belonging to God, in contrast to what is "profane," as belonging to man.

"*The oracles of God.*" (Rom. iii. 2; Heb. v. 12; 1 Peter iv. 11.)

"*The lively (or living) oracles.*" (Acts vii. 38.)

"*The sword of the Spirit.*" (Eph. vi. 17.)

"*The Scripture of truth.*" (Dan. x. 21.)

"*The Word of truth.*" (Eph. i. 13; James i. 18.)

"*The Word of faith.*" (Rom. x. 8.)

"*The engrafted Word.*" (James i. 21.)

It is regarded as one whole, and is spoken of as "*the Book*" (Deut. xxxi. 26; Josh. i. 8; 2 Kings xxii. 8, 10, 13; Heb. x. 7), as "*the Law and the Prophets*" (Matt. v. 17, and frequently), or more fully, "the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms" (Luke xxiv. 44), by which three divisions the Old Testament was known among the Jews. In 2 Peter

iii. 16 it is specially to be noticed that the apostle unites the epistles of Paul to the "other Scriptures," as forming a part of the divine canon.

This view of the Bible as one whole is of vast importance; for while, "at sundry times and in divers manners," God has spoken, the revelation is one, giving an unbroken record of God's dealings with man, from the garden of Eden to his final destiny in the new heavens and earth, or in the lake of fire. The foundation is laid in Genesis, and the top stone of the building is reared in the book of Revelation.

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE.

(Continued from page 142.)

AT HOREB.

HOREB was no ordinary spot. It was there in days of old that the Most High had descended; and, while the whole mountain burned with fiery flame up to mid-heaven, earthquakes convulsed the ground, lightnings and thunderings struck terror into the heart of Israel, the voice of God was heard above all. It was then the mighty trumpet of God uttered with awful majesty those commands by which the tribes were to be governed; and which were afterwards written down on the stone tablets and delivered to Moses to be secured within the ark.

Elijah seeks to secrete himself in a cave on this very mountain, but the eye of God discerns him, and the question is put, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" He was not then engaged in any occupation; neither was there in that place anything for him to do. Recently he had been doing a mighty work three hundred miles off; but here there was not a solitary soul to hear anything he might say, or witness anything he might do. Clearly this was

not the place of his appointed service, but far away from it. He must now, however, account for his being here, which he does in these words :

“I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts : for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword ; and I, I only am left ; and they seek my life, to take it away.” Solemn words were these. All was true. He had been very jealous for God ; his whole history displays it. The children of Israel had thoroughly forsaken the covenant of their God, utterly disowning Him, and casting His law behind their backs. They had thrown down His altars. (By this is meant, not the altar at Jerusalem, but those erected in high places throughout the country.) They had also slain His prophets with the sword, himself being the only one remaining. Elijah had already represented this at the time of the sacrifice on Carmel. Even the one hundred hidden by Obadiah seem to be no more ; and now they seek his life also.

These are the reasons he gives to account for his being there ; and they intimate that he came to save his life. He does not indeed say this explicitly, but his words convey nothing less.

There is, however, another aspect in which the Spirit of God views what Elijah stated, which probably did not at all enter into his contemplations. In exculpating himself he has brought a heavy accusation against Israel ; nay, more, he is regarded as interceding against them. “Know ye not,” says the apostle Paul in writing to the Romans (xi. 2), “what the Scripture saith of Elias ? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars ; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.” The bringing these their enormities before God by way of self-

justification, though the whole was perfectly true, is regarded as interceding against them ; though such was not his design.

But was it pleasing to the Lord that he should say this?

In Ezekiel xxii., after recounting the fearful crimes of the false prophets, priests, princes, and people of Israel, the Lord thus tells out the desires of His heart, "And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it : but I found none." He sought for some one to plead *for* His people, not *against* them. How often had Moses pleaded in their behalf, and always with success. Moreover, the whole arrangement of the sin-offering, as well as the official position of the high priest, unfolded the character of Him whose joy is to save, not to destroy. Much more fully is this declared in the gift of His well-beloved Son, who, when nailed to the cross by His enemies, prayed for them ; and now intercedes for all who come unto God through Him.

There is further significancy in the enquiry, "What doest thou HERE, Elijah?" It was, as we have seen, the spot whence the law had been promulgated, obedience to which was to be Israel's title to life, and to the land of promise ; and from which they had marched to take possession of it under the leadership of Moses. After the expiration of many hundred years the sole surviving prophet of the Lord is found in that identical spot. He is alone, travel-stained, desolate. What can bring him thither, to the mount of God ? Is he come to make mention of mercies received ? of the fidelity of the nation and their prosperous condition ? Is he come, with a heart overflowing with joy and gratitude, to offer praises and thanksgivings, and to solicit a continuance of the divine favour ? Ah ! no. He comes, a solitary fugitive, with the sad tale that

king, princes, and people are in open rebellion against their God.

This solemn accusation from such a person, in such a place, cannot but be listened to by the Most High. Unwilling as He is to punish, this cannot be overlooked. Before passing sentence, however, a peculiar effort is to be made by the God of all grace. He directs the prophet to go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord. He goes. "And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice;" or, as the Septuagint reads, "a gentle breath of air." (Some Greek copies add, "And there the Lord was.")

The intention of this display is obvious. The Lord God has all the elements at His command. "Fire and hail, snow and vapours, stormy wind fulfilling His word." He has but to speak, and the soft air rends in pieces the solid rock. He has only to order, and the earth shakes itself to fragments, or fire presently dissipates the whole into vapour. But the Lord has no pleasure in destroying that which His wisdom, power, and goodness have created, and bestowed upon the sons of men. All the inhabitants of the earth are but as grasshoppers before Him; with the blast of the breath of His displeasure He could in a moment make an end of them all. But His gracious declaration is, "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." The gentle breathing of His grace, the tenderness of His love, is what He delights to exhibit, in order that men may be attracted to Him and live.

The effect on Elijah of this soft sound is remarkable. He was told to go forth and stand upon the mount before

the Lord, and doubtless he did so. When, however, the terrors of the majesty of the Most High were in action he seems to have shrunk back and retreated into the cave. He can no longer stand before the Lord when His judgments are let loose. But when the terrific display is at an end, the gentle sound reassures him; he comes forth and draws nigh unto his God, yet with the face hidden in his mantle.

Had the Lord God any motive in thus exhibiting His power before His servant? There might be a threefold object. First, to impress him with the promptitude with which He could call forth instruments of destruction adequate to destroy the earth and all things in it. Next to declare plainly that He has no pleasure in using His power to destroy; but that His pleasure is to attract the guilty to Himself by the sweet and gentle voice of mercy and grace. And thirdly, to induce His servant to discern and act upon these divine principles; so that, instead of invoking judgment as hitherto, his cry might be for mercy. His servant had moreover just experienced in his own person the attractive power of the one and the repulsive effect of the other.

Will Elijah now understand the loving character of his God? If again questioned as to the reason for his being so far away from his post, will he adhere to his former statements, and so continue to intercede against Israel? Or will he, confessing failure on his own part, return, and, if need be, suffer as all his brethren had done, and entreat mercy towards the murderers?

A second time the question is put, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" It may be that the man of like passions with ourselves, alarmed and bewildered by what he had just witnessed, had not collected his thoughts, but mechanically repeated his previous reply. It may be that he

had not yet discerned what his God was endeavouring to teach him. Or it may be that he again relates what had occurred, not comprehending the light in which his answer is viewed by Him before whom he stands. At all events the charge is not withdrawn, but reiterated. It is all too true. Judgment must now be pronounced and executed; and moreover he himself is ordered to enforce the fearful sentence. The guilty are to be slain. Three executioners are appointed; and Elijah is to authenticate their appointment by anointing them to their several offices.

“And the Lord said to him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael king over Syria: and Jehu, son of Nimshi, shalt thou anoint king over Israel: and Elisha, son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah, shalt thou anoint prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.”

First he has to go to Damascus, distant from Horeb more than four hundred miles in a straight line, and by the desert road, perhaps to avoid publicity; and there he is to anoint Hazael, one of the generals in Syria, king over that country, thereby setting aside the reigning monarch. Next he is to anoint Jehu, one of Ahab's captains, to reign in his stead. Lastly, he is to anoint Elisha prophet in his room, as he had become tired of the office, and had asked to die. The two last injunctions involve a return into Ahab's territory after the journey to Damascus. And for what purpose are these nominations? For the extermination of the Ten Tribes, guilty of rebellion against their God, and the murder of His servants. Only “seven thousand” are to be spared, the few who have not taken part in the established idolatry.

ON ASSURED GUIDANCE.

(A letter from the late Mr. J. L. HARRIS.)

DEAR BROTHER IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,—I share with you the great difficulty of assured guidance, and have to learn how much I need one as my Counsellor who can have compassion on him that is “ignorant and out of the way.” How great also is our mercy that our God “upbraideth not,” and that He does not say to any who fear Him, “Eat of the fruit of your own ways, and be filled with your own devices.” (See Prov. i. 31.) I trace much of my own failure in respect to assured guidance to the lack of a single eye; and I know not how you read 2 Cor. xi. 1-5 (“the simplicity that is in Christ”), but the context appears to me to point out the need of having a single object before our hearts, as well as a single eye. And our Counsellor counsels us to buy eye-salve from Him that we may see.

I am well assured, dear brother, that there is an art of learning the value and preciousness of Christ by our failures and shortcomings, our blunders and mistakes. God is our teacher, and He by the Spirit of truth teaches us Christ. We are disciples, and have to “learn Christ,” and how? By our very necessities. In the upper school we shall still learn Him under happier circumstances. We shall there see Him, be like Him, and learn new wonders of His grace and glory.

Now it seems to me that the apostle Paul had learnt the art of turning every thing to the account of glorifying Christ and of exalting God. If I am right, the apostle is not so much justifying himself, in 2 Cor. i. 16-22, against the charges of fickleness of purpose, as virtually saying, “It is not in me that my yea should be yea, my nay, nay. I am a man naturally fickle, dependent not only on God, but even on circumstances.” It was the state in which the Corinthians then were that hindered him from visiting Corinth. God alone is independent of circumstances. Paul may seem fickle and faithless, but God is faithful. Whatever the man Paul may be, there is no uncertainty in the gospel which he and Silas preached; no uncertainty in God’s promises. *There is “Yea and Amen.”* Christ Himself is “The Amen.” (Rev. iii. 14.) He can utter His word with a double amen. We put our amen to what He has said.

We should be wrong in saying that we are never guided by circumstances. We are not to be the mere creatures of circumstances, but to find out how to thread our way through them. In this I think we

find it more difficult to receive Christ as "our wisdom" than as our righteousness; for we after all are vain enough to think we have some wisdom in us to guide us aright, and forget the oracle, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." I am convinced that the irksomeness to us of habitual dependence leads to the desire of leaning upon some authority short of God Himself. It may be a pope, a director, a system. We cannot walk before God, or with God, without exercising ourselves to maintain "a conscience void of offence toward God and men." I think a great deal of our shortcoming is to be traced to a want of self-judgment. The use of the two-edged sword is needed (Heb. iv. 12), and the maintenance of faith and of a good conscience together.

Although we are *under* providential guidance, even that of Him whose kingdom ruleth over all, I believe that faith in God gives us a higher guidance. We are left here in all things to glorify God; to live not unto ourselves, but to Him who died for us and rose again; to walk *worthy* of the dignity of our calling. (See this word "worthy" in Eph. iv. 1, Phil. i. 27, "as it becometh;" Col. i. 10, 1 Thess. ii. 12.) If we kept God's objects in view, surely our path would be more plain and our steps more firm. Our blessed Master never sought His own glory. He always sought to glorify God the Father. Think you that either you or myself would have seen the gist of the devil's temptation if we had the power of turning stones into bread? I trow not.

There is a word the power of which I greatly desire to know in my own soul. It occurs in Phil. i. 9: "That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment," or "sense," as the margin reads, and I think more correctly. The Spirit which rested on Jesus ("remaining on Him"—John i. 32, 33) made Him "of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord." (Isa. xi. 3.) Now I believe that the Holy Spirit, wherewith we are sealed, if ungrieved in us, would give us that perception, so that before we saw any principle we should at once perceive that such a thing, or such a line of conduct, or even of thought, would, somehow or other, touch the honour and glory of Christ. I believe it will be well for us in these latitudinarian days to cultivate sensitiveness as to anything which touches the honour of Christ Himself or of His cross. I speak freely, but I believe that the tone of revivalistic preaching has tended to make God's rights and Christ's honour secondary to human convenience—the salvation of the sinner being the end, and God's glory in saving, great as it is, little thought of. The apostle did not rejoice primarily that sinners were saved, but that Christ was preached; and we know that the preaching of Christ is ever a savour of life unto

life, or of death unto death. God has exalted Christ, and demands obedience to Him.

Perhaps the word of the apostle "with God" in 1 Cor. vii. 24 may prove helpful to us: "Let every man, wherein he was called, therein abide *with God*." Oh for a clear walk "with God" and "before God," "in the sight of God and our Father." (1 Thess. i. 3.) Would that I could help you in a better way; and I hope you will receive what I have said in good part. Pray for me.

I add a word. The first failure of Israel under Joshua arose from covetousness; the second from confidence in their own strength; and the third from confidence in their own wisdom—"And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord." This surely is among the things "written for our admonition."

How peculiarly was Moses the child of Providence. What an opening to him of a prospect of delivering his people from the bondage of Egypt, had he not "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God!" Is not this also searching and instructive to ourselves?

Your brother and servant in our Lord,

PLYMPTON, *January 4th*, 1870.

J. L. H.

NOTES AND REPLIES.

Can an unbeliever be a partaker of the Holy Ghost? (Heb. vi. 4.)

To be an inward partaker of the Holy Ghost is to be born again; but to partake of the outward powers and gifts of the Spirit is only what we see in Judas, "the son of perdition;" in Saul, when "the Spirit of God came on him" (1 Sam. x. 10); and in all those of whom our Lord speaks in Matt. vii. 22, 23. All these were "partakers of the Holy Ghost;" and it is this which makes apostacy so terrible, and its condition so hopeless. There is perhaps no condition more hopeless than that of Balaam, when he describes himself as "the man whose eyes are open," "which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes opened," and yet is conscious that he has no part in the matter—"I shall behold Him, but not nigh;" "I shall see Him, but not now." Balaam and Judas, Saul and Caiaphas, are perhaps the most solemn exemplifications of Heb. vi. 1-6. Their histories carry out each line of the detail there given, and their end shows the impossibility of renewing unto repentance in such cases; but let not troubled souls who love the Lord misapply this Scripture to themselves.

How are the words "wherewith he was sanctified" in Heb. x. 29 to be understood of one unsaved?

It is well to observe the difference between the expression "*was sanctified*," used of the professor who apostatizes from the faith, and the "*are sanctified*" in verse 10, applied to those who "believe to the saving of the soul." The person here spoken of once assumed the place of a sanctified one, and as such he is spoken of, without implying that the sanctification was real. Had it been of God it would still have remained, and not have been referred to as a past thing. Once he professed to have been sanctified and separated by holy blood; now the blood has become common or unholy in his eyes, and his sanctification has vanished with it.

How are we to understand the prophecy regarding "Immanuel" in Isaiah vii. 14-16?

It is necessary to notice here, as elsewhere in prophetic teaching, that there is a *proximate* future and a *remote* future. The proximate here has reference to the immediately impending calamities hanging in dark forebodings over Israel. Of this the prophet says Maher-shalal-hash-baz was the sign, his very name speaking of spoil and captivity. But beyond this, in the future lies unfolded the prophecy of the virgin's child whose name, Immanuel, implies the eternal security of God's covenant-mercy, which in darkest days shines out the brightest. Isa. vii. 15 is explained by viii. 4, which tells of the speedy carrying away of the spoil of Samaria and the riches of Damascus by the king of Assyria. "Butter and honey," instead of corn and wine, indicate a land given over to desolation, agriculture being forsaken, and the fields turned to pasture because those who tilled the soil had disappeared. The prophet's son prefigures Immanuel, and verses 15, 16 refer to Maher-shalal-hash-baz, who was a witness of God's delivering mercy to Judah when, under Hezekiah, they were saved from the grasp of the king of Assyria after he had carried Israel away captive. But the ultimate rejection of Judah, on account of their rejection of the Messiah, is also pointed out, because of their refusing "the waters of Shiloah," God's covenant springs of blessing, and seeking the protection of the Gentile nations, whom God sends to them in judgment ("the waters of the river, strong and many," *v.* 7) whether Assyria, Babylon, or Rome. In prophetic testimony the blending together of the present and the future in one picture is a display of the manifold wisdom of God, future prophecy being drawn from present history, and present history expanding into future prophecy. Hence the abiding character of God's word, and thus we understand how Isaiah and his sons were "for signs and for symbols in Israel from the Lord of hosts, who dwelleth in mount Zion." (*v.* 18.)

RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD :

ITS FACTS AND TEACHINGS.

THIS subject, though so vast and solemn, is nevertheless a very blessed one to the children of God. It is also a matter on which each succeeding generation of saints needs to have its faith strengthened. That every one of Adam's race that has ever lived must ere long be raised from the dead, to live again, is easily admitted as a Bible truth; but it needs reflection to perceive at all adequately the vastness of the facts this truth involves. The magnitude of the resurrection of the dead immensely increases as the world grows older. Every thirty or forty years its more than twelve hundred millions of our race return to dust. Like the foam of the sea, that sinks again into the ocean from which it sprang, or as year after year's grass of a field might lie upon each other as pressed-down and withered hay, so the human dead lie in the earth on which we are treading, one generation upon another. How vast then the truth of their ALL living again! How unutterably mighty the Power that will do it! how majestic and stupendous the deed when accomplished! Reason utterly fails on this great subject, and imagination cannot grasp the magnitude of what these simple facts bring before it. Yet this, and nothing less than this, is what is so easily and lightly assented to amongst us as a Bible truth.

Blessed be God, resurrection *is* a Bible truth, clearly and fully revealed; but how feebly is it seen or felt by God's own children, whilst it is increasingly scoffed at and scorned by an unbelieving world. Indeed, the nearer the time of its fulfilment comes, and the vaster it grows by the world's great age, the less, rather than the greater,

is the impression that the coming resurrection of the dead makes on living people. The hurry of life leaves little time or inclination for reflection upon it; and without such reflection its magnitude is not perceived, nor is its solemnity felt. And infidel "oppositions of science falsely so called" are always challenging the faith of God's children in it, and are contemptuously asking the Corinthian question, "*How* are the dead raised up? and with *what body* do they come?"—meaning by it that there is no body left for them to come in—adding also many assertions and arguments of their own; such as that the dust of the human dead has long since been so mingled with original earth, that it is already changed into a thousand forms of living vegetable and animal organisms around us, and cannot by any possibility be gathered, nor the individuals who died be made to live again, because of its wide scattering and its endless intermingling with other things and persons. Indeed, faith in the resurrection of the entire human dead is so feeble in our day, and so inoperative, that our Lord might say of it what He does of the expectation of His personal appearing: "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find *faith* on the earth?" (Luke xviii. 8.) How needful, then, to gather up the Scriptures upon it, and to arouse the attention of God's children, as well as that of a careless world around us, to this marvellous and solemn coming event. And this we would now seek to do.

The resurrection of the dead divides itself into the larger and more distant matter of the "great white throne" day, and the general resurrection then of both the remaining righteous and the wicked, and the nearer and brighter theme of "the FIRST RESURRECTION," a resurrection of the righteous ONLY, at the blessed moment of Jesus' coming again. This latter takes place a thousand years before

the other, and includes in it all "that are Christ's at His coming" (see 1 Cor. xv. 23); all, that is, who have by grace up to that time believed on Him, together with all the infant dead up to that date—for these we know are His.

In tracing the Scriptures given us on our theme, we will begin with the latter of these two divisions; viz., the resurrection of only a portion of the dead at our Lord's coming. We do this, both because it is the nearer as to time, and also because it bears more closely and directly upon our "blessed hope" as waiting saints; and being a resurrection *from among the dead*, it is in that respect like to the rising from the dead of our blessed Lord Himself, whose triumph from His grave had no company with it, except that of certain bodies of the SAINTS which slept, whose graves had been lying rent open ever since His expiring cry on the cross. (See Matt. xxvii. 51-53.)

This resurrection of only righteous ones is a matter very precisely worded in the New Testament. It is spoken of as a resurrection "FROM the dead" (*ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν*); a resurrection, that is, of the righteous dead only, without any disturbing whatever of the ungodly dead whose dust may lie intermingled with theirs, or on either side. The sleeping saints are taken out from amongst the entire human dead; so that not any dust whatever of the righteous is left unquickened, while not a particle of the dust of the wicked is changed by that shout of the Lord Jesus, or trump of God. Thus it is indeed an accurate resurrection *from amongst* the dead. What a marvel is this of unerring discernment, as well as of almighty power! But what cannot our God do? "Is anything too hard for me? saith the Lord." We have only to find whether God has *said* it; and if He has, we may be sure He both CAN do it and will do it. Resurrec-

tion from amongst the dead rests, as Jesus said to the Sadducees, upon the Scriptures and "the power of God." (See Matt. xxii. 29.) This discernment of our Lord at His coming between the dust of His saints and the dust of other human dead, agrees exactly with the similar accuracy with which He will at the same time separate between all the *living* believers of that hour and the mere professors with whom they may at that moment be ever so closely intermingled, whether in the justifiable and necessary businesses of life, or, alas! in professing Christian worship and communion. "I tell you, in that night there shall be two men *in one bed*; the one shall be *taken*" (*i.e.* to be with the Lord—see Greek, and compare John xiv. 3), "and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left." (Luke xvii. 34, 35.)

Let us now consider the passages where this expression, "FROM the dead," is found. There are others which speak of "resurrection of the dead" (*e.g.* Heb. vi. 2); but these refer to the general truth that the whole human dead must rise, and are not to the point of our present branch of the subject.

Our Lord's words to the disciples, as they came down from the mount of Transfiguration, are the first occasion of them. "Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again *from the dead*." (Matt. xvii. 9. Compare also Mark ix. 9, 10, where the newness of the expression would seem to have specially arrested the attention of the disciples; for Mark adds, they were "questioning one with another what the rising *from the dead* should mean.") A general resurrection of the dead was one of those first "principles of the doctrine of Christ" which were familiar enough to Peter and James and John as godly Jews; but a resurrection

from among the dead was then taught them for the first time, and might well give rise to a wonderment and a "questioning" of what it could mean. Thus the first Scripture on this blessed subject refers to our Lord Himself. How befitting this is, and how instructive! All truth is in Him, and finds in Him its fullest and most glorious illustration; as He said, "I am the way, and the *truth*, and the life;" and amongst others this truth also of a resurrection *from* the dead, which leaves the other dead untouched. For such was Jesus' rising from His rocky grave in Joseph's garden, and that of His saints who then also rose; and such will be the resurrection of the righteous at Christ's coming.

The next passage on this subject is Luke xiv. 13, 14: "When thou makest a feast," (not "a dinner or a supper" merely, but the *best* that thou hast, "a *feast*,") "call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection *of the just*." There is, then, a resurrection of none but "*the just*," and of which it can be said, "Blessed and holy" is every one that is then raised. Hence this also is the resurrection *from* the dead. Our Lord here speaks of it as the time of *recompense* for all true service done on earth, whether in the gospel to the unsaved, or in His Church. (Compare Rev. xxii. 12: "Behold, I come quickly; and my *reward* is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.") The ready and perfectly easy way in which our Lord names "the resurrection of the just" in this passage strikingly shows how filled His own mind was with that still future event now so little believed.

In Luke xx. 27-38 we find our Lord again teaching this resurrection of *some* of the dead before others. The free-thinking and infidel Sadducees came against Him;

they were well-known deniers of "*any* resurrection" of the dead. By the case of a deceased woman who had had seven brothers of a family for her seven successive husbands (in accordance with Deut. xxv. 5, though this was probably a supposed instance), they sought to make the book of God itself inconsistent with the doctrine of any resurrection whatever of the dead. Our Lord's reply is well known. In it He was not content with maintaining only a resurrection of all the dead, but advanced His teaching to the yet higher ground of a resurrection which only the righteous would obtain. His words were, "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world" (or, "that age;" *i.e.* the thousand years age of reigning with Christ), "and the resurrection FROM the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children [sons] of God, being the children [sons] of the resurrection." These words are a plain declaration of an elective or choosing-out resurrection, which will instantly stamp every one who partakes in it as a son of God, by his being raised in "the image of the heavenly," even Jesus, "the Firstborn *from* the dead."

This precious truth is found also in the Acts of the Apostles. Here too it is the opposition of the Sadducees that gives to it only a greater distinctness. In Acts iv. 1, 2, we read, "And as they" (Peter and John) "spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and *the Sadducees*, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection FROM the dead." Like their Master in Luke xx., Peter and John advanced their doctrine beyond the fact of a general resurrection of all, to that of a prior and distinctive one of only believers in Christ. In Acts xvii. 31 Paul uses the same expression, on Mars' hill at Athens, in

order to set forth the Lord Jesus in all His distinctiveness as a Judge, as well as His glory as a Saviour, and declares that in both these respects God "hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him FROM the dead." Of the listening Athenians it says, in verse 32, "When they heard of the resurrection of the dead" (*i.e.* of any resurrection whatever), "some mocked," &c. Thus similar were the philosophic and infidel Athenians to the Jewish Sadducees; but how much the guiltier of the two were the latter, as possessing the books of Moses!

We next come to the epistles. We find this doctrine at the outset in Rom. i. 4; vi. 4, 9. In chap. i. 4 Paul gives it as the very basis of all clearness and definiteness of "the gospel of God." He says Jesus is in that gospel "declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection FROM the dead." Jesus' third-day resurrection thus distinguished Him from all the other dead amongst whom He lay, as truly as His spotless life and His solemn death had previously distinguished Him from all other living men. In chap. vi. 4, 9, the same distinctiveness of our Lord's resurrection is used for exhortation to us as His saints. We are there reminded that in our baptism after we believed, we set forth our union with Him in death, burial, and resurrection; and the fact that He "was raised up FROM the dead by the glory of the Father," is used to urge us to a similarly distinct separation FROM persons and things of moral and spiritual death which are around us from day to day.

H. D.

"HIS REPROACH."—From whence did reproaches come upon Christ? Not only from the openly profane (Herod and his men of war did indeed set Him at nought), but chiefly from the temple worshippers, from the established priests and religious sects of the day.

“RECEIVE YE ONE ANOTHER.”

A FEW SUGGESTIONS AS TO RECEPTION IN ASSEMBLIES.

THERE are many aspects in which the Church, or assembly of God, is looked at in the Word, such as—

- 1st. The body of Christ. (Eph. i.—v.)
- 2nd. The husbandry of God. (1 Cor. iii. 9.)
- 3rd. The habitation of God. (Eph. ii. 20, 21.)
- 4th. The assembly of God. (1 Cor. i. 2; v. 4.)

These figures have a heavenly and abiding application in accordance with God’s eternal purpose, and also a present and local application according to which the heavenly and eternal should now be exhibited on earth.

Into the heavenly reality God receives, and having received, He *never puts out*. It is His work, and “whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever.” Into that which is the local counterpart man, in subjection to the Word, receives, and from it he may exclude.

The assembly of God in its widest signification includes all believers, but there is also a local company of believers which God, by His Word and Spirit, assembles. He first *calls out* His own from the world, as the Greek word for *church* implies, and then commands them to assemble unto Christ. He who calls the assembly is the one to whom the assembly belongs.

In Numbers x. we have in figure God’s way of calling His people together. The silver trumpets, made of atonement money, were the means of calling; that is, the *sound* came through that which spake of atonement. Corresponding to this the Word reaches us through Him whose presence in glory speaks of accomplished reconciliation. Every word of God comes to us through Christ, as every word of ours reaches Him through Christ. (Eph. ii. 18; Heb. xiii. 15.)

“The assembly of God at Corinth” consisted of every member of the body of Christ there, and every one of these *ought* to have responded to God’s call to come together, whether for breaking bread (1 Cor. xi. 23), or for prayer (Matt. xviii. 19, 20), or for discipline. (1 Cor. v. 4, 5.) *When so gathered* they formed the visible assembly of God at Corinth.

The Lord’s Supper was to be observed when they were so gathered (1 Cor. xi. 20, 33); and the commandment as to putting away the evildoer from their midst (1 Cor. v. 4, 5) was also to be carried out when so assembled.

Genesis ii. 21–24 and Ephesians v. 29, 32, speak of the Church as the body of Christ, and the tabernacle in the wilderness typifies the building of believers together as the habitation of God (Ephesians ii. 22), but Numbers x. speaks of God *calling* His assembly together.

Who, then, are qualified to respond to God’s call to gather themselves together unto the name of the Lord Jesus? Evidently every Christian, just as every Israelite (under recognised conditions as noticed below) was *competent* to answer in Numbers x., and when gathered with others he formed a part of Jehovah’s assembly.

But besides the commands contained in Numbers x. there were God’s laws in Deut. xxiii. 3; Lev. iv. xiii. and xiv.; and Num. xix.

In the first of these (Deut. xxiii. 3, answering to 2 Cor. vi. 14–16), certain persons, as the Ammonite or Moabite, are debarred from answering the call to assemble; for only a born Israelite, or one who became an Israelite according to God’s ordinance, could respond. So now, no one, unless born again, has a title to, or can form a part of, God’s visible assembly.

Then Leviticus xiii. puts even a born Israelite, if a leper, outside the camp, and shows that his uncleanness

renders him incompetent to be present in the assembly of Jehovah. This corresponds with 1 Cor. v., where one called a brother is likewise for a time excluded.

But in Leviticus xiv. we have the leper restored, just as in 2 Cor. vii. we have the restoration of the Corinthian evildoer. Therefore, those whom God has manifestly restored we are bound to receive again.

In Numbers xv. 30 we have God's law in regard to presumptuous sins; the guilty one was to be cut off. But even when David's sin should have been thus visited he found mercy (Ps. li.), and came into the house of God and worshipped. (2 Sam. xii. 20.)

Leviticus iv. 27 to the end, contains God's law regarding sins of ignorance, *when brought to the knowledge* of His people. An Israelite's father, for instance, might have neglected the instruction of his child, and brought him up in ignorance. In times of departure from the truth, as in the days of Ahab, ignorance would extensively prevail. But the transgression, when committed under such circumstances, was no less a *sin*, though done in ignorance. Such persons would attach no meaning to the sound from the silver trumpets; just as many nowadays attach no importance to 1 Cor. xi. 23, or Heb. x. 25, because through false teaching they have been led to look on these things as non-essential.

But when the eyes of an Israelite were opened, and his sin came to his knowledge, he might rend his clothes like Josiah (2 Kings xxii. 11), and bring a female kid of the goats in the appointed way (Lev. iv. 28), and then his competency to assemble with God's people would be unquestioned.

In like manner we in the present dispensation are called to self-judgment at all times, as shown by 1 Cor. xi. 28-31. And while we should have no sympathy with

laxity in regard to the qualifications necessary to entitle any to assemble with God's people, we must always be careful to see that we have God's warrant for questioning the *title* thereto of any individual.

The question is often asked, Who receives into the assembly? But this should be looked at in connection with another; viz., Who *calls* the assembly?

Thus, if a Christian comes asking the privilege of “remembering the Lord's death till He come,” if only he be known to be a Christian indeed, the question is not, Who is to receive him? but God having called him (1 Cor. xi. 23, connected with chap. i. 2), who has a right to forbid him? *None but God, by His word.*

But it may be answered, the brother applying for his birthright place does not see the evil around as he ought, and is not walking as yet in such separation therefrom as the word of God enjoins. A question is thus raised as to ignorance and wilfulness, and we ought certainly to be slow to impute wilful disobedience without clear proof.

Romans xiv. xv. come in here. These Scriptures on their very face assert the birthright place of every Christian in the company of the redeemed. God receives us into His family, but before doing so He does not ask that we see everything according to His view. Were He to do so, we never should be in His company till we reached heaven. We are to be followers of God, as dear children, in our dealings with one another.

If we are well instructed in the truth, and discern our liberty where our brother does not see his, we are not on that account to reject him because he does not come up to our standard of knowledge. On the contrary, we are to receive him, but not *for the purpose* of sitting in judgment on his doubtful thoughts. (Rom. xiv. 1.) In the assembly

and privately there is ample room for the ministry of the Word to meet his need, and there is opportunity for the exercise of patience. (2 Tim. ii. 24-26.) It is for the care and instruction of the weak and ignorant that pastors and teachers are given. (Eph. iv. 11-13.) And let us remember here that all the gifts are to the *body of Christ*, and set in the assembly, which is His body; that is, they are not gifts to *a* church, but to *the* Church. When God calls His people together, all needful gifts should be there, though, alas! many are not; but in the assembly, room ought to be left for the exercise of every gift that God has given. (See 1 Cor. xiv.)

In seeking to avoid laxity in welcoming to the Lord's table those of whom we ought to stand in doubt, our snare is to fall into the sin of making a rule where God makes none. This is where many professing better things have failed.

It is a sin to be broader than the Word. It is equally a sin to be narrower than the Word; for sin is any want of conformity to the will of God.

If we bear in mind that every Christian has a birthright place in the assembly of saints, and that God has clearly indicated in His word those who forfeit their place and right to gather, we shall be less liable to go astray. We would close this article by briefly referring to the account of Paul's receptions in Acts ix. 18-30 as illustrating the foregoing remarks.

In this chapter there are *two* receptions, one at Damascus (*vv.* 19-25), the other at Jerusalem. In Damascus there were no difficulties in the way of Paul's reception, for the fact of his conversion was notorious there. There was no elders' meeting, because there was no difficulty. All was plain, and he goes in and out among the disciples, and preaches Christ in the synagogues. Persecution arises,

and the disciples confirm their love to him in his need. (v. 25.)

In *Jerusalem*, on the other hand, there was a difficulty, and therefore a meeting of those who took the oversight (in this case the apostles); just as in Acts xv. 6 there was a similar meeting on the occasion of another difficulty.

The difficulty was, “Is the persecutor really a disciple? Can it be possible that the notorious sinner has found mercy?” On this question hinged his reception or rejection; for the only barrier to the acknowledgment of his title to their company was, “they were all afraid of him, and believed not *that he was a disciple.*” (v. 26.) But when the apostles are satisfied (v. 27), on the testimony of Barnabas, “he was with them, coming in and going out.”

Thus the early Christians acted, glorifying God by receiving one another, as Christ also received them, and the Holy Spirit manifested His presence in working in them the mind of their Lord and Master.

As an aged brother has said, “Let us be as *broad as the Word*, and as *narrow as the Word* ;” that is, let us own God as the lawgiver in His assembly, that so “the God of peace” may make us perfect in every good work *to do His will*, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ.

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.—Uniformity or confederacy is not unity. The unity of the Spirit must extend to the whole of the one body, and therefore anything which on our part hinders any member of that one body from manifesting the unity of the Spirit, or anything that hinders the edifying of the one body as a whole, is a breach of the unity of the Spirit.

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE.

(Continued from page 164.)

DEPARTURE FROM HOREB.

HAVING received instructions from the Lord, Elijah departs on his journey to Damascus. But what is that he carries in his hand? It is the death-warrant for most of the house of Israel. Is this what he has desired? By no means. He did seek before to starve them into submission, and had acted accordingly for three years and a half; but this was for their restoration, not for their destruction. The commission to destroy has been put upon him in consequence of his repeated accusations against them, and of his being found at Horeb instead of at Samaria or Jezreel.

But what shall he now do? Shall he go on and destroy? The recent scene at Carmel perhaps comes across his mind, where with one voice, one shout, the whole multitude had acknowledged the Lord to be their God. This was the last he had known of them, for he quitted the country the same night. Perhaps he may now find them still owning the Lord, and that Baal's worship has been abolished during his absence. And then perhaps he reflects how much they might have advanced in the acknowledgment of God had he remained among them, and not quitted his post; how much they must have needed his help to bear up against the tyranny of Jezebel. And if any of them had lapsed, might not that have resulted from seeing that he was afraid of her, and had gone away no one knew whither?

Besides, his desire all along has been, not to harm them, but to do them good. This death-warrant, therefore, is a burden to him. He cannot act upon it; his heart will not let him. Moreover, he has given up the prophetic office, and another has been nominated in his stead. His successor may perhaps execute the terrible commission; he cannot do so himself. His firmness at length gives way, and he is found to have feelings like another man.

But what shall he now do? He cannot and does not go to Damascus; nor does he anoint either Hazael or Jehu. Even the anointing of Elisha to slay appears too great a burden for him; therefore he anoints no one. All he now wants is to get rid as soon as possible both of his responsibility and of the load upon his heart; and therefore proceeding at once to where Elisha lives, and finding him at the plough, he divests himself of his rough garment or mantle, casts it upon him, and hastens away. His heart is too full for any explanation; nor does he wait to anoint or to invest him with due solemnity. Indeed he seems to repent of having done even thus much; for when Elisha runs after him, declaring his readiness to accompany him, he replies, "Go back again, for what have I done to thee?" not at all wishing for his company. What Elijah intended by this act, except to disburden himself of the office, it is hard to say.

But the wise and gracious method which God adopted to soften the spirit of Elijah has in some measure succeeded. Having the sword put into his hands, with authority to destroy old and young, he finds he cannot use it. Compunction has been wrought in him, with a strange confusion of feelings. His own natural character, and a fixedness of purpose, strengthened by years of persistence therein, have been brought to a stand. There is also a

desire to die, as well as a desire to live; a relinquishment of the prophetic office, together with a wish to retain it. But beyond all there is now indicated a consideration for men's lives which he did not before seem to possess. Thus far has the discipline of God taken effect in the subjection of His servant's mind.

But the direction as to the part Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha, are each to take in slaying the children of Israel involves considerable difficulty. It may be asked, If Jehu is to slay those who escape the sword of Hazael, how can there be any remaining for Elisha to slay? The problem may have been inexplicable to those concerned in it, and to all others; and the apparent impossibility of carrying it out may have been used as an argument against a literal fulfilment, until the events had occurred which should explain the accuracy of the prediction. The subsequent history shows us that Elisha is the first to slay. (2 Kings ii. 24.) He is the cause of the destruction of the forty-two children who mocked. These, we conclude, were the only persons whom he ever slew. Jehu destroys all Ahab's family, great men, kinsfolk, and priests, with all the worshippers of Baal. (2 Kings ix. x.) Lastly, Hazael begins his work of destruction on the remainder. (2 Kings x. 32, 33.) In respect to time they each slay in the inverse order of their being named.

As regards the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal nor worshipped him, and who were to be exempted from slaughter, we may conclude either that they were too young to be noticed by Jezebel, or that they had refused, at the risk of their lives, to join in the idolatrous worship. Authorities in those days were not scrupulous as to the means they employed to enforce the worship of their gods, as is evidenced by Nebuchadnezzar's course. And Jezebel, having cut off the Lord's prophets,

would not hesitate to employ the sword against any faithful ones in her dominions. In days yet to come a similar course of persecution will be followed, as foretold in Rev. xiii. 15. There can be little doubt that Elisha was one of these seven thousand. His heart was evidently in exercise towards God; for no sooner does Elijah cast his mantle upon him than he at once makes up his mind as to what he will do. First, he must acquaint his father, who from the number of oxen employed must have been a man of some substance. Next he makes a feast for the people; then, abandoning all, he follows Elijah, voluntarily becoming his servant, and in consequence sharing the dangers and hardships which befel his master.

Elijah thus acquires another servant instead of the one he had left at Beersheba, though it does not at all appear that such was the purpose of God, who had appointed Elisha prophet instead of Elijah. Neither does the casting of the mantle by Elijah indicate any desire on his part to have Elisha with him either as companion or servant, but rather the reverse. It was a spontaneous act on Elisha's part, arising, as the after history shows, from admiration of the character of Elijah, who was no stranger to him. Elisha, in common with all Ahab's subjects, had been at mount Carmel, and had there witnessed with joy his splendid exhibition of faith, boldness, and decision. The servant of God, while engaged in his farming operations, had been meditating on what he had there seen; and now that Elijah again crosses his path, and by his strange action, whether comprehended or not, evinces an interest in him, he breaks away from all domestic ties and occupations to follow him whom his soul loveth. And so great was his attachment that, from being a man of property, possessed of many servants, he readily becomes the menial servant of Elijah, pouring water upon his

hands after meals, which is the description of him given in 2 Kings iii. 11.

Nothing is done for some time towards executing the commission to destroy. A period of about eleven years seems to have intervened between these events and the removal of Elijah to heaven by the whirlwind and chariot of fire. Not till after this does the slaughter begin. (2 Kings ii. 24.)

The next scene in his history is that narrated in 1 Kings xxi. 17. Jezebel, by the consent of her husband, has now, in addition to her other crimes, put to death Naboth for his refusal to yield up the inheritance of his fathers; and Ahab has gone down to take possession. Elijah is sent thither to meet him, and there announces the sentence of death passed upon him by the Lord. On hearing it Ahab exclaims, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Their last meeting was on Carmel, where Elijah had been the honoured instrument of bringing down from heaven the wonderful exhibition of divine favour to him and his people. And when Ahab is returning home at night, amidst the darkness and heavy rain, Elijah was there to strengthen, assist, and encourage him. He had no cause to regard him as an enemy. But there is guilt upon the conscience, and a determination to have his own way, cost what it may. He had sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord.

Elijah, who never feared the face of man, though driven from his post at the threat of the woman, now unfolds to him the further denunciation of the Lord. Not only were the dogs to lick his blood where they had licked that of Naboth, but all his posterity also were to be cut off; and the dogs were to eat the dead body of Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. From what is said in 2 Kings ix. 25, it appears that this announcement was made, not when Ahab

was alone, but in public, attended by his captains and guards, so that the intended wrath of the Lord was well known to them, and probably the tidings spread throughout the land.

These words from Elijah pierce Ahab's heart. He rends his clothes, puts on sackcloth, and fasts. That he did not order the man of God to be put to death evinces a measure of the fear of God. He believes the word of judgment on himself and family, and thereupon humbles himself. All the threatenings of God are sent in mercy, for the purpose of turning the sinner from the error of his way. If they have this effect, then there is room for an extension of mercy, of which God is not slow to avail Himself. Vile as Ahab was, he was not beyond the reach of the outflow of divine tender consideration. It was revealed to Elijah afterwards that in consequence of Ahab humbling himself before God, the extermination of his family was postponed till after his death, so that he might not behold the misery that was to come. Whether this was made known to Ahab we are not told; but the servant of God is informed that he might not look upon his prediction as falsified by the fulfilment being delayed.

Even in the midst of all the desperate wickedness of the court and people, and their abandonment of their God, wonderful is it to find that He had not abandoned them. On four occasions does He send prophets to Ahab, as described in 1 Kings xx. Twice does He promise and give them victory over the vast hosts of the Syrians, with the evident intention of attracting them to Himself by these fresh displays of goodness and power. And all this after they had slain all his former prophets! Even in the closing scene of Ahab's life, when he has again gathered round him another four hundred false prophets, the Lord's forbearance allows him to receive another warning from

the mouth of the prophet Micaiah, whom also he hated, that he may be deterred from rushing on to his destruction at Ramoth-gilead.

Oh, how adorable is the character of Him with whom we have to do! How every page of His word develops the description of Himself He was pleased to make known to Moses in Exodus xxxiv. 6: "The Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and not clearing the guilty; visiting the iniquity of fathers upon children, and upon children's children, unto the third and fourth generation." Were it otherwise, not one of us would be alive this day. The earth would be without an inhabitant.

(To be continued.) 208

SATISFIED.

How long the reckoning-sheet! Alas! poor soul,
 Thy debts are great; yet thou hast nought to pay!
 "Thanks be to Christ my Lord, He paid the whole,
 Cancelled my debts, put all my guilt away.
 Enough to know that Jesus bled and died;
 Here may I rest, where God is satisfied."

But life is full of griefs. Alas! poor heart,
 Tossed with its storms, how canst thou *keep* at rest?
 "One changeless Friend in all things takes my part;
 With Christ for me, in all things I am blest.
 Enough to know that He is by my side;
 In Him to rest, is to be satisfied."

All this may be, and yet, alas! poor will,
 Thou art not wholly weaned from earth and sin.
 "With shame I own the charge, yet triumph still:
 My God will perfect what He doth begin.
 Enough to know His purpose must abide;
 When I awake *like Him*, I shall be SATISFIED." A. L. B.

THE WORD OF GOD.

(Continued from page 159.)

III. THE SOURCE AND AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE.

“ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” or is “God-breathed” (2 Tim. iii. 16); and in 2 Peter i. 21 we read that “holy men of God spake as they were moved [carried or borne along] by the Holy Ghost.” When Scripture speaks, God speaks—“Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken *of the Lord* by the prophet.” (Matt. i. 22; also ii. 15.) “For unto which of the angels *said He* at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee?” (Heb. i. 5; also v. 5, 6; x. 30.) Indeed, throughout the Old Testament what is written is attributed directly to God—“And God said;” “The Lord said;” “As God commanded;” “Thus saith the Lord.” It is also said that the Holy Ghost speaks in what the prophets utter, as of Isaiah in Acts xxviii. 25, “Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet” (see Isa. v. 6; also lix. 21); and of David, “Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts” (Heb. iii. 7, compared with Ps. xcv.; see also Acts i. 16; iv. 25), and so frequently. In referring to Old Testament types, it is said that “The Holy Ghost signifies” by them things to come (Heb. ix. 8), marking a divine purpose in types and shadows too often forgotten.

Christ appeals authoritatively to the Scriptures. In His conflicts with Satan His only weapon is, “It is written.” (Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10, compared with Deut. viii. 3; vi. 16, 13.) In His conflicts with the Jews it is the same, “*Have ye not read*, that He which made them at the beginning made them [a] male and [a] female?”

(Matt. xix. 4.) "Ye do err, *not knowing the Scriptures*, nor the power of God." (Matt. xxii. 29-33.) See also John v. 39, 46, 47; vii. 38, and many other places. Notice also in regard to the future His reference to Daniel's prophecy: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place." (Matt. xxiv. 15-19.)

So also in the Acts and the Epistles the apostles appeal to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and recognize their collective authority, reading in them the utterances of the living God. But our Lord not only maintains the authority of Scripture, whether the words of the Old Testament records, or His own words (compare John xviii. 9 with xvii. 12), but He tells us it is by them that man will be judged at the last day. (John xii. 48, v. 45-47.) He also warns of the responsibility involved in *having* God's word. "They *have* Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." (Luke xvi. 29.)

In regard to the inspiration of Scripture, on the ground of which its authority rests, it is not vague and indefinite, but absolute and explicit, extending to every jot and tittle. This is beautifully illustrated in the construction of the tabernacle and temple. Of the former God gave Moses an exact pattern (see Exodus xxv. 9, 40), and for the latter David says: "The Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, all the works of this pattern." (1 Chron. xxviii. 12, 19.) If God cared thus for His sacred earthly house, has He not bestowed equal care on the sacred writings of His own Word? This minuteness is strikingly illustrated by our Lord's use of the words: "I said, Ye are gods," in John x. 34, 35 (from Ps. lxxxii. 6); and in Paul's use of, "And to thy seed." (Gen. xii. 7.) "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy Seed, which is Christ." (Gal. iii. 16.)

NOTES AND REPLIES.

What difference is there between the "kingdom of heaven" and the "kingdom of God"?

A COMPARISON of Matt. xiii. 11 with Mark iv. 11 shows there is no essential difference in the two expressions. The former is mentioned only in the gospel of Matthew, and the latter is the one always employed in other portions of Scripture; so that the question resolves itself into this, Why has the Spirit of God in the first gospel deviated from the form of expression used elsewhere? The answer seems to be that in this gospel Christ is presented as the "King of the Jews." (Comp. chap. ii. 2; xxvii. 29, 37.) In it God reveals to us that the kingdom in its present development in mystery during the Christian dispensation, and in its future manifestation in the millennial age, is unlike the kingdom of Israel under David and Solomon in this respect, that there is a *direct* authority and control from heaven. Hereafter man will be constrained to own, as Nebuchadnezzar did after his seven years' dethronement, "that the heavens do rule," and the kingdom will become in fact, as it is in right, that of "the King of heaven." (Dan. iv. 26, 37.) In the expression "the kingdom of God" a contrast is drawn between God and man, the present being "man's day" (1 Cor. iv. 3, margin), as opposed to "the day of God." In "the kingdom of heaven" (or "the heavens") the contrast is between heaven and earth. The signification is the same, the aspect is different.

Is there any special guidance of the Spirit in the Assembly?

It is needful to remember that the Spirit bestows the gifts upon the individual (1 Cor. xii. 4, 8-11), but that Christ gives the individual as a gift to the Church, of which He is the Head (see Eph. iv. 11); whilst it is also true that "*God hath set the members each one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him.*" (1 Cor. xii. 18, 28.) Hence, while we cannot fail to recognise the fact of the Spirit being really present in the assembly, even as He is present in the individual believer, it is of great importance not to substitute the Holy Spirit for Christ, nor for a moment to allow such thoughts as are couched under the unscriptural expression, "The presidency of the Holy Ghost." Christ is Lord of the assembly, and to Him must the eye of each be

directed ; while the presence of the Spirit is the sole power by which we have access through Christ to the Father, and maintain communion in worship or in service. For the presence of the Spirit in the Church the following passages suffice as proof : " Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ? " (1 Cor. iii. 16.) " In whom [Christ] ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. " (Eph. ii. 22.) Hence our responsibility not to quench the Spirit either in ourselves or in others in ministry to the body. The Spirit ever guides those who are willing to be led, and never more so than when seeking rightly to behave themselves in the house of God, the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. The headship of Christ realized, leads to implicit subjection to His written Word ; but the supposed presidency of the Spirit leads to a virtual subjection to an inward guidance, which is ever the claim of fanatical self-will, while boasting of being "*led.*" May God deliver His churches from all " special guidance " that has not Christ for its object and the written Word for its warrant. One writing on this point says : " To *feel* the wind that blows, and to be borne on upon its wings, is a very different thing from attempting to embody and locate that wind, and to give it a seat before us or amidst us as an assembly, as those do who speak of the Spirit as president of the assembly. " In considering this subject it is well to bear in mind that the Spirit is present, not to " speak of [from *απο*] Himself, " but to glorify Christ, and to receive of His, and to show it unto the Church (John xvi. 13, 14) ; for as Christ is the revealer of the Father, so the Spirit is the testifier to Christ. But as with many the Son eclipses the Father, so with others the Spirit in the Church eclipses Christ, the Head of the Church, and hence the confusion that exists under a seemingly godly phraseology.

Can such promises as " So shall thy barns be filled with plenty " be laid hold of now ? (Prov. iii. 10.)

THEY can surely be laid hold of ; but as the dispensation in which we live is a spiritual one, the fulfilment will be spiritual, yet none the less real. Food and raiment, and not earthly riches, are the portion of him who, like his Master, rejoices in being a pilgrim and a stranger here. (Compare 1 Tim. vi. 8 with Deut. x. 18.)

RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD :

ITS FACTS AND TEACHINGS.—II.

IN tracing passages on the subject of "resurrection FROM the dead;" *i.e.* a resurrection at Christ's coming of none but the saints, we had in our last paper reached as far as Rom. vi. 4, 9 (see page 175), where the apostle brings this truth to bear upon our walk as saints. In Eph. v. 14 a similar use is made of it. Paul is there seeking to raise the walk of Gentile saints to a standard corresponding with that "light in the Lord" into which we have been already raised up in Christ out of the former darkness of our unregeneracy. He bids us "walk as children of light," and "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness;" and strengthens his exhortation by quoting the "awake" and "arise" of Isaiah lii. 1 and lx. 1. But he adds to these stirring words as follows: "Wherefore he [or it; *i.e.* the Scripture] saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise FROM the dead [or from among the dead], and Christ shall give thee light." Thus he grafts the New Testament fuller teaching concerning resurrection upon the Old Testament quotation. And, oh, what increased light would Christ, our resurrection Lord, give us, both in our souls and our daily steps, if we arose more, even now, "from among the dead" persons and things around us!

In Galatians i. 1 Paul declares that his apostleship was given him "not of men, neither of man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him FROM the dead." This wording of his apostolic authority was doubtless to help on, even at the outset, the great object of the whole epistle, which was to lift himself and his

fellow-saints far above the "dead works" * of a Judaizing ritualism, and out *from* all connection with them. For resurrection "FROM the dead" does as truly free us from man's *religion* as it does from man's world, with all its coarser and grosser lusts of the flesh.

Such was Paul's use of this truth for instruction and exhortation to others. Let us now see how he used it for his own walk. In Phil. iii. he tells us something of his onward course, and his upward aim, as one who had received "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," and who longed for "the prize" which that "high calling" puts before all saints. But he knew there was one road by which to obtain it, and *only one*; and that road was such a setting of Christ before him as would cause him to be putting on Christ and putting off self all his days below. In verse 8 he calls this "a winning of Christ;" in verse 9, a being "found in Him;" in verse 10, "knowing of Him, and the power of His resurrection;" and then in verse 11 he describes this resurrection of Christ and of His saints with Him "as the resurrection of the dead" (or rather "the out-resurrection, that FROM the dead;" see Greek). This resurrection of Christ, his Lord, FROM the dead shone before Paul's view as the guide-star, the sunbeam, and the pattern of daily walk for himself and fellow-saints. He gazed on it till he so loved it and valued it that he would fain know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, and be even, if necessary, made conformable to His *death*, if "by any means" (that is, at whatever cost) he might even *here on earth* know all the sanctifying and energizing power of the resurrection *from among* the dead. Truly he who had exhorted others on this subject in Rom. vi. and Eph. v.

* "Dead works" occurs only in Heb. ix. 14, and specially means the lifeless things of man's ritual religion. Compare Prov. xv. 24: "The way of *life* is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell [sheol—state of the dead] beneath."

did not intend to be himself "a castaway" (*i.e.* one disapproved) in the day of Christ. He knew that in that resurrection morning of Christ's coming he and his fellow-saints would be found with unsullied affections toward God and the Lamb, and unswerving devotion to His service for ever. He looked for the first resurrection as the means by which he and they would without ceasing swell the song of worship, and would, as His servants, serve Him, and see His face, and have His name in their foreheads. And he longed for these same blessings *now*, even on earth below, and in his mortal flesh, at any sacrifice. He did not, like others, despise "the pleasant land" (see Ps. cvi. 24), but joining in one the meanings of Joshua and Caleb's names, he believed that God's salvation (Joshua—salvation of Jehovah) could give him a present soul-possession of it, and with his whole heart (Caleb—whole-hearted) he set his face at once to attain to it. Its grapes of Eshcol did not seem to Paul to hang so high as to be out of present reach; but, on the contrary, he expected to have the very giants which stood in the way of his attaining them become only as bread for him and for any others also that were like-minded. Nor did he think he "had already attained," or was "already perfect" (or perfected; see Greek). He did not count himself "to have apprehended" that which was given him of God in Christ Jesus; for if so, he must have already fallen into the carnal blindness and error of Hymenæus and Philetus (2 Tim. ii. 17), who said that the resurrection was past already, and thus overthrew the faith of some. Joshua and Caleb did not vainly dream that the bunch of Eshcol grapes they so one-mindedly and with one step carried on a staff between them was itself the pleasant land, for they knew they had not passed Jordan, and the "Israel of God" were still in the desert; but those cut-down grapes

were a blessed earnest of what they believed was in reserve for them. So Paul felt his present measure of resurrection from among the dead to be, as it were—

“ A pledge of sacred joys to come ;
 Anticipation blest
 Of heaven, our everlasting home,
 Of heaven, our place of rest.”

The grapes of Eshcol are never mentioned afterwards ; for whole-hearted Caleb and believing Joshua pressed on for the land they so believed in one day subduing and possessing, and made little or nothing of having just entered it and cut down a single cluster ; and thus Paul would have us be “ forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before ;” viz., our high calling of God in Christ Jesus. “ Let us therefore, as many as be *perfect*, be thus minded,” he says. (v. 15.) “ Perfect ” we are already in Christ, as to our acceptance before God above ; and this becomes our power for seeing and humbly owning how infinitesimally small is our present practical attainment when compared with what we are to be when He shall come. Surely, then, Phil. iii. is an instructive instance of the use a child and servant of God may make of the blessed truth of the resurrection FROM the dead.

Let us now turn to Peter. We have seen him using this truth in his testimony at Jerusalem, when, with John, he there “ preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.” (Acts iv. 2.) In his first epistle also he says : “ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively (or living) hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ FROM the dead, to an inheritance,” &c. (1 Peter i. 3, 4.) It is thus he would cheer the heavenly strangers scattered by persecution “ throughout Pontus, Galatia,” and

other countries. The sufferings of his Master are a prominent subject with Peter in this epistle, and the "sufferings of Christ" in us, His members also, together with the glories (see Greek) which must ere long follow them. (1 Peter i. 11.) And it is in order to bring these ensuing glories *very near* to their souls' view, and to make them very weighty and blessed, that "the resurrection of Jesus Christ *from* the dead" is pointed out. This it is which gives such substance and such definite shape to the "living hope" to which, says Peter, we have been begotten.

The resurrection morning is given here in its wider range; just as throughout the epistle the death of Christ is viewed in its broader aspect of sufferings as well as death. We are spoken of as begotten by Christ's resurrection from the dead, not only to the sweet, deep joy of being made like Him at His coming, but also to then possessing with Him "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." This unfading inheritance is that "place" which our Lord went to prepare for us (John xiv. 2), for Peter had not forgotten these words of his blessed Master. We enter on it at the resurrection of the just; and Peter therefore very naturally says that "the resurrection of Jesus Christ FROM the dead" has begotten us to the living hope of it. In his second epistle (chap. iii. 13) he enlarges this blessed prospect of suffering saints to its full magnitude when he says, "We, according to His promise, look for *new heavens and a new earth*, wherein dwelleth righteousness;" but this is not *accomplished* till a thousand years later. The *nearness* of the coming glory is therefore the distinctive cheer given us in his first epistle; its full eternal *magnitude* in the second. Thus we see the value the apostle Peter also put upon the truth of a *first* resurrection—a resurrection *from among* the dead.

But John was fellow-labourer with Peter in the Jerusalem preaching above referred to. And in John's subsequent writings we find the same truth taught us of a prior resurrection of the righteous only. Revelation xx. 4-6 is as definite on this subject as any scripture can be; and so familiar had this hope become that it had acquired a title, and he now speaks of it by the apparently well-known name of "the *first* resurrection," just as the day of Christ's rising from the dead was called "the first day of the week." "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." That this scripture points to a resurrection of the bodies of the saints is plain, because of its saying "they lived and REIGNED with Christ," which none do except in *bodies* raised (or changed) and glorified. (See 1 Cor. xv. 50.) That it is the resurrection of ourselves as sleeping (or else living) saints at Christ's coming, according to 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17, that is here meant is also clear, because they are spoken of as the "blessed and holy," who are to be "priests of God and of Christ," and are to "reign with Him a thousand years." It is therefore commensurate in extent with the clause in 1 Cor. xv. 23, "they that *are* Christ's at His coming." This vision gives us, therefore, only another view of the blessed company who are to be "caught up

together to meet the Lord in the air," and so shall "ever be with the Lord." And as in Peter's epistle, so here also, this blessed hope stands especially connected with present sufferings; for the reigning ones are such as had either been beheaded for Jesus, like John the Baptist and the apostle James (Acts xii. 1), or else had in some way or other refused the worship of the beast, and suffered for it. Compare also Paul's word, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. ii. 12.) It is the prominence here given to these *sufferings* of the waiting saints that causes the expression, "I saw the *souls* of them that were beheaded," &c. The word "souls" is equally prominent in Peter's first epistle, who was himself an expectant-martyr. (See 1 Peter i. 9, 22; ii. 11, 25; iii. 20; iv. 19; and compare "His *life* shall be unto him for a prey"—Jer. xxi. 9; xxxviii. 2.)

Thus clear is the united testimony of our Lord Himself and the apostles to the wondrous fact that all the righteous dead up to Christ's coming are to be raised to life and glory without the quickening of a single one of the ungodly dead amongst whom they now lie. Two other scriptures bearing on this subject; viz., John v. 24–29 and 1 Cor. xv., are so valuable and important as to require separate consideration.

Meanwhile three lessons are prominently taught us by this truth of a resurrection FROM the dead, whether as seen in our Lord Himself, or in us His waiting saints.

First. That resurrection will make manifest in a moment the *distinctness* and the *separation* between God's children and those who are not His children; therefore let this distinction and this divine separation be more visible NOW.

Second. That resurrection will in one moment impart and display the full image of *sonship to God* on all whom He has begotten. We shall be "children [sons] of God,

being the children [sons] of the resurrection" (Luke xxi. 36); therefore let more of this sonship character to our God be distinctly seen in us NOW. (Compare Matt. v. 44, 45.)

Third. That resurrection will place us on "thrones" to live and reign "with Christ a thousand years," and all will then see us as *reigning ones*, and will feel our power. Therefore let it be even now more known concerning us that we keep our bodies under; and instead of letting "*sin reign*" in our mortal body, let all see that we even NOW yield our "members as instruments [or weapons; see Greek] of righteousness unto God." In other words, Oh that we might more manifestly be men of the first resurrection, even now!

H. D.

CIRCUMCISION OF HEART.

It is impossible to be ignorant of the painful and solemn fact, that the Church of God is in a condition of weakness, declension, and backsliding almost universally; and this weakness is undoubtedly caused by a want of true separation or circumcision of heart unto God.

Disobedience at all times bears its natural fruit—declension from God, crookedness of walk, weakness of discipline, perversion of judgment, and much more; and even when these evils do not bring public reproach on the name of the Lord, they are none the less a cause of grief to Him, and a positive hindrance to the outflow of blessing in service and worship.

In the book of Joshua we read that when Israel left Egypt "all the people who came out were circumcised;" but, strange to say, the rite was neglected during the wanderings in the wilderness. Now at Gilgal their journey is closed, the Jordan is crossed, the land is before them, but they are not ready to go forward. The multi-

tude must halt; no marching, no old corn, no divine captain until the first command in respect of the inheritance be obeyed. Each male must bear the token of separation unto God (Gen. xvii. 10, 11), therefore the command to Joshua, "Circumcise again the children of Israel the *second* time." (Joshua v. 2.) They were partakers of God's special redemption and care; He had borne them on eagle's wings unto Himself to be a peculiar treasure; they had received earnest of the inheritance in the cloudy pillar, in the Eshcol cluster and the conquest of Bashan's cities; but the full possession of the promised land has yet to be acquired.

Oh, what precious things for saints of new covenant call and faith, hope and life, are here unfolded to us! We have already been circumcised in the circumcision of Christ (Col. ii. 11), and by His cross we are separated from the world or Egypt; we already have complete deliverance from the consequences of Adam's transgression—from inherent as well as committed sin; the bloodshedding of Christ is "once for all," and our salvation is proportionate thereto—"He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;" we have eternal redemption, the full assurance of hope and of faith, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and the certainty of eternal life. But if we would obtain the present possession of the fulness treasured up for us in Christ we must be personally circumcised in heart, lips, and eyes. Oh, beloved, shall we go forward? Are we prepared first for true separation unto God? Do we desire to say in truth as Paul did, "I am crucified with Christ," "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world"? If so, there must be in our heart a Gilgal separation; thoughts, feelings, desires, affections, habits, which have

sprung up since our conversion, and which make us like the Israelites born in the wilderness, need to be circumcised, to be subjected to the sharp two-edged sword of the word of God. Shall we be *real* or not when we sing—

“Thine only, Thine alone I'd live,
Myself to Thee entirely give!”

This is a real heart business (see Rom. ii. 28, 29): “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the *heart*, in the *spirit*, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” This involves a cutting off the right hand or the right foot, plucking out the right eye, the severance of every wrong association, the denial of every Christless pleasure, the stripping off the worldly ornaments, the restraining of luxurious appetite; it is a searching, sifting of one's own very self in the sight of God, and dealing with all in strictest righteousness. Do we mortify our members which are upon the earth? Do we bring our souls under such a thorough scrutiny in the light of God's word, that we judge the thought of foolishness, the touch, even in imagination, of the unclean, the lack of faith, the idle word, the haughty spirit, the petulant temper, the froward mouth, the fleshly will, and many, many more of the workings of evil, as sin and abomination in the sight of God? Do we give heed to His solemn words, “Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the Lord your God and ye shall not make your souls abominable by any manner of thing which I have separated from you as unclean. And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine”? (Lev. xx. 7, 25, 26.)

But there is another aspect of circumcision in Deut. xxx. 6: "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, *to love the Lord* thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Let us mark it well; it was to produce fervent love to God. Oh, what a mighty energy is love! What will it not do for its object? What will it not deny itself of? *Real* love to God always has its ears awake, always has willing feet and ready hands, and shuns anything which would create a film of darkness between the soul and God. This love cannot reign in an uncircumcised heart, therefore we are exhorted to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." Is this difficult? Painfully so to the flesh, but it is the delight of love to live for its object; and if the love of God be shed abroad in our hearts it will constrain us to present ourselves a living sacrifice to Him.

How many dear children of God, through unbelief, remain in the wilderness like Israel of old, and get no other than wilderness experience—manna and water, food and raiment! These are blessed figures of precious things in Christ; but the "old corn of the land," and the fruits of Canaan, are symbols of perfect peace—peace like a river, rest in the Lord, fellowship in the light with the Father and the Son, joy unspeakable and full of glory, the joy of the Lord for our strength—all of which are the earnest of the riches of glory, and are our inheritance in Christ. We must have true circumcision of heart before the Lord before we can eat the bread of God to the full and drink the wine of His joy continually.

It is, indeed, worth something to have the reproach of Egypt rolled away, but this never can be in the wilderness. Surely it is better to have Gilgal suffering than to linger out one's life in a desert. The land was

before Israel with its mighty foes, but the captain of the Lord's host was ready to lead them in. The heavenlies are before saints, and the enemies within and the wicked spirits that surround are mighty; but our Captain of Salvation has been made perfect through suffering, and is able to make us more than conquerors; and He has provided the whole armour of God with which we may, like Paul, fight the good fight of faith. How soon is victory won when He appears! Jericho soon fell before the ark of God; and so surely will our Lord Jesus lead His own to victory when our hearts are captivated by His love, and we cannot bear to sin because we love Him.

Let us give this solemn matter our prayerful, earnest consideration. Does not the vast majority of the cases of stumbling, the personal falls, the collective backslidings of the Church of God, arise from the lack of this divine culture of soul, from a want of readiness to yield to the pruning of the heavenly Husbandman, the wounding of the Great Physician, the circumcising by the Church's Head and Leader? Let us remember how the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem failed to heed the call of God by Jeremiah to circumcise themselves to the Lord when judgments were hanging over them. (Jer. iv. 4.) "To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, *their ear is uncircumcised*, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it" (vi. 10-12.) And again, "All the house of Israel are *uncircumcised in heart*" (ix. 26).

Alas! it ever was and ever will be true, that the flesh, and most of all our own religious flesh, is always slack in dealing out judgment upon itself; but the grace of God, that bringeth salvation unto all men, "teacheth us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live

soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;" and, "Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." May the Lord give us right thoughts, His thoughts of these things, and His grace to beget within us the prayer, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

TENDING THE FLOCK.

EZEKIEL xxxiv.

IN these days much earnest effort is put forth by the Lord's people for the salvation of souls; wherever we go we find earnest workers, sparing neither time, nor strength, nor energy if only souls can be won for Christ. But when the souls are saved, how few there are really to undertake the care of them!

The Lord's garden is planted, but many of the plants are stunted, and blighted, and withered. The Lord's flock has many sheep and lambs, but how many of them are "sick," "diseased," or "broken," or "driven away." Children are born into God's family, but how deformed and sickly too many of them become. And are not such as these one of the greatest hindrances to gospel work, and a cause of much reproach to the name of Christ, and sorrow to His heart? But is not their state, we may ask, in large measure owing to the scarcity of those who will watch over and tend them and nurse them for His sake?

Those of us who have been for some time in the Lord's

family, who have learned something of His ways, His heart, His love, who have learned something too of the deceitfulness of the human heart, and the snares of our great enemy, surely *we* are responsible to watch over the Lord's young and tender ones, over the restless ones, so prone to wander into other pastures, over the sick ones who are often spreading infection all around. The Good Shepherd has come, and has set us the example of His love. Let us take heed that it be not said of us by the Lord God: "Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand." "The diseased have ye not strengthened," &c. (Ezek. xxxiv. 4, 5, 10.)

Already we see many becoming "meat to all the beasts of the field." The roaring lion is going about seeking whom he may devour; the grievous wolves have entered in, not sparing the flock, and wolves in sheep's clothing are deceiving the unwary; the little foxes are spoiling the grapes, and the old serpent is beguiling many from the simplicity that is in Christ. If young Christians do not meet with love and sympathy amongst God's children, they will be tempted to seek it elsewhere; if they are not fed with that which will satisfy them, they will seek poisoned food; and they *are* doing it, and hundreds who did run well have been led astray.

Are there not some who will really give themselves to the Lord for this work? It requires a tender, loving heart filled with compassion received from the heart of Christ; it requires one who can use the two-edged sword of the Spirit, and wound, if need be, but also gently bind up the wounded spirit. It is a work that needs much patience and quiet waiting upon God. It is an unseen work, and often a most discouraging one, but one that is dear to the heart of our beloved Lord; and if we know anything of the unwearied love with which He has

watched over us, surely we shall be willing to be workers together with Him in this matter.

Many also might take up this work who are perhaps wondering why the Lord has shut them out from much active service. We could each find some one who needs to be helped over some difficulty, or led into the green pastures of His Word, or won to a more whole-hearted devotedness to Him; some one who needs to be warned of a besetting sin which threatens to blight all promise of fruit; some one who needs to be instructed in the ways of the Lord, to be led into His grace and taught His fear, or shielded in some danger to which he is exposed. As the days grow darker, and evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, and Satan, as an angel of light, is alluring many to the right hand and to the left, may this labour of love be laid more upon the hearts of true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. A.

OUTSIDE THE CAMP.—“For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to ‘come.’ When the worship of Israel became mixed with idolatry, they made the wilderness their home. ‘They sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.’ A religion of form and ceremony, which is in truth a religion mixed with idolatry, will always consist well with worldliness. But *we* have no continuing city here; this is not our rest; the wilderness is no place for pastime; we are strangers and pilgrims. The blood of the Lamb has separated us to God and to glory. May it be so in truth! May our lives not belie our words! Let us remember the beautiful order of these truths. Eat of the altar in the holiest *first*; go outside to *Christ* next, and we shall have His reproach; lastly, seek the future city; look earnestly onwards to the coming of the Lord, when that glorious heavenly city will be revealed.” S.

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE.

(Continued from page 188.)

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TWO FIFTIES BY FIRE.

ELIJAH IS TAKEN UP.

DURING the short reign of Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, Elijah once more appears. The king, who was injured by a fall, sends to a foreign idol, a Philistine god, to learn if he shall recover. Elijah is ordered to meet the messengers, and tell them that, because of this fresh insult to their own God, the king will certainly die. Ahaziah, in order to seize and secure him, sends an armed force so numerous as to have the appearance of being intended to resist all that God could do in his behalf. Elijah is sitting on the top of a hill. The captain issues the peremptory command, "Man of God, the king hath said, Come down." He is well known as a man of God; but the God of whom he is the servant is not known as He should be, notwithstanding all the wonders He had recently wrought. The reply is, "If I am a man of God, fire will descend out of heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty." The fire comes down accordingly, and burns them up. It is a lesson that the army and their sovereign have to learn, that the power of Jehovah is not to be trifled with; forbearance has its limit. If His wrath be kindled, yea, but a little, all His enemies must perish. Another fifty is sent. Their bold captain, faithful to his king's orders, issues a more peremptory command than the former. He too is destroyed with his fifty.

The foolish king persists, and sends a third party to certain death; for what can these do more than the others? And had it not been for the prudence of their commander,

their king might in this manner have lost all his soldiers. He would not learn how futile it is to fight against God. The third captain, however, humbles himself; goes up the hill, falls on his knees, beseeches Elijah for his own life, and the lives of his men, designating himself and them Elijah's servants. He obtains his request, and even more. The prophet is told to go with him, and when they appear at the palace the terror-stricken countenances of the fifty prove that, though they bring the prophet, they have gained no victory, but that their very lives have been saved by his mercy. He now repeats to the king personally the sentence of death recorded against him. He dies accordingly; and no mischief befalls the prophet who had thus apparently been within reach of his anger. Thus does the God of Israel protect and honour his servant, and magnify His own great name in Israel; and thus does the servant honour his Master by faithfully obeying His orders.

In the second chapter of the Second Book of Kings, we have the account of Elijah's removal from the earth. The period of his prophetic office does not seem to have continued above fifteen years, from about the eighth year of Ahab to the second of Ahaziah, as has been before noticed. But it was a period of no common character. For many years of Ahab's reign there had been fierce persecution of the servants of God. A grievous famine had desolated the country. Idol worship, after receiving what seemed to be its death blow, had again sprung into fresh life. From the time that Elijah rebuked the impious king till Ahaziah his son is found on the throne, about nine or ten years, he disappears from view: nothing concerning him being recorded. Yet his ardent soul could have had no rest. Either it must find suited exercise, or, like a sharp sword, it would wear out the scabbard.

But the time had come when God was about to honour the man who had honoured Him. It had already been revealed that He was about to take His servant into heaven, or, in accordance with the Greek version, "as into heaven." Elijah and Elisha were both aware of this; so were the prophets at Bethel and at Jericho; for, along with the renewal of Baal's prophets, the Lord had raised up many fresh witnesses for Himself. They both leave Gilgal. Elijah asks his friend to remain where he is, because the Lord had ordered him to go to Bethel, some twenty miles to the west. Undeterred by the distance, Elisha protests by the most solemn oath that he will not leave him. It may be that Elijah desired to spare him the pain of the final separation, and so desired to get rid of him quietly. But besides the natural desire to remain to the last in his company, Elisha had a special object to attain, constraining him in this instance to resist his master's wishes. They reach Bethel. Nothing occurs there, save that the prophets of the place tell Elisha what he already knows, that the Lord will that day take away his Master above his head. The subject is too painful, and he silences them. Here Elijah makes another effort to leave him behind. It is resisted as before, and, notwithstanding the fatigue of the morning, and that another twenty-mile journey to Jericho lies before him, he again solemnly protests he will not leave him. They now travel back eastward to Jericho. There he is informed of the Lord's intention by other prophets, whom he answers as before.

Elijah now makes a third and final effort to induce him to remain behind, but he replies as on the former occasions. They now proceed some miles further to the Jordan. Fifty men of the sons of the prophets follow. Then occurs the striking of the waters by Elijah with

his mantle, their separation, the passage through them, and their closing again.

Such devoted attachment as Elisha has shown, extending over many years, claims from Elijah some mark of recognition. He now says, "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee." He does not say, Ask what I shall entreat God to give thee; but "what I shall do for thee" while here. It may be that God had given him power to requite Elisha's attentions in any way he might wish.

Elisha is prepared with his request. He asks not for the objects that men usually desire—long life, riches, and honours. Things of this kind he had given up to follow him. Nor, on the other hand, does he ask for an increase in the knowledge of God, or of His will; or greater ability to fulfil it. There is something nearer his heart. We have seen how he first came to follow Elijah. Further acquaintance has only deepened his admiration of him. His whole soul is swallowed up therewith. Elijah's zeal, devotedness, singleness of mind, abstraction from men and their ways, his energy and decision, are the only objects his ardent follower can think of. "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." Hard indeed would it be to surpass Elijah in these qualities. But he asks for a double portion. Nothing less, and nothing else, will content him. This is the grand request he had to prefer, for the opportunity of presenting which he had that day followed his master's footsteps with such perseverance. How is it that men are so often enraptured with that which is the opposite to themselves? No two persons could well be more dissimilar in character than these two men; yet the whole soul of the one is engrossed with the desire of excelling the other in those characteristics which were the contrasts of his own. But the Lord

God, according to the word in Jeremiah i. 5, had fitted each of His servants for the position they were to fill. Could the unerring wisdom of our God, in adapting the instrument to the work, be borne in mind, there would be no room for dejection on the one hand, nor for envy on the other on account of the absence of some quality which we see to be so useful in another. Each would seek to employ the talent entrusted to him to the best of his ability.

But when we notice the fervent desire of Elisha to become like his earthly master, how earnestly should the Christian desire to become like his heavenly Master and Lord. What close and constant adherence to His perfect example befits us. It is the will of our God and Father that we should now be transformed into His likeness, even as it is His purpose to conform us fully hereafter; and "he that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." (1 John iii. 3.)

"And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven," or "as* into heaven." Glorious indeed was the passing away from earth of this favoured man. A chariot and horses of fire were sent for him by the Most High, enveloped by the whirlwind which bore him upwards. The literality of this splendid equipage, though supernatural, is clearly ascertained by 2 Kings vi. 17; where, when the young man's eyes were opened, "he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." It is the only known instance of such honour being conferred on man. Enoch indeed was translated that he should not see death, but the mode of his translation has not been disclosed, whereas this was

* *ὡς εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν.*

public, many looking on; and apparently it took place in the evening of that eventful day.

The mantle of Elijah falls off him as he soars above. He no longer needs the rough sheepskin; nor is it suited to his new condition. Brighter apparel awaits him there! commensurate with the glory into which he was about to be introduced, and with which he was seen to be invested on the mount of transfiguration. (Luke ix. 31.)

R. N.

THE WORD OF GOD.

III. WHAT THE WORD OF GOD IS SAID TO BE.

“Light.” “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” (Ps. cxix. 105.) “The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light.” (Prov. vi. 23.) Compare with what is said of the sun in Psalm xix.

“Righteous.” “Thy testimonies that Thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful.” “My tongue shall speak of Thy Word: for all Thy commandments are righteousness.” (Ps. cxix. 138, 172.)

“Truth.” “Thy Word is truth.” (John xvii. 17.) “Thy law is the truth;” “Thy Word is true from the beginning.” (Ps. cxix. 142, 160.) Connect with Genesis iii.

“Very sure,” that is “faithful.” “Thy testimonies are very sure;” “All Thy commandments are faithful.” (Ps. xciii. 5, cxix. 86; see also Ps. lxxxix. 33, 34.)

“Very pure” or “refined.” “Thy Word is very pure: therefore Thy servant loveth it.” (Ps. cxix. 140.) “Every Word of God is pure.” (Prov. xxx. 5.) “The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace [crucible] of earth, purified seven times.” (Ps. xii. 6.) Earth is God’s

crucible, and *history* is God's Word tried, and no dross is found in it; all is real. His Word cannot be "bound" (2 Tim. ii. 9), but will accomplish its mission.

"*Exceeding broad*," that is, limitless in its application. (Ps. cxix. 96.)

"*To be desired.*" "More to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold." "The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver." (Ps. xix. 10, cxix. 72.)

"*Sweet.*" "How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth;" "Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." (Ps. cxix. 103, xix. 10; compare Ezek. iii. 3.)

"The Word of God is *quick* [living] and *powerful*, and *sharper* than any two-edged sword, *piercing* even to the *dividing* asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a *discerner* of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Compare Ps. cxxxix. 2; Jer. xvii. 10.) The Word *tests*, and so does Christ. (See Luke ii. 34, 35.) Our Lord says that His "words are *spirit* and *life*." (John vi. 63.)

The Word of God comes to us as "the gospel of God" (1 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Peter i. 25), of which the Lord was the sower (Matt. xiii. 3), and the Word was the seed. (Luke viii. 11.)

NOTES AND REPLIES.

How is God's repenting, mentioned in 1 Sam. xv. 11 (compared with verse 29 and other scriptures), to be understood?

REPENTANCE is a change in the mind of him who has purposed anything, either springing out of a changeableness and fickleness in himself, or from some change in circumstances which righteously militate against the purpose formed. The *former* is impossible with God, as we read in verse 29, "The Strength of Israel will not lie nor

repent;" and it will be observed that in this sense repentance is synonymous with lying; it is a change without an adequate cause. The Hebrew word that is here rendered "Strength" is almost invariably used for *perpetuity*, and is most frequently translated "for ever." It implies permanence, as indicating strength and victory, and represents the certain triumph of a fixed purpose that is sure not to fail, come what may. Such is God, Israel's unalterable and unchangeable "for ever." The *latter* must take place whenever those conditions are violated on which the purpose or the promise rested; and in this sense repentance is one of those beautiful anthropomorphisms of which we find so many in the Bible, that is, God brings Himself down to speak as man, and hence, when grieved at the time of the flood on account of man's wickedness, we are told, "It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." (Gen. vi. 6.)

Does Hebrews ix. 27 imply that those not looking for Christ will not be translated at the second advent?

THE word "look for" in this verse and in Phil. iii. 20, is in the following passages rendered "wait for:" Rom. viii. 19, 23, 25; 1 Cor. i. 7. The normal condition of every Christian is to wait for Christ; but this may be done unconsciously, as the creature "waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 19), or consciously, as in Rom. viii. 23, 25; Phil. iii. 20; 1 Cor. i. 7. Consciously to wait for Christ is a very real and solemnly practical thing—true of some, who have no definite Scriptural knowledge of the premillennial advent, their thoughts being summed up in an undefined faith in a final judgment; and not true of very many, who, it may be, are very clear and very correct in their conceptions of prophetic truth. We say this because some, who think themselves well taught in prophetic truth, would exclude those less perfectly instructed. To all such we would say, Quickening truth comes not in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; and if the truth of the advent has no power over a soul, it has come to such an one, Christian though he be, only as the letter that killeth—as a matter for condemnation, and not for reward. Scripture is very plain as to the subjects of the first resurrection; namely, "*they that are Christ's*" (1 Cor. xv. 23); "*the dead in Christ*" (1 Thess. iv. 16); and we would say distinctly that all inferences must be false, let them be drawn with what apparent plausibility they may, that ignore and set aside such plain scriptures as these. The first resurrection is consequent on faith in Christ; for to *all* who possess living faith does this resurrection *from*

the dead belong. It is the common inheritance of all saints, whether weak or strong, whether they build on the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, or wood, hay, stubble. The judgment-seat of Christ will settle all questions as to gain or loss; but they stand there because accepted in Christ, having died and risen in Him; for of all saints it is true that they are quickened together, raised up together, and made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ, who is Head over all things to the Church, which is His body. Because Christ is the firstfruit of them that slept, they who are His are raised at His coming, and in them is fulfilled the resurrection of 1 Cor. xv., in which there is little allusion, if any, to the general resurrection. When considering our standing before the throne, there is great danger of grace being lost sight of, and therefore we should ever remember that, our standing in Christ being secured, the award of the righteous Judge will secure a place to each, according to his work and service. Our standing in resurrection (*i.e.* the *ἐξανάστασις*) is the sole result of God's workmanship in us, and not of our work for God.

How are we to regard the utterances of Job's friends in the light of Job xxxviii. 2 and xlii. 7, 8?

THE statements made by Job's friends were right; their application of them to Job was wrong. So Job's statements were right, though he misunderstood God's dealings with him. It has to be further noticed that the only quotation made from the book of Job in the New Testament is from Eliphaz's address (chap. v. 13), which is quoted by Paul in 1 Cor. iii. 19, and shows the divine estimate of the book in general. In regard, however, to chap. xxxviii. 2, its reference is to Job himself, rather than to his friends. His words had darkened the divine counsels, because he understood them not. In chap. xlii. 7, 8, the expression, "Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right," might better be rendered "have not spoken *to me*," referring to Job's confession to God in verses 1-6. Probably Job's friends may have regarded what God had said to Job, in condemnation of his impatience under the discipline of God, as justifying them in what they had said of him, and God now raises up His humbled servant Job, and makes him their intercessor, and hence the high place he occupies in God's mind among the intercessors of Scripture, when the judgments coming on Jerusalem are foretold: "Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it . . . they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness." (Ezekiel xiv. 14, 16, 18, 20.)

CREATION'S TITLE DEEDS.

THE KINSMAN ON THE THRONE.—REV. V.

MAN forgets that his inheritance is forfeited by sin, and that he and his inheritance have fallen under the power of the prince of this world and the authority of darkness. Hence his need of redemption, to meet the claims of a lawful captivity and the penalties of a holy law.

In Rev. v. we see Christ as the Lamb that had been slain, standing in the midst of the throne, while He who sits upon the throne holds in His right hand "a book written within and on the back-side, sealed with seven seals;" and the question arises, "Who is worthy to open the book?"

Rev. iv. represents God as the Creator, who is to look upon as a jasper stone, for "God is light;" and as a sardine stone, for "God is love;" while around His throne is a rainbow, the pledge of covenant-blessing to a world that had been overwhelmed with the deluge. The four living creatures in the midst of the throne and round about it rest not day and night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come," a triune anthem of praise to our God, Father, Son, and Spirit, before whom the elders fall down and worship, saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord [or, our Lord and God], to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are [were, *i.e.* they existed] and were created."

We need to remember that word, "for thy pleasure;" for it gives God His true place as the One who holds and claims the right to fulfil all the good pleasure of His will, because all things are made by Him, and are designed to

show forth His glory, honour, and power. For this cause creation was allowed to fall under the power of corruption and sin, that by a new creation on the ground of a divine redemption His glory, honour, and power might be in an infinite measure increased and made manifest.

This redemption is provided for in the kinsmanship of Christ as Man, according to an eternal purpose, and in harmony with a divine law.* He alone can bring back, subject to law and right, that which was lost and forfeited by sin, and even He can only do so by the weakness of the cross with its suffering, and its shame, and its redeeming death. On this ground only can He put forth the might of His own right hand and fulfil what redemption has secured. This He does by the mighty energy of the seven horns and the seven eyes (representing omnipotence and omniscience), which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. Christ could say by right and by law, in view of the cross, "The prince of this world is judged," and will in due time make this true in fact. This is what "the appearing [epiphany] of our Lord Jesus Christ" will accomplish, and this appearing "the blessed and only Potentate [Mighty One], the King of kings, and Lord of lords," will show "in His own times." (1 Tim. vi. 14, 15.) We have already had the epiphany of the grace of God (as the word is in the Greek—Titus ii. 11), and we await the epiphany of the glory of God. (v. 13.)

Chapters i. ii. iii. of Revelation give us the epiphany of the grace of God to His Church through a risen Christ. We there see how He is fulfilling the apostle's word and

* He redeems not simply because He desired to do so, and willed it, on the ground that all things were created "by Him," but because of a deeper and more mysterious truth (to which we may recur at a future time), that all things were created "IN Him." (See Greek, Col. i. 16.) This appears to involve a relationship "in the beginning," of which the incarnation in time may be but the necessary consequence.

“teaching [or disciplining] us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age.” From chap. iv. to the end of the book we have “the epiphany of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us [in our stead], that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people [or especial, *i.e.* a people over whom He has an especial claim], zealous of good works.”

In Rev. v. God shows forth the epiphany of our Lord Jesus, for that which Paul calls “His own times” has in vision arrived. In the right hand of Him that sat on the throne is the sealed roll of creation’s *title deeds*,* a book written on both sides, and fastened with seven seals. Death had proved man’s forfeiture of his inheritance, and the death of Jesus (whose gracious title on earth ever was “The Son of man),” while it confirmed God’s sentence on Adam, “Thou shalt surely die,” caused the deeds of inheritance, so to speak, to go back into the hands of the Creator of heaven and earth. A *strong* angel proclaims with a *loud* voice, “Who is worthy to open the roll, and to loose the seals thereof?” That is, “Who has the right to go to God and claim the inheritance of creation from Him?” There is something unutterably grand in this appeal from the throne of God, followed by the awful silence which made the beloved disciple weep much. Heaven heard, but none of the mighty and holy ones there dared come forward; earth heard, but none on earth could offer a claim; the lower world heard, but the prince of darkness could put forth no title to a dominion and to

* See the interesting account in Jer. xxxii. of the prophet purchasing the field from his uncle’s son when the city was given over to the Chaldeans, and when the title deeds, the evidence of the purchase, were to be put in an earthen vessel, to continue many days; a witness of a more glorious “right of redemption” to be claimed by the Redeemer of Israel.

an inheritance, to secure which he had slain the Heir. (Matt. xxi. 38.) Heaven, earth, and hell are silent as He approaches the throne who is alone able to sustain His claim and to prove His worthiness.

The weeping seer had been comforted by the assurance of the elder: "Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah,* the root of David, hath prevailed [or conquered] to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof;" and Christ now comes forth in His mighty surety-character, yet seen not as the lion in His *might*, but as the Lamb in His *right*; for He here claims the book on the ground of redemption, and not on the ground of omnipotence. The justice of God's mercy is thus made manifest to heaven, and earth, and hell; for there is none to dispute the right of the lowly Lamb (the *αμνον*, the little Lamb) who had been slain, and who stood "in the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders," as He comes forward and takes the book out of the right hand of Him that sat on the throne. Satan's rule has been founded on the subtilty of the serpent, and is maintained by the might of the roaring lion. Christ's rule is founded on the right of the slain Lamb, and maintained in the might of the Lion; for the Lamb stands invested with the might and wisdom of God, as indicated by the seven horns and seven eyes.

He who sits on the throne owns the claim of the Lamb, and gives to Him the roll, the title-deeds of an inheritance which embraces the world on which He bled, and heaven also; for He said, after His resurrection, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Thus it is that

* Judah was the name of an individual as well as of a tribe, and the point in Judah's history that made him so eminent a type of Christ was his becoming surety for Benjamin, and giving himself over as a bondsman in order that the condemned brother might go back to his father and his home.

in the dispensation of the fulness of times, God will "gather together all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth." (Eph. i. 10.) The scene in this fifth chapter of Revelation represents the commencement of that ultimate gathering together into one of which Paul speaks. Its pledge and its beginning is seen in the taking of the Book.

Then follows the new song sung by the elders, which bases on redemption the worthiness of the Lamb to take the book, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us [them] unto our God kings and priests: and we [they] shall reign on the earth." Thus the victory spoken of in His having prevailed, is through His death and resurrection. Death could not hold Him, for sin had nothing in Him, and therefore it was impossible He could see corruption.

To enable us to understand a little more clearly Christ's place as shown in this new song, let us look into the work and responsibilities of the Old Testament *Goel**—a word which signifies a *Kinsman*, as to relationship; a *Redeemer*, as to obligation; in consequence of which he was required to redeem either person or property, and, if needful, to

* *Goel* (גוֹאֵל) is variously translated, and occurs in the following places—

1. "Kinsman." Num. v. 8; Ruth ii. 20; iii. 9, 12; iv. 1, 3, 6, 8, 14; 1 Kings xvi. 11.

2. "Redeemer." Of the *angel* in Gen. xlviii. 16; of *God*, in Isaiah xli. 14; xliii. 14; xlv. 6, 24; xlvii. 4; xlviii. 17; xlix. 7, 26; liv. 5, 8; lix. 20; lx. 16; lxiii. 16; also in Job xix. 25; Ps. xix. 14; lxxviii. 35; ciii. 4; Prov. xxiii. 11; Jer. l. 34; and of *man* in Lev. xxv. 25, 26; Ruth ii. 14, margin.

3. "Avenger or Revenger." Num. xxxv. 12, &c.; Deut. xix. 6, 12; Jos. xx. 3, 5, 9; 2 Sam. xiv. 11.

The above are the only places where the noun occurs. As a verb it is mostly translated *redeem*, *do the kinsman's part*.

raise up the name of the dead; and also to be an *avenger* of blood, avenging the death of his kinsman by the death of him who had slain him. The word *Goel* implies kinsmanship, and is translated "near kinsman," "next kinsman," or simply "kinsman."

Jacob on his dying bed is the first to use the expression, when he says of the Angel of the covenant, "The angel that redeemed me," or "my redeemer—my *Goel*." It is as if Jacob realized in the man who wrestled with him in Penuel a relationship and a fellowship which we may find it hard to understand; but God seems to respond to it when He uses the word of Himself in connection with "the worm Jacob" thirteen times in the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah. It tells us that God would take the place of *kinsman* to His people, and would give the certainty of ultimate deliverance and glory to all who by faith would claim the redemption in the Man who is God's fellow (Zech. xiii. 7) and the Surety of God's people.

It is next used by Job in that memorable passage where amidst the darkness and misery of the present he could say, "I know that my *Redeemer* liveth, and that He will stand in the latter day upon the earth." (Chap. xix. 25.) Job here foresees the coming of that very day of which Rev. v. gives us the assurance. How little did saints of old realize what redemption was to cost God, or what the Son of God must pass through to become their Redeemer! And, alas! with all the light of Calvary shining on it, how little do we enter into the glories and sufferings of the slain Lamb.

The incarnation consummated this eternal purpose of divine kinsmanship. Then the Son of God became the Son of man, and the Word, who was God, became flesh. Yet as it is the prerogative of God to call things that are not as though they were, He graciously revealed Himself

to Jacob, to Job, to Isaiah, and to the saints of old, as the *Goel* of His people, in the certainty of an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure.

Let us now consider the *obligations* involved in kinsmanship, and we shall see how our Lord fulfilled them all. They were—

1st. The *redemption of the person* of one who, having waxed poor, had been sold and brought into bondage. Of this we read in that jubilee chapter, Lev. xxv., in which notice especially verses 47-55. It is to this jubilee period that Isaiah refers in the passage quoted by our Lord in the synagogue of Nazareth. He then presented himself to Israel as the Anointed of God to proclaim liberty (compare Lev. xxv. 10) to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. This is what the gospel brings—redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God's grace (Eph. i.), whereby the prison-house is opened, and the lawful captive delivered. The poverty of Ruth, and her having to come among the poor to glean in the field of Boaz, fits her to become an apt representative of every poor sinner who, knowing his poor and lost condition, is content to be a gleaner in the field of the heavenly Kinsman. Boaz represents to us the riches of the grace of Him who was to be revealed in due time as the One to redeem the poor stranger from poverty and want.

2nd. The next obligation was, the *redemption of the inheritance*. Of this we likewise read in Lev. xxv. 25-28, and find an illustration in Ruth iv. Boaz tells the fellow-kinsman, who stood nearer in kinsmanship than himself, that Naomi was selling a parcel of land that belonged to their brother Elimelech. This the nearer kinsman could not purchase, as it entailed responsibilities which he was not prepared for; and Boaz then buys the field. So Christ

says that "the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." (Matt. xiii. 44.) The person of Ruth secured the purchase of the field by Boaz, and the preciousness of the redeemed to Christ led Him to purchase the inheritance of all things.

3rd. The *Goel* had to raise up the name of the dead, and for this there was an especial provision appointed by God, in that the kinsman had to marry the widow of the dead. Of this we read in Deut. xxv. 5-10, and here also Ruth's history gives a beautiful illustration. This feature reveals especially the unselfishness of the Redeemer. The blessed Lord, in the unselfishness of His love, enters into man's estate, becoming a partaker of flesh and blood, and by death and resurrection raises up, through faith in Him, the name of the dead, exalting man in redemption as he never could have been exalted in creation. He thus builds up his brother's house, raising up the name of the dead. He is the Man upon the throne; and "the bride, the Lamb's wife," is with him there.

4th and lastly, the Kinsman was to be *the Avenger*. This feature of *Goel* responsibilities is spoken of in Numbers xxxv. In verses 18, 19, we read, "The murderer shall surely be put to death. The revenger (*goel*) of blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him, he shall slay him." Of this we see the fulfilment in Isa. lxiii.: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? He that is glorious in His apparel, travelling [or rather going triumphantly] in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. . . . For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed [*i.e.* those for whom I act the kinsman's part] is come. And I look, and there is

no helper; and I wonder there is no upholder: therefore my own arm brings salvation for me; and my fury, it upheld me." In the New Testament Rev. xix., xx. corresponds with this, when the dragon, the beast, the false prophet, their followers, and all whose names are not written among the living, will be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death.

What then is the book of the Revelation but the final development of the redemptive work of Christ in all these points to which our minds have been directed? The new song of chap. v. embraces them all. The redeemed of the Lord are thus gathered from all nations—*poor* bankrupt sinners delivered from the lowest dungeon. Their inheritance is restored, and they are made therein kings and priests, for "they shall reign on [or over] the earth." The Church, the *Bride* of Christ, the purchase of His blood, is seen arrayed in fine linen, pure and white, and her glory is described to us in the latter portion of the book. The Almighty Redeemer—the Divine, yet human *Goel*—has also shown how He will *avenge* the wrongs done to man and God by him and his whom Scripture calls the "enemy," the "adversary," the "murderer," and the "liar."

But Christ's receiving the title deeds from the hands of God awakes the song of the angels, as well as that of the living creatures and the elders. In their outer circle they say, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Let this recall to us Peter's words when speaking of Christ's redemption, "which things the angels desire to look into" (1 Peter i. 12); and when the Lamb takes the book the angels see the beginning of the fulfilment of that for which they have waited so long. Then the whole creation follows, saying, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto Him

that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

This yet future song of earth's participation in redemption's work is but an echo of very many of the Psalms, particularly those between Psalms xciii. and c. Let us look forward, then, with more earnest longing to the time when our Lord shall indeed take to Himself His great power; when the rights of His cross shall be vindicated, and when He who wore the crown of thorns shall wear His many diadems. Then shall His redeemed see the King in His beauty, and enter on their inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading, and is even now "reserved in heaven" for them. Come, Lord Jesus.

H. G.

DAILY.

A DAILY cross—He gives it thee to bear;
 Nor canst thou murmur; 'tis but *after Him*
 Whose own eyes once, alas! grew faint and dim
 In bearing one for thee! He shows thee where,
 By tracks of His own footsteps, thou shouldst tread—
 A daily joy, our hearts might say, instead,
 Since we but follow where our Master led.

A daily watching at thy Master's gates:
 How blest the one who thus has learned to stand,
 Expecting guidance from the Master's hand!
 Sure answers still reward the soul that waits:
 What if those gates *seem* closed? His words abide,
 Who never yet His promise has denied;
 Wait on—His love would teach thee to confide.

And rest thy soul meanwhile on this sweet stay:
 The daily cross He giveth thee to bear,—
 The daily watching He would have thee share,—
 Grace for them both He sends thee, day-by-day.
 "I am the Bread of Life," His own lips said;
 Himself He gives thee as thy "daily bread;"
 Feed thou on Him—thou shalt indeed be fed.

A. L. B.

THE CHURCH OF GOD ;

OR, THOUGHTS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

THE epistles in general are the Holy Ghost's expositions of truths made known in the gospels, and doubtless, together with the Apocalypse, they contain the things to which the Lord Jesus referred when He said, "I have *yet* many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them *now*. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into *all* truth: for He shall not speak of [or from] Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come." He who "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God," first *hears*, and then in infinite condescension *speaks*, affording a blessed pattern to us, that we should *listen* and *learn* in order to *teach*.

This is blessedly true of the epistle to the Ephesians written by the prisoner in Rome. Though Paul was then in *bonds*, his soul doubtless knew greater *liberty* and joy than ever; for his "bonds were manifested in all the palace to be *in Christ*." He was not a criminal, but a sufferer for Christ's sake. It is in this epistle that the blessed truth of the body of Christ is brought out, which is to God, FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, most precious and glorious. Ephesus means "desirable," and the word may be applied to the Church. Not that the existence of the Church in Ephesus gave to that city its name; for it was called Ephesus when as yet there was no assembly of God in it, save in the counsels of God. It was the desirable city to the idolatrous world because of the magnificent temple of Diana, and other attractive objects in it, but to God the desirable thing in it was the body of Christ.

The entire Church of God on earth at any time is His centre and object; His delight is in it. To it, as to His body, Christ is given, who is head *over* all things, and all things are for the Church's sake. Christ "loved the Church and gave Himself for it." He died to purchase it, and lives to nourish and to cherish it, as being of His flesh and of His bone; all things in heaven, on earth, and in hell, are made to subserve the accomplishment of God's purpose of blessing for it. This is true of each member, as well as of the whole body. In drawing your attention, dear fellow-Christian, to this epistle for your private and prayerful reading, let me ask you to follow me in considering the Church of God, which is the subject of the epistle, in the following aspects:

1. In the counsels or purpose of God. (Ch. i., first part.)
2. In natural degradation (*i.e.* the natural condition of its members), in elevation and union with Christ, and in position on the earth. (Chap. ii., in three sections.)
3. In obedience, as possessing life in Christ. (Chaps. iii., iv., v., vi. 1-9.)
4. In conflict. (Chap. vi. 10-24.)

IN COUNSEL OR PURPOSE.

Paul having acknowledged the faith and love of Ephesian disciples (the characteristics of saints in all the epistles, and true in fact to this day), he takes his place with them as a worshipper, blesses the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for the common blessing in the heavenlies in Him, tracing all up or back to God's eternal choice of them in Christ, as holy and blameless in love, and predestinated unto sonship "according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace."

Here the Church is viewed in its entirety and ultimate

perfection, as it shall be in the glory when presented by Christ according to chap. v. 27; for the purpose of God takes us up from our ruin and carries us onward to the glory—nothing short of, nor lower than the glory; see Rom. viii. 28-30, which gives us the full scope of the divine counsels of love, the entire range of God's purpose of grace.

Such is the believer's true position before God as seen by Him in Christ, and the Church's position in Him the Head, foreknown and predestinated, called (in time), justified, and glorified.

This perfectness and glory of the Church in the last Adam, Head of the new creation, was purposed by God in full prospect of the ruin of the first Adam and of the entire race of which he was the federal head. It was God's determinate counsel that grace should triumph over sin, that He would bring forth out of the ruin by sin a more glorious vessel than that which Satan had been allowed to spoil, and also that the vessel thus formed should be beyond his power to mar, through union with His own Son, which the first man knew not and had not by *creation*. Not only is the Church raised to an unspeakably higher level than that from which man fell in Adam, but it is preserved in that elevation by an indissoluble union with the Lord Jesus, the blessed Son of God.

All this and much more was true of the Ephesians in the purpose of God, when they were in their ruin, neither knowing, believing, nor caring for such grace in the days of their

DEGRADATION.

Their degradation is described in chapter ii. The apostle, by his prayer for them, had led their minds to Christ as raised from the dead and seated at God's right hand, far above all principality and power, and every name named

now or in the coming age (chap. i. 19, &c.); and he reminds them that the same power that raised Christ had wrought a mighty work in them, making them alive in Christ. "And you who were *dead* in trespasses and sins, yet now hath He quickened." The raising and exalting of Christ, and the quickening of their souls from death in sin, both demonstrated the power of God, and pledged their future security, deliverance, and victory. In a word, grace and power had effected their regeneration, and being now possessed of life in Christ, the Holy Ghost, by whom they were indwelt, would lead them on and teach them their true position in Christ, and their wondrous

ELEVATION.

It was a mighty lift indeed from the deep depths of natural blindness, guilt, and death, as children of disobedience, to life in Christ, and a seat with Him in the super-heavenlies, and to the knowledge, love, worship, and service of God, even our Father, after the divine pattern, Christ Jesus. Thus has God founded for Himself a monument of redeeming love to His own eternal praise and glory; not first of all for the creature's good, but for His glory, the creature's blessing being the means to the end. "That He might show in the ages to come the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Whatever besides may in the final state display His glory, this unique workmanship of divine love, wisdom, and power, will shine forth in the glorious light of Him who is, and ever shall be, the irradiating beam of all that is bright in the glory.

The Church, the body of Christ, is *now*, during its formation on the earth, a demonstration to the principalities and powers in the heavenlies of God's manifold, much-varied wisdom; and since Pentecost they have seen a sight

never beheld before—the union of believing Jews and Gentiles in Christ, and in assembly on earth, who had been so sundered by birth and manner of life.

In Ephesus the Holy Ghost had gathered souls to Christ (see Acts xix.), who, with others, were being builded together into a holy temple in the Lord, and actually were a habitation of God through the Spirit. This continues to be true, and is so in us as believers in the Lord Jesus. Let us then, beloved, rejoice in this unexampled act of grace, and be careful to exhibit the power of that grace in a life of true-hearted and thorough

OBEDIENCE.

Obedience! a simple word, and yet a great one, comprehending and describing what should be the entire life of a believer, even as it does that of the blessed Master Himself. Yes, one and the same word represents both His life and ours. This one principle has its distinct circles of development—the closet, the family, the Church, and the world without. It is true that the apostle, addressing an assembly, commences his practical address with the principle in its general and wide application; but we may begin with the narrowest circle—the closet.

It is in the closet surely that the Holy Ghost commences His blessed work of training our spirit, thoughts, and feelings by and in harmony with the word of God, which is the revelation of His will. This is fellowship with God, and joy is its fruit. The profit derived, the wisdom and power communicated in the closet, will be by grace manifested by a Christlike behaviour, whether in the family, the Church, or the world.

In these widening circles the general principle of obedience has special application according to the relationship in which each believer stands to the other, and their closer

or more remote contact in daily life. For example, that which the world would not notice, or, if they did, would not censure, might offend and wound a fellow-saint, a member of the assembly of God. Again, that which the assembly could not notice might be a trespass in the family, and would there wound and offend. This, however, we know, that the believer's obligation is to walk with God in each and all of these circles; to be in them a sweet savour of Christ to God. We know also that Satan adapts his temptations to each of these circles, and to our temperaments, habits, and tastes. I will not enlarge here, but ask my reader to consider carefully and prayerfully the exhortations, instructions, and warnings given in this epistle in connection with the several relationships of life, and to aim at obedience *in all*. If he does, he will encounter opposition, and will know the struggle of Satan against God in him, between flesh and spirit; and seeking to live godly in Christ Jesus, he will find himself in

CONFLICT.

The Church collective is in conflict, and so is the individual believer—in conflict with the unreal, the mere nominal, professing world; with error and immorality; with the flesh in all its workings, as acted on by wicked spirits; and with the world in all its forms. What the capabilities of the flesh for evil are, what the wickedness of our hearts is, and what are the dangers from without, let the varied warnings and ~~exhortations~~^{exhortations} of the epistle testify to; and, on the other hand, what can be reached or attained by the power of the Holy Ghost, who dwells in us, the exhortations given in it determine. We are to be imitators of God, walking in love after the example of Christ, as He loved us; putting *off* the old man—pride, envy, malice, sinful anger, lying, theft, and other abomi-

nations not to be named, together with the more subtle desires and evils of the mind; and then putting *on* the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created him, walking in the Spirit, walking in Christ. As we stand before God in all His perfectness, accepted in the Beloved, so should we appear before others in all the beauty of a Christlike conversation, or manner of life, walking worthy of the calling wherewith we have been called.

As I write this I think of the words written by the same apostle long since: "Who is sufficient for these things?" To this question we have his own answer: "Our sufficiency is of God." Whether therefore we consider the high standard of obedience presented to us, the conflict inevitable in seeking to reach it, or our own incompetency, we are met by the presentation of the fulness of Christ and the almighty power of the indwelling Holy Ghost; and we are bidden finally "to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might," using that strength in putting on the whole armour of God and boldly withstanding the foe.

This armour is described minutely and at length in the end of chap. vi., and I pray you, dear reader, examine the description carefully, remembering that the armour is neither your life nor your standing, any more than the soldier's armour is the man himself; it is rather that in which he performs the functions of a soldier, and answers to his name. Yes, read it, and, counting on your resources in Christ, fight the good fight of faith, expecting victory. Thus will you enjoy your proper portion—"joy and peace in believing," and the comfort the Lord Jesus intended to be drawn from His own words, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

H. H.

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE.

(Concluded from page 213.)

REFLECTIONS.

ON reviewing the transactions of the day on which Elijah was taken up, one cannot help noticing certain remarkable incidents. The two prophets are at Gilgal, near the Jordan. Their first journey is away from the Jordan to the westward as far as Bethel. On arriving there, they return eastward to Jericho. Leaving that place, they still go on eastward till they reach the Jordan; then across the river into the land formerly belonging to the Amorite, and which was not included in the land of promise, though it became part of the location of the two-and-a-half tribes. All these are familiar names in Israel's history. Gilgal was *their first place of encampment after the passage of the Jordan*; Jericho the first city they assailed, and which was captured in so wonderful a manner; Bethel, a place of note on many accounts; but known also in connection with the other places because of the great battle close by, when the small town of Ai resisted and put to flight many of Israel, though it was afterwards overpowered and destroyed. All these places are brought into combination on this occasion.

Why, then, must Elijah cross the Jordan in order to be taken up? Why was he not taken up in the land of Israel? And why must one miracle be wrought that the two prophets may pass out of the land, and another to allow of the return of Elisha, unless there was something specially to be taught by their so doing? Does it not seem as if it were all connected in some measure with Israel's first entrance into the land? a rehearsing backwards, as it were, of that event, with some modifications?

When Israel was introduced into the land of promise, they were told that their retention of it depended upon their good behaviour. This is fully shown by Lev. xviii. 26, &c., Lev. xxvi., and Deut. xxviii., corroborated by many passages in the books of Kings and in the Prophets. They did not conform to those stipulations, and were cast out, to Assyria, to Babylon, and finally to all the nations of the earth. God had foreseen what their conduct would be, and had thereon given them "statutes that were not good" (by reason of their inability to keep them), "and laws whereby they should not live." It was not at all His pleasure that they should be sent away; but if His requirements were not obeyed, it became necessary. And this not so much in the way of punishment (though punishment indeed was involved), as that they might be brought back upon another and a better footing, as is fully explained in Jer. xxxi., cited in Heb. viii.

It is possible that the divine counsels may have epitomised both the expulsion and the restoration of Israel, under the figure of these two prophets, combined with the events already noticed. Setting out from Gilgal, where the national circumcision had taken place, and the reproach of Egypt had been rolled away, they arrive at Bethel—the spot where of old God had made those munificent promises to their ancestor, Jacob, by virtue of which they were then inhabiting the country. There also on the other hand they could behold the tokens of the base delinquency of Israel in Jeroboam's idol altar, and the calf he had there set up for worship. After both had thus been made spectators of God's faithfulness, and of man's delinquency, they proceed to Jericho, the first city given into the hands of Israel after the separation at Gilgal, doomed to be destroyed and not rebuilt (Joshua vi. 26), yet it was rebuilt nevertheless (1 Kings xvi. 34); fresh illustrations of the same important

truths. Thence they both pass out of the land by a miraculous procedure similar to that whereby Israel entered it, and then Elijah is caught up.

The prophet of justice and judgment is dismissed with especial honour; and though for a time removed from sight, he again appears in glory with the Lord on the mount, and is preserved to be yet brought upon the scene, as notified by the prophet Malachi.

Nine years after his removal there came a writing or letter from him, as narrated in 2 Chron. xxi. 12-15, to Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, the reigning king in Judah. He had married a daughter of Ahab; and followed the practices of that wicked, idolatrous family. The letter was full of woe denounced upon him on account of his crimes; if possible, to induce repentance. Elijah, who had specially denounced Ahab and his race (1 Kings xxi. 17-24), is also employed to pass sentence upon the Judah branch of the same family. It is particularly to be noted how the political marriage, arranged and effected by Jehoshaphat, the good King of Judah, with Ahab of Israel, terminated. By marrying his son to Ahab's daughter Jehoshaphat probably intended and hoped to re-unite the two kingdoms once more under one monarchy. Yet the alliance, far from producing this result, brought about the utter ruin of his own family. The sentence upon Ahab penetrates into Judah also, to the extinction of every one of that branch, Jehoram having slain all his brethren, the other sons of Jehoshaphat. None survives save Joash, the babe of a year old, who was taken out from the heap of the slain; and he, the only scion of the two races, when he becomes free to display his character, shows by his atrocious wickedness the seed from whence he sprang.

Whether Elijah's letter was written before his departure, or in what way it reached its destination, we are not in-

formed. This only is recorded that it received entire fulfilment. (2 Chron. xxi. 16-20.)

In thinking over the conduct of Elijah one cannot fail to notice his strong and determined character. He was no reed shaken by the wind. Having before him one grand object, he made it the business of his life. All his thoughts and his energies were entirely devoted thereto. Personal considerations were wholly set aside. His thorough devotedness to God is most conspicuous. In him we see not the characteristics of grace, but rather those of justice, which measures out retribution for offences committed. Stern and unbending, he seeks to bring Israel into right paths by the exercise of severity, and his prophetic utterances are mainly announcements of judgment, not of mercy.

Doubtless the Lord God raised him up for the times in which he lived, and for those in which he will again appear; in which our God will vindicate His wisdom in the selection of the most suitable instrument for His purposes. In carrying out any avocation the skilful artificer uses implements of different degrees of fineness and sharpness. If a tree is to be hewn down he does not select a penknife for the purpose; if a hole is to be bored, though it might be done with a chisel, some other and more suitable implement is preferred. And the counsels of God are wiser than those of man.

But when we have to dwell on character, and its accordance with the mind of God, we cannot with safety take any other criterion than the perfect model He has set before us in His beloved Son. His is the perfection of character, as well as of conduct. To ascertain the relative value of any other, it must be tested by this touchstone. There is no other mode of forming an accurate estimate. All the failure in man only shows out more fully the holi-

ness of the Lord Jesus ; and all the goodness in man serves only as a foil to set off His excellence in greater brilliancy. When God searched the ways of man He pronounced that there was "none righteous ; no, not one." But in regard to the Lord Jesus Christ He said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And further, it is well to remember that every *undue* estimate of a servant tends to obscure the service of that Perfect One who is at once the sinner's Friend, his Master, and his God. R. N.

ON READING THE SCRIPTURES.—Christ is Himself "the Word of God," the Alpha and Omega of every page, the first letter and the last of all revealed truth ; and keeping Him before our view, well may the open pages of our Bible seem to us "God's holy Word." As I use these pages, alas ! for me if I am not dwelling in His grace to me ! I had better not read them too fast, nor with a hasty mind. Do not let us forget that that blessed One Himself was here on earth once a precious reader of the Scriptures ! I love to think that my eyes of a morning read the very pages that Jesus read. (I do not speak of the New Testament, of course, but of the Scripture so far as it existed in His time.) He saw a depth in it, and loved that depth, though it carried in its every page the truth of His approaching death ; still He loved to read. Oh that I may read that which He read in fellowship of spirit with Him. Children of God, great are our privileges ! This is the book that makes us humbler and wiser whenever or wherever we read it in the Spirit. But if we merely trip over the pages of a morning, just to do our duty and be off, vastly little of Christ or heaven shall we see in it. He only understands it, and deepens in it, who goes over it on "bended knee." H. D.

NOTES AND REPLIES.

How are we to understand Gal. vi. 2, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," in connection with verse 5, "For every man shall bear his own burden"?

IN the first place the two words in the original translated "burden," are quite distinct, and have different significations. In verse 2 *βαρος* (*baros*) is used, and it occurs also in the following passages: Matt. xx. 12; Acts xv. 28; 2 Cor. iv. 17 ("weight"); 1 Thess. ii. 6; Rev. ii. 24. It means a burden, as something heavy, weighty, and hence here signifies those grievances, sorrows, cares, or difficulties which, as burdens, rest upon every child of God. These we are commanded to bear for one another, as those who "weep with them that weep;" and thereby we "fulfil the law of Christ," which is a law of burden-bearing—for Christ has *borne* our sicknesses, and carried our infirmities (Matt. viii. 17); and "His own self *bare* our sins in His own body on the tree." (1 Peter ii. 24.) Hence the obligation of the law of Christ is to do for one another what Christ has done for us, and in the unity of the body of the one Christ the members are to be to one another what Jesus Christ is to all and to each. (1 John iii. 17.) It is thus we keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and in the harmony of love. In verse 5 *φορτίον* (*phortion*) is the word used; it also occurs in Matt. xi. 30, xxiii. 4; Luke xi. 46. And in Acts xxvii. 10 we have a similar word, *φορτος* (*phortos*), used for the *lading* or cargo of a ship, where the burden is viewed not with reference to its weight, but only as something to be carried, whether as precious freight or otherwise. The connection in verse 2 is totally different from that of verse 5. Here the context is, "Let every man prove his own work," the work or its result being like the cargo of a vessel; and as every vessel carries its own cargo, so each individual will carry the result of his own labour to the judgment-seat of Christ, where it will be tried by fire as to what sort it is. How many think that they are bearing something as if rich in good works, when in God's sight it may be nothing! The day will reveal it, and distinguish between the gold, silver, precious stones, and the wood, hay, and stubble. Therefore God's word is, "*Prove*" it *now*; and may we not add, Burn up what is worthless now, with tears and a broken heart, that it come not unjudged before the judgment-seat? for the word which says, "If we would judge ourselves, we shall not be judged," may have a reference beyond the immediate present.

Why was Simeon left out in the blessings to the tribes in Deut. xxxiii. ? and what lesson are we taught thereby ?

IN Gen. xlix. Simeon and Levi are linked together under a common sentence of scattering for cruelty, and it is not improbable that Simeon had an especial hand in the selling of Joseph, as he is the one bound in Egypt when the others are sent back. Levi, however, rises out of the position in which he stood under Jacob's prophetic utterance by reason of the faithfulness of the tribe to God when Israel sinned in the matter of the golden calf (Exod. xxxii. 26-29), and in the matter of Peor (Num. xxv.), in the evil of which the Simeonites seem to have been foremost. Hence the glorious promise of priestly dignity with which Moses invests Levi. Simeon remained where it was ; in fact the tribe fell off in numbers while in the wilderness, from 59,300 when they crossed the Red Sea, to 22,200 when they crossed the Jordan. Further, when Joshua divided the land Simeon was left without a separate portion ; for "their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah." (Josh. xix. 1.) Israel before Moses in Deut. xxxiii. would seem to typify the Church before the judgment-seat of Christ, the tribe of Simeon occupying the place of those of whom Christ has nothing to say. They are among the tribes, their name is on the breast-plate ; but all their works are burnt up, and no record is left. In harmony with this we scarcely find the name of this tribe even mentioned in all the subsequent history of Israel. Surely this is a matter of solemn significance to all saints, that they be not left in the day of the Lord with a starless crown, as those whose life journey and life opportunities left them lower at the end of their history than at the beginning !

Who was the Zacharias, son of Barachias, mentioned in Matt. xxiii. 35 as slain "between the temple and the altar" ?

IT seems most probable that he is the same as the Zechariah whose death is recorded in 2 Chron. xxiv. 21. He is called the son of Jehoiada the priest ; but as Jehoiada died at the great age of one hundred and thirty years, he may have had a son Barachiah, father of Zechariah ; and if Barachiah had died early, Zechariah might have been called the son of Jehoiada, though really his grandson. An instance of the omission of the father's name is found in Ezra v. 1, compared with Zech. i., and this is of frequent occurrence where the grandfather has been a man of note. "Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo," is called in Ezra, "Zechariah, the son of Iddo." (See also Luke xi. 51.)

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD:

ITS FACTS AND TEACHINGS.—III.

ON this great subject we have thus far cited scriptures on only "the FIRST resurrection," or that *from amongst* the dead—the blessed event which is to take place at our Lord's second coming; but in John v. 24–29 we have this, and also the resurrection of the whole human dead a thousand years later, both included. For as in a landscape one mountain top of the scenery may lead the eye on to another higher and more distant one, so do our Lord's words in this passage lead us on from one wonder to another of the resurrection of the dead.

Indeed, the whole subject of John v. appears to be the power of the Son of God over *mortal flesh*, whether alive or dead; His power to make living mortals hear His *word* of gospel quickening, and dead ones His *VOICE* calling them forth, either to life or to damnation.

In this respect John v. differs from John iii. or iv., and the three chapters taken together present a threefold view of the ruin of the sinner, and a corresponding threefold view of the salvation of God by His eternal Son.

In John iii. ruined man is seen *spiritually* dead, and needing to be begotten and born from above—dead in trespasses and sins, for he loves the darkness rather than the light, because his *deeds are evil* (see John iii. 9)—yet decently and religiously, and even amiably dead, for *Nicodemus* is the instance before us, who so enquiringly *came* to Jesus on his own and others' behalf. (See the words "WE know" in John iii. 2, and compare the word "many" in John ii. 23.)

In John iv. ruined man is seen in all the *activity* of

these trespasses and sins, which break out as foul and unceasing streams from that corrupt source, viz., a spiritually dead nature. Hence a *woman* is given as the case in point rather than a man, a woman being the first *actual transgressor* of our race in Eden's garden ; the scene is also at the "sixth hour" of man's active day, instead of "by night," as in John iii. God's eternal Son, too, is intent on her, not she on Him ; for He meets her in the midst of her *work*. Her only object at the well was "to draw water." And as He recalls in a few words her sinful life, she could say, He "told me *all that ever I did*." Since all the outcome of sin proceeds from vile thoughts and affections within, God's love here takes the form of quenching the restless, guilty "*thirst*" in the sinner by the gift of His Son, causing in the new-born one the upspringing and the outflowing of new and divine affections and ways.

But in John v. man's ruin is seen in the matter of his *body* ; he is mortal and diseased. The scene is laid in Jerusalem—that city the inhabitant of which ought not to have had to say, "I am sick ;" for "Jehovah-rophecha" (I am Jehovah thy Physician) was the name of her faithful covenant-keeping God ; and He would have put none of Egypt's diseases upon her had she but kept His statutes. (See Exod. xv. 26.) But even Jerusalem was, as it were, a lazar-house of "whatsoever disease" could anywhere be found, and close by "the sheep market" of her vain sacrifices there "lay a great multitude of impotent folk," waiting for the healing of a single case, though only once a year. What a specimen of sinful man's ruin as to his very body ! and man, too, at "his best estate," even among the favoured nation that was brought nigh to God by outward ordinances ! How true that early word to man and woman as sinners, "Dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return." Verily, "sin hath reigned unto *death* ;" and there

is no individual of Adam's race, be he Gentile or Jew, whose mortal flesh while on earth does not prove and illustrate this solemn truth; and there is no unsaved sinner in whose *body* it will not be awfully proved for ever in the torments of that lake of fire which is the second death.

Hence in this chapter God's salvation is seen as that utterance of His obedient Son, which, if only the sinner's heart believes, when he hears it with his mortal ear (see *v.* 24), or reads it with his mortal eye (*vv.* 39, 47), it will not only beget a new birth and new life in his *soul*, but will, by the VOICE of the Son of God," ere long give him eternal life even in his *body* also. Verily, the sinner's is a threefold ruin; but in God's gift of His beloved Son the believing sinner finds a threefold "great salvation."

Let us now consider our Lord's words in this fifth chapter a little more closely, and we shall find His utterances in Jerusalem on that earthly and Jewish "Sabbath-day" were as full of *new-creation* power as the words in Gen. i. 26, "Let us make man in our image," &c., were mighty of old to give a happy birth to this now groaning first creation.

The words "Verily, verily" ("Amen, amen," as in the original) are uttered three times in the discourse. "Amen" means what is *true*; and eternal *truth* was in all the utterances of the Son of God; for by Him came "grace and truth" into the world. With the first "Verily, verily" (*v.* 19), we have the perfection of the Son's *obedience to*, and consequent fellowship with, the Father, as Isaac was in obedient fellowship with Abraham on Mount Moriah. With the second "Verily, verily" (*v.* 24), we have the *lips* of that same obedient and honoured Son uttering the message of eternal life; or, in other words, the gospel of God's grace, which causes all who believe it to pass

(spiritually) "from death unto life." And with the third "Verily, verily" (v. 25) comes our subject of the resurrection of the dead; first of the hearing (or righteous) dead (vv. 25-27), and then (a thousand years later) of the whole of the human dead at the day of "the great white throne." (See vv. 28, 29.) Taken together, these three "Verily, verily" give us, first, the subject matter of the gospel; second, its present power by its preached message; and third, its future twofold result of bodily life and glory to ALL who have believed it, and of bodily damnation to all who have despised and rejected it. Each "Verily, verily" attaches to the whole passage that follows it; and indeed all through John's gospel this solemn preface of our Lord's words will be found to introduce either a new subject, or a new aspect of the same subject. And it is important to distinguish between the gospel "Verily, verily" of verse 24, and the first resurrection "Verily, verily" of verse 25. The wording of the two verses is very different. In verse 24 it is Jesus' "WORD" that is being heard, whether preached by Himself, or by any through whom He sends it. In verse 25 it is "the VOICE of the Son of God," and it is the "dead" who are said to hear it. (Compare 1 Thess. iv. 16.) "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a SHOUT . . . and the *dead* in Christ shall rise first." In verse 24 no distinction of "hour" (or dispensation) is made, for the gospel is the same on to the end; but in verse 25 there is a distinct "hour." "The hour is coming, and now is," points to the shouting into life of the righteous dead as an event belonging to the *present period* of waiting saints; the last sands of the hour-glass of this age will witness it—the age of which Jesus could say, it "now is;" for His advent was its Alpha, and our being caught up by His mighty shout will be its Omega. And its being a resurrection of only *some* of "the dead" is

pointed to when He says, "And *they that hear* shall live;" *i.e.* only such as were in their lifetime what God counts to be hearers, viz., believers. "The rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished." (Rev. xx. 5.) Lying in their unblest, unhallowed graves, they will not respond to that "shout" of joy and love; for in their lifetime they never responded to the message of love to their souls. Thus plainly does verse 25 answer in every respect to other scriptures on the subject of the first resurrection; and in verse 26 all the mighty power put forth is declared to be the Father's gift to the Son, on the ground, of course, of His obedience unto death. It is as Himself a *Risen One* from the dead that Jesus has this resurrection power. From other scriptures (*e.g.* 1 Thess. v. 3; 2 Thess. i. 8, &c.) we know that after the VOICE of the Lord Jesus has manifested its resurrection power on His saints, His execution of judgment upon the living rejectors of God's gospel will follow; hence our Lord adds, in verse 27, "And hath given Him authority to *execute judgment* also, because He is the Son of man."

But this is not all. In verse 28 another declaration is made of this same resurrection power of the Son of God over mortal flesh, and a *much larger one*. "Marvel not at this," says our Lord: "for the hour is coming, in the which ALL that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." This can be none other than the day of "the great white throne"—a day of *larger* display of power over the dead* than was "the first

* That what God calls *resurrection* power should include in it the *changing* of the mortal bodies of all who are *living* believers in Christ at that *last hour* of earthly time into bodies glorious, only agrees with the same truth as to ourselves, whoever of us may be "alive and remain" at the moment of the *first* resurrection.

resurrection," because it will include, not only such *righteous dead* as shall have died during the thousand years' reign of Christ (see Isa. lxx. 20), but also *all the ungodly dead* of the entire human race, from guilty Cain downward. Hence the emphatic word, "ALL that are in the graves," in contrast with only *some* from among the dead (viz., the righteous or the hearing ones) in verse 25. The word "*voice*" also in verse 28 links itself with "voice of the Son of God" in verse 25, both these resurrection acts of Jesus being by the power of the same omnipotent "shout," though they be a thousand years apart in point of time, even as the fountain yet to be opened for Israel's sin and uncleanness (Zech. xiii. 1) is by virtue of that same bitter cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" which has already opened it for us.

Verse 29 would therefore show the day of the great white throne to be a resurrection scene of both righteous and wicked, and in this our Lord's words agree with the vision He gave to John of that day in Revelation xx. 11-15. In that vision no sooner has creation—its sea and its dry land—given up ALL its then existing dead ones of Adam's race than "the book of life" is opened, and whosoever amongst that vast multitude "was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire;" for only the works of such as had had *eternal life* in them were found to be precious before God, or able to abide in the presence of that great white throne; just as now also, only such works as are *the fruit of life and grace divine* in us are acceptable to God. See Ephesians ii. 10: "Created in Christ Jesus unto *good works*, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." The works of all the rest, however moral, amiable, or religious, could but condemn them before God's *white throne*.

Mark too the similar *wording* in both passages of the

test applied. In Rev. xx. 12, "The dead were judged . . . according to their *works*;" and in John v. 29, the *saints* who come forth to "the resurrection of life" are described as "they that have *done good*," and the *unbelieving*, who are cast into the lake of fire, as "they that have *done evil*."

Compare also Paul's words as to "the righteous judgment of God" in Romans ii. 5-8, where ALL saved ones are spoken of as those "who by patient continuance in *well-doing* seek for glory, honour, and immortality," and have "eternal life" as the blessed result; and the unsaved as those who "are contentious, and do not *obey* the truth." In the case of the heirs of "eternal life," we know from other scriptures that their "well-doing" really was, first, their *obeying the gospel*, and then all the other obedience which this grace of God *wrought in them*; while in the case of all those who perish, we know that "the truth" which they did not obey, and against which they were "contentious," was the grand gospel truth that man is guilty, but God is good, and has made a rich provision for a guilty world; and being "contentious" against *this*, all else in their lives is only rebellion also. Thus variously in different scriptures does God's word describe for us those two great classes of all mankind—the saved and the lost.

It follows, then, that the *final* resurrection of the dead is one of both just and unjust. With this fully agrees the description given by the prophets of the Israel nation during the thousand years' reign of Christ; for all their accounts of that nation's millennial blessing still make room for DEATH in their midst, righteous though they all will be, and all of them children of God. Whether young or old, whether early in the thousand years age, or later on in it, that nation will all of them be a people "forgiven their iniquity" (Isa. xxxiii. 24), and all of them made

spiritually to know the Lord. (Jer. xxxi. 34.) They will be free from sickness, and have their lives of an Adam-like length—so much so, that at a hundred years old any one among them will be regarded as still “a child;” but if he sins *openly* against the Son of God, who reigns amongst them, he will be cut off. Such seems to be the meaning of Isaiah lxxv. 19, 20: “And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant *of days*, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die *an hundred years old*; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.” Add to this that Christ’s reigning age is to be a day of such vast spiritual blessing to earth’s *Gentile nations* that Paul speaks of it as “life from the dead” to them (see Rom. xi. 15); and that no such millennial length of life is foretold of any of these multitudes of believers in Jesus, except among the Israel nation, and we at once see how many, many names of the millennial dead will be found “written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. xiii. 8), and how truly the last resurrection will therefore be a simultaneous one of both righteous and wicked!

These are wonders indeed of the power of the risen Son of God over the mortal flesh of all Adam’s race; and if they challenge and even stagger our faith, it is only that it may be rooted the deeper (as the wind roots the trees more firmly), in all the word of our God; and in the double “Amen, amen” of our Lord’s lips. “The God of Amen” will be Jehovah’s new name, to be uttered and delighted in by His blood-washed, grace-saved, millennial saints all through that age. (See Isa. lxxv. 16, where the words “the God of truth” should be “the God of Amen.”)

Let that "God of Amen," the "God that cannot lie," be our stay and our trust for the fulfilment of all His word in this more privileged, but more difficult, time of being God's foretrusters. (See Eph. i. 12.) But if we are to fulfil this our high character of foretrusters (rather fore-hoppers), we must diligently "search *the Scriptures*," and give heed to all that God testifies therein. (See John v. 30-47.) Be it so. Amen. H. D.

HEBRON.

"Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt."

NUMBERS xiii. 22.

To know what God would teach us from this passage we must look into what He says about Hebron and Zoan in other scriptures.

Hebron is first mentioned in Genesis xiii. 18. When Abraham had parted from Lot he went to Hebron, which means "fellowship." On reference to Joshua xiv. 12-14 it will be found that Hebron was a high place; so that its name not only signifies fellowship, but its situation also indicates the same blessed privilege. Lot chose him all the *plain* of Jordan, and this seems to be man's choice when departing from God; for after the flood Noah's descendants soon found the plain of Shinar (Gen. xi. 2), the outcome of which was the tower of Babel, afterwards Babylon. How beautifully Abraham's altar at Hebron contrasts with the tower of Babel! The tower was a high and mighty building, whose top was to reach unto heaven. Abraham's altar was insignificant in itself, but there he could indeed have fellowship with God.

The next time we find Hebron mentioned is in connection with Abraham at the death of Sarah. There she was buried

(Gen. xxiii. 17-20), as was also Abraham himself afterwards. (Chap. xxv. 10.) He not only lived there, but was buried there. Great importance is attached to Abraham's purchase of the field in which was the burying-place. The whole of chap. xxiii. is taken up with telling us of it; and verse 17 tells us that even the trees "were made sure" "for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth." He would not receive it as a gift from them, just as he would not take from the king of Sodom "from a thread even to a shoe-latchet," lest it should be said that he had made Abraham rich. (See in connection Esther viii. 11; ix. 10, 15, 16—"But on the spoil laid they not their hand.") The force of this will be further seen when we consider Zoan. Before leaving this chapter look for a moment on the expressions "*sure*" and "*for a possession.*" Not only do they convey the idea, but they testify to the fact of the righteousness of the purchase; for Abraham had paid the full price. In like manner our redemption is a righteous redemption; for the *full price* has been paid, and so the place of our fellowship is secured for ever—made sure for a possession—and not all the world can take it away. (John xiv. 27.)

Let us now turn to Joshua xiv. 12, 15, where we find Hebron mentioned in a different aspect. It is now a great walled and *fenced city* where the giants, the Anakims, lived. It was not to be walked into on silver slippers, but a hard fight would be necessary before the stronghold could belong to Caleb as an inheritance. Not only were there the Anakims, but the Canaanites dwelt there (Judges i. 10); yet Caleb set his heart upon it, and with his strength renewed he obtained it; for the Lord was with him. We too shall have a fight and a conflict if we are to maintain fellowship with God and separation from the world, and many giants will have to be withstood and slain with the sword,

“which is the word of God” (Eph. vi. 17), “quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.” (Heb. iv. 12.) Caleb was one who wholly followed the Lord, and thus it was that he could obtain Hebron. So we shall never know what true fellowship is unless our eye is single. If we sin, and our fellowship be thereby cut off, God’s gracious remedy comes in—“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” (1 John i. 9.) Notice that Caleb obtained Hebron “for an *inheritance*.” It was a place where he was to dwell, not to “come and go.” So in Psalm lxxxiv. 1, 4: “Blessed are they that *dwell* in Thy house;” and the result will be, “They will be still praising Thee.”

The next view of Hebron is as a *priestly city* (Josh. xxi. 11), where dwelt the children of Aaron who handled the holy things of the tabernacle. We, too, are a “royal priesthood” (1 Peter ii. 9); made “kings and priests unto God” (Rev. i. 6); and in this respect also we should seek to enjoy our high privilege.

We have now to look at Hebron as a “*city of refuge*.” (Josh. xx. 7.) In this aspect we first knew Hebron when the avenger was on our track, crying for justice, which was nothing less than demanding our life. Then God gave us to see in Jesus our city of refuge, whither we could flee and live, and not only live, but dwell. Just think of a poor man coming panting up to the gate of the city and asking admission, his only plea that he was a manslayer, and liable to death if found outside the city. He would at once be admitted to dwell with the priests. So the Lord takes a poor sinner and saves him from eternal death, and gives him an everlasting place with Himself—“That they may be *with me*.” (John xvii. 24.) We can but exclaim, like Paul, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judg-

ments, and His ways past finding out." (Rom. xi. 33.) Again, if the slayer came out of the city and was found, he might be killed by the avenger of blood. The slayer was obliged, on pain of death, to remain in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest that was in those days; but the men of the city were not to deliver him up. (Josh. xx. 5.) Thus we can say, "We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation;" or, like Paul, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." (2 Tim. i. 12.) Our Priest continueth ever, and hath "an unchangeable priesthood" (Heb. vii. 24); therefore our fellowship continues, and we "go no more out."

Hebron in 2 Sam. ii. 1, 11 is the *city of the King*. Is God the King of our Hebron? or have we a little Hebron of our own? Does not Hebron correspond to 1 Thess. iv. 17, where we, like Judah, shall go out to meet our King on His appearing, and then accompany Him to His glorious kingdom?

We have seen Hebron, *first*, as a place where a pilgrim and a stranger could hold fellowship with God, having a pitched tent, but a built altar; *secondly*, as the place where the righteousness of our fellowship can never be called in question; *thirdly*, as the place where there must needs be a conflict to maintain fellowship; *fourthly*, as the place where as priests we enjoy this fellowship; *fifthly*, as the place of our refuge; and *sixthly*, the place of the coming King, where the fellowship shall be unbroken and the conflict shall cease.

Now let us turn our attention to Zoan, and although Scripture does not say as much of this place as Hebron, we may be able to gather something for our profit. In Numbers xiii. 22 we find that Zoan was in Egypt, so that

we may consider what is said of Egypt as applying in a measure to Zoan. In Psalm lxxviii. 12 we see that Israel had been in the field of Zoan. They had been brought out of Egypt; but their temptation was to return there.

We may judge of the character of Zoan by looking at what is said of its governors. In Isaiah xix. 11-14 we read, "The princes of Zoan are become fools," and "the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." (Ps. xiv. 1.) In Isaiah xxx. 1-4 the Lord pronounces woe on those that go down to Egypt for help—"For his princes were at Zoan," where the Lord was not. In Numbers xiv. Israel wanted to go back to Egypt without asking the Lord; and Isaiah's words show they are still of the same mind, going down to Egypt, and "have not asked at my mouth." "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jer. xvii. 9.) In Ezekiel xxx. 14 Zoan is spoken of as the place of God's judgments. As Hebron is the city of the King, so Zoan is the object of His judgments. The building of Hebron some years before Zoan may remind us of God's purpose of blessing before the world was.

A.

THE WORD OF GOD.

IV. WHAT IT EFFECTS.—IT

Regenerates. "Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth." (James i. 18.) "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Peter i. 23.)

Makes wise to salvation. "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. iii. 15.)

Quickens. "Thy Word hath quickened me." (Psalm cxix. 50.)

Leads to faith, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." (Rom. x. 17.)

Purifies. "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit." (1 Peter i. 22.) "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." (Ps. cxix. 11.) "Through Thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way." (Ps. cxix. 104.)

Sanctifies. "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth." (John xvii. 17.) "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." (Eph. v. 26.)

Enlightens. "The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." (Ps. xix. 8.)

Nourishes. "If thou put the brethren 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, whereunto thou hast attained." (1 Tim. iv. 6.)

Promotes spiritual growth. "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby." (1 Peter ii. 2.)

Makes fruitful. "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Ps. i. 2, 3.)

Instructs and corrects. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Tim. iii. 16.)

Warns. "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." "Moreover by them is Thy servant

warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward." (Ps. xix. 9, 11.)

Thoroughly furnishes. "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. iii. 17.)

Keeps from the destroyer. "By the Word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." (Psalm xvii. 4.)

IT GIVES

Joy. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." (John xv. 11.) "I have rejoiced in the way of Thy testimonies as much as in all riches." (Ps. cxix. 14.)

Peace. "Great peace have they which love Thy law." (Ps. cxix. 165.)

Liberty. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John viii. 32.)

Wisdom. "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." (Ps. xix. 7.) "Thou through Thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me." (Ps. cxix. 98.)

The knowledge of eternal life. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life." (1 John v. 13.)

Songs in the pilgrimage. "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." (Ps. cxix. 54.)

Good success. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." (Josh. i. 8.)

“THE LORD IS THY KEEPER.”

He keeps as a *shepherd*. (Jer. xxxi. 10.) By enfolding, watching, leading into green pastures, and beside still waters, and by seeking after the wanderers.

He keeps us as a *vineyard* is kept. (Isa. xxvii. 3.) By planting, watering, watching, pruning.

He keeps, as the *apple of His eye*. (Deut. xxxii. 10.) By being pained when we are touched, and by protecting care.

He keeps by *unslumbering watchfulness*. (Ps. cxxi. 3.)

He keeps by *holding our hand* (Isa. xlii. 6); promising that though we may fall we shall not be utterly cast down. (Ps. xxxvii.)

He keeps by *His peace* garrisoning our hearts (Phil. iv. 7) when we are “careful for nothing,” &c., (v. 6), our part being to *let the peace rule*. (Col. iii. 15.)

He keeps by *His power* (1 Peter i. 5), working in us “to will and to do.” (Phil. ii. 13.)

He keeps *our feet* from being taken. (Prov. iii. 26.) By warning of *snare*.

He will keep the feet of His saints or separated ones. (1 Sam. ii. 9.) By constant washing. (John xiii. 4-10.) By showing us the right paths, and holding up our goings.

He will keep us “*from evil*.” (2 Thess. iii. 3.) By teaching us to avoid it, and by restraining its power.

—
The Lord Jesus prays—

“Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.” (John xvii. 11.)

“KEEP YOURSELVES.”

“He that is begotten of God *keepeth himself*.” (1 John v. 18.)

By the power of the divine life within.

“By the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.”

By the word of His lips. (Ps. xvii. 4.)

We are to *keep ourselves in “the love of God.”* (Jude 21.)

“From the paths of the destroyer.” (Ps. xvii. 4.)

“From idols.” (1 John v. 21.)

“From every wicked thing.”

“Unspotted from the world.”

“Far from a false matter.”

We are to *keep ourselves “pure.”* (1 Tim. v. 22.)

To keep our *heart and soul*. (Prov. iv. 23, xxii. 5.)

Our *lips and tongue*. (Ps. xxxiv.)

Our *mouth*. (Prov. xiii. 3.)

Our *feet*. (Eccles. v. 1.)

Our whole *bodies* under. (1 Cor. ix. 27.)

Our *garments*. (Rev. xvi. 15.)

For this we must call upon God—

“Keep me as the apple of the eye.”

“Keep the door of my lips.”

“O keep my soul.” (Ps. xxv. 20.)

“Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.” (Ps. xix. 13.)

“Oh that thou wouldest keep me from evil.” (1 Chron. iv. 10.)

“Keep me from the snares...laid for me.” (Ps. cxli. 9.)

—
“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling...be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

THE EPISTLE OF CHRIST.

2 CORINTHIANS iii. 3.

THE letters which we love and value are those which are the most unreserved communication of the heart, and thoughts, and feelings of the writer. Such letters are a satisfaction both to the one who writes and the one who receives. The letter may speak of joy or of pain; it may speak of one or of many things; but what alone can satisfy us is, that, as far as it goes, it should truly and faithfully represent the writer; and nothing less than this can be the meaning of the words, "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ."

Let us seek to consider in the light of God's presence what these words mean. When we look around upon very many of God's children, and when we look at ourselves, are we not forced to confess what poor representations we are of Christ? what a feeble, if not untrue, idea we convey to others of what He is? How little do they read in us of His tenderness, and compassion, and sympathy! of His truth and faithfulness, as well as of His deep, yearning love! Is not the secret of this that so little is *written* in our hearts? Is it not because we have drunk in too little into our own spirits of what He is? It is plain enough that in a letter only that can be read which has been first written; and it is no light matter to have Christ written upon us "with the Spirit of the living God." It involves a deep personal knowledge *in our hearts* of what He is to *us*, and this is generally learned through need and failure. It is not that He holds back His communications, but that we are not prepared to receive them. He cannot reveal the tenderness of His deep personal love when the heart is satisfied

with earthly streams. He cannot pour out the fulness of His resources when there is no need felt. His pity and compassion, and forgiving, un-upbraiding love, fall lightly on the heart which has not felt the bitterness of sin and failure. His strength cannot be given to those whose self-confidence has not been broken by the experience of the strength of the enemy without, and of evil within, and of utter inability to meet them. His wisdom can only be imparted to those who have learned, in some measure at least, their own folly, the wiles of the devil, and the deceitfulness of sin. And so it is that just in proportion to our felt need does the Spirit of the living God reveal the Lord Jesus to our hearts. He does so by the written Word, by showing us therein the things of Christ, what He has said and what He has felt in the case of others in like circumstances; how He has bound up other broken hearts, and set other captives free. And is it not well worth while to endure the need, the emptiness, the humbling, however painful it may be at the time, if by this means we can gratify the heart of our loving Lord, by receiving into our hearts more of the fulness of His love and of His resources.

Again, just so much as we personally know of Him shall we be able to show to others. They may then in us learn to know something of Christ—something of His compassion, tenderness, gentleness, sympathy, love; something of His faithfulness, and holiness, and truth.

Let this thought cheer and encourage us, as we painfully have to learn out little by little the lesson of our own insufficiency and helplessness; and let us drink more deeply of the rich unfailing streams that flow from Him, that so, knowing Him better, we may manifest Him forth to others—"that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh."

Let us also remember that each one of us who are called by the name of Christ, who profess to obey the commands of our Father—one of which is, “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all *in the name* of the Lord Jesus—is responsible to represent Him truly, to be His witness, that our words, our actions, our whole character, may be Christ-like, and that we may walk even as He walked, loving even as He loves us.

We are not only to be to God a sweet savour of Christ (2 Cor. ii. 15), and to be changed into the same image from glory to glory (iii. 18), but we are to be the *epistle* of Christ—manifestly declared to be such—His signature unmistakably upon us, and the writing clear, and legible, and definite. Well may we ask the question, “Who is sufficient for these things?” (ii. 16) and gladly give back the inspired answer, “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.” (iii. 5.)

THOUGHTS ON SOME OF THE NAMES IN ROMANS XVI.

OF the thirty-five names in this chapter twelve are here selected, and a few words are added concerning their signification as bearing upon the believer's life and walk.

Phoebe—“shining, pure.” As children of God we are called out of darkness into His marvellous light. “God is light,” and we are “light in the Lord.” As the moon reflects the light of the sun, in like manner it is God's design that the Church should reflect the life of the Lord Jesus in a dark world. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. v. 16.) Of John the Baptist the Lord Jesus said that he “was a burning and

a shining light." (John v. 35.) We may frequently feel depressed on account of the dimness of the light manifested by us; but while desiring to shine more brightly, should we not be encouraged by the fact that even a little light can be clearly discerned in a very dark place, the intense darkness serving only to make it appear more brilliant?

Andronicus—"a man excelling others." In 1 Cor. xi. 12 we are told to seek to "*excel* to the edifying of the church," and to "covet earnestly the best gifts." In the book of Nehemiah we read such words as, "The people had a *mind* to work," "*every one* to his work," "we *laboured* in the work;" and who that has read the record of David's mighty men, and felt somewhat of the power of the love of God, has not desired to do something better for the Lord Jesus? In Hebrews xi. we have a list of the names of many of the Old Testament worthies; but at the commencement of chap. xii. the Lord stands alone, and we are directed to look off unto Him as the One who indeed excelled all by His life of unbroken obedience to God.

Amplias—"large, extensive." We are narrow and contracted, because selfish. As we think of our Lord's unselfish love, we have need to pray, like Jabez, "Oh that thou wouldest *enlarge* my coast!" or with the psalmist, "Enlarge my heart." Getting by giving is one of God's principles; but we are prone to omit to give. The most miserable Christians are those who are living for and keeping all to themselves; with them self is all! One of the blessings which Solomon received was largeness of heart; and his words are: "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." (Prov. xi. 24, 25.)

Urbane—"civil, courteous." The tongue is continually bringing us into trouble. It was used freely by Eve in Eden, and the fall quickly followed. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue;" hence the force of the word, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." With a little practice and self-denial we may learn to speak lovingly, and at the same time truthfully, "speaking the truth in love;" and what a power goes along with it! Joseph "spake kindly unto his brethren," "unto *their hearts*." The apostle Paul twice mentions those who behaved courteously to him (Acts xxvii. 3; xxviii. 7); and we are exhorted to be pitiful and courteous. (1 Peter iii. 8.) David said, "His word was in my tongue;" "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue." "A soft answer turneth away wrath." Nabal's churlish reply to David was the opposite of this; and we know the result. Let us remember Him who has told us, "I create the fruit of the lips;" "From me is thy fruit found."

Aristobulus—"the best counsellor." *Patrobas*—"paternal." These may be considered together. We are members one of another, and have an individual responsibility to the Lord Himself, and also to each other. "We then that are strong ought (*i.e.* owe it as a debt) to bear the infirmities of the weak." And in this sense the measure of our responsibility is precisely the measure of our ability. Love is not easily hindered; it creates no burdens, but rather converts that which is felt to be a dull duty into a happy privilege, causing the soul to yearn for a continuation of such holy liberty. The teacher should seek to make a friend of the young convert. A suitable bond of wise counsel, sympathy, and encouragement, a kindly enquiry as to his habits, companions, &c., would not be

out of place, but, on the contrary, would often prove a real and lasting blessing. David and Jonathan took sweet counsel together. "He that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise." The apostle Paul appears to have esteemed this privilege. To the Corinthians he said, "As my beloved sons, I warn you." To the Thessalonians he wrote: "We exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children." Writing to the Galatians, he says, "My little children." A kind fatherly care over converts is to be observed and much valued. Our Lord's desire is expressed in the words, "Take care of him . . . and when I come again, I will repay thee." (Luke x. 35.)

Phlegon—"zealous." The young convert is sometimes blamed for exercising zeal without knowledge, and this he frequently does. Yet, where love is the motive, the utmost margin should be allowed. Among those who are older is there not a danger of possessing knowledge while manifesting but little zeal? The Corinthians were "zealous of spiritual gifts," and the Church should now be characterized as "a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Through the grace of God may we maintain that reputation.

Philologus—"a lover of learning." There is a learning that we begin with—"Every man therefore that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me." And then the word still is, "Learn of me." Laban learned by experience that the Lord had blessed him; but how slow we are to learn this in its fulness, because slow of heart to believe. Where, however, there is an opened ear, a will to obey, a disposition to receive, a desire to know—longings really produced by God Himself—He never delays to satisfy. We may also recollect that the injunction, "Cease to do evil," comes before "Learn to do well."

Olympas—"heavenly." We are partakers of the heavenly

calling; and the Lord's desire is that His people should not only be heavenly with reference to their calling, but also heavenly in character now. "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly."

Timotheus—"honoured of God." Before honour is humility. If we take the low place, and are contented to be misunderstood and thought wrongly of, God will exalt us in due time. God's honour, and not success in service, is the first object to be considered. Then the Lord's approbation will be declared by the words, "Good and faithful servant." Meanwhile He has said, "If any man serve ME, him will my Father honour." Thus it is our happy privilege to seek the honour that cometh from God only.

Jason—"healer." Love covereth all sins; its mission is to bind up rather than expose; it "suffereth long, and is kind." When Saul died the Philistines sent into the land of the Philistines round about to publish the intelligence; but what did David say? "Tell it not in Gath." Oh, how many painful wounds there are at the present time amongst God's people which have not been bound up, when in many instances a single kind word, with a little explanation, would have been sufficient to heal them! But, alas! it is still true of us in too many cases that "The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken."

Erastus—"lovely, amiable." Here one cannot help thinking of Jonathan, the lovely and amiable one, whose love was pleasant, "wonderful, passing the love of women." Howbeit he was no more than a shadow of the substance Himself, the "altogether lovely," to be much with whom means to be much like Him in our ways. May this be our happy experience till He come.

A. D.

NOTES AND REPLIES.

How are we to understand Acts xxii. 16: "Be baptized, and wash away thy sins"?

BAPTISM is a symbol; and as the bread and wine at the Supper are spoken of as the body and blood of Christ, so baptism is put for the remission of sin indicated by it. Water-baptism is a type of Spirit-baptism, of which we read in 1 Cor. xii. 13: "For in (*ev*) one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." Here the baptizer is Christ (see Matt. iii. 11), and he who is thus baptized *by* Christ is dead, buried, and risen *with* Christ. The figure of this we are commanded to perform in water, and therefore at the command of God Ananias came to Paul and said, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Baptism in water no more secures the forgiveness of sin than partaking of the Lord's Supper secures that eternal life which is alone possessed by eating of the flesh and drinking of the blood of the Son of man. (See John vi.) Baptism and the Lord's Supper are alike symbols and types of deep significance, and of imperative importance as the commands of the Lord; but the symbol and the shadow can never be put in the place of the substance and the reality without undermining the whole fabric of redemption.

What is the meaning of "I travail in birth again," in Gal. iv. 19?

PAUL had begotten them in the gospel, and in their conversion they were made partakers of eternal life; but the result of that should have been, that Christ should have been formed in them. Such, however, had not been the case, as their going back to law indicated; and Paul had to deal with them and to travail for them as if they had never known Christ. This seems illustrated in Israel's history by the double passage, first, through the Red Sea, and then through the Jordan, which latter was the result of the unbelief that had kept them forty years in the wilderness, and brought them to the east side of the Jordan, whereas they might have gone from Kadesh-Barnea into the land at first, fresh from the Red Sea. In Paul's own life there was no double passage; he went up out of the Red Sea into the midst of the land of promise. The Galatians were following the steps of Israel, and the Red Sea of their conversion had to be supplemented by the passage of the Jordan, so to speak, with its renewed lesson of regeneration, whereby the death and resurrection of Christ was to become a practical reality. Alas, how many need this truth in our days!

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT:

ITS GODWARD AND MANWARD ASPECTS.

THE object of this paper is not to unfold the mysteries of this most eventful day in Israel's history, as given with such detail in Leviticus xvi., but to point out the striking contrast between the Godward and manward aspects of the ceremonial of this day of days, this Sabbath of Sabbaths. There is perhaps nothing more important in considering the sacrificial character of Christ's death than to give due prominence to its highest aspect, and that is, its relation to the throne of God and to the requirements of His infinite justice. The natural tendency of the human heart is to view the cross of Christ too exclusively in its connection with the creature's need arising from his sinfulness, and to forget the demands of the holiness of God. In the Scriptures the latter always stand foremost, and notably so in the sacrificial appointments of this day of sorrow and of sackcloth in the Jewish calendar.

The two features in the feast to which we would draw attention are, first, the change in the garments of the high priest during the ceremonies of the day; and second, the distinctive character of the two goats which together formed "*the sin-offering.*"

In verse 4 we have the garments described in which Aaron had to commence the ministrations of the day. They were not his usual high-priestly garments, as described in Exod. xxviii., attached to which were the names of the children of Israel, but plain linen garments. "He shall put on the holy *linen* coat, and he shall have the *linen* breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a *linen* girdle, and with a *linen* mitre shall he be attired: these

are *holy garments* ; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on." The priestly garments, whether of the high priest (Exod. xxviii. 2) or of the ordinary priest (v. 40), were to be "for *glory and for beauty* ;" but these were *holy garments*. Holiness is the one thought brought before us, and that in special connection with righteousness, which linen typically represents. Israel is, so to say, at present entirely in the background, and the high priest, who on every other occasion stood bearing the names of the tribes of Israel on his heart and on his shoulders, now stands with no memorial on him that would mark him as Israel's high priest, but in his holy garments only, as having *individually* to do with the holy God Himself.

It is this peculiarity which gives its especial feature to this solemn day, and which, to one intelligently contemplating it, at once strikes the mind as strange and remarkable ; for we should naturally have judged that if ever there was a moment in the high priest's ministrations when it would have been needful for him to have borne on his heart and shoulders the names of Israel, it would have been when presenting the sin-offering that was to cleanse away, in type and shadow, for another year, all their sins, all their iniquities, and all their transgressions from before the face of the Lord. But it was not so. Then, and then alone, in all the ministrations of the year, was Israel apparently out of sight and unrepresented before God.

What then is the significance of these "holy garments" ?

Those familiar with the epistle to the Romans, and whose minds have not been misdirected by theological bias, will find an answer in what is said there regarding "*the righteousness of God* ;" a righteousness "revealed from faith to faith," which is manifested in "the gospel of Christ," and which becomes "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." (Rom. i. 16, 17.)

Of this "righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe," Paul says that it is a "righteousness of God without law" (Rom. iii. 21, 22), and that it has been witnessed to by the law and by the prophets. We see the witness of the law in the chapter before us, where salvation and forgiveness are secured to Israel notwithstanding all breaches of the law, and secured *without law* and *by blood*. Salvation comes either through the obedience of law-keeping, or through a Substitute's enduring the penalty of law-breaking. Man has ever sought salvation in the former; God has provided it in the latter; for He is the God of resurrection, who first allows law to have its legitimate course, and then brings in resurrection as His eternal triumph over sin and death. Law and grace alike triumph in Christ Jesus; for God does not make void the law through faith; yea, He establishes the law. (Rom. iii. 31.) And it is of essential moment to maintain this establishment of law against some who virtually make faith set aside law.

But Rom. iii. has more than a passing interest in connection with Lev. xvi., from the use of the word "mercy-seat" (*ἱλαστήριον*, *hilasterion*), which is rendered "propitiation" in verse 25, where we are told that God has set forth Christ "as a propitiation [mercy-seat, or better, atonement-seat], through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission [or pretermission; that is, not forgiveness in the full sense of the word, but rather a holding in abeyance] of sins that are past through the forbearance of God." Such it was under the old covenant, under which there could be no present forgiveness, but only a prospective one. Hence the beautiful contrast between verses 25 and 26; so that now Paul adds, "to declare *at this time* His righteousness," and not His forbearance; His forgiveness and justification of the sinner, and not

His pretermission of his sin; "that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." For we read, "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin."

The righteousness, then, with which the epistle to the Romans chiefly has to do, and that typical act of which we are now speaking, when the high priest stood in his *holy linen* garments before God, both tell of that righteousness of God which is imputed to the believer in Christ, and which is a divine righteousness, because wrought out in the death of Christ by God, who caused His sword to awake against His Fellow. The greater part of the priestly action of Aaron on the day of atonement bore witness to a righteousness that has its aspect wholly Godward, whereby the question of sin, in all its awful malignity and terrible consequences, is met once and for ever, and removed out of God's way, and whereby His saving grace, love, and pity can have free course, and be glorified in the salvation of all who will accept it, how personally guilty soever they may have been.

The day of atonement is thus the working out in type, of that righteousness of God purposed in eternity in the blood of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." It is this which is imputed to faith; not the righteousness of a law-obeying Substitute, but the righteousness of a sin-avenging God in the sacrificial death of Christ. The Father and the Son are seen *alone* and *together* in the great day of atonement, when the darkness of midnight surrounded the cross on Calvary, and shut in a suffering Christ alone with God. Imputed righteousness is therefore the imputation of a righteousness resulting from law vindicated in death, even the death of a Substitute, and therefore Paul teaches that we *died in Him*.

Many theories on this subject have been propounded

which have tended to darken God's counsel, wherein the imputation of righteousness in the death of a Substitute has been confounded with the impartation of righteousness in a new nature through regeneration.

In order the more completely to disconnect man from this part of the ritual of the day of atonement, we read: "And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place *until he come out.*" The transaction was to be recognized by all as one carried on between the high priest and God, wherein man was not to be near, but kept out of sight, that the soul might contemplate God alone in connection with the blood of the goat, on which "the lot for the Lord" fell. Its blood was sprinkled seven times before the mercy-seat in the most holy place, and seven times before the altar in the holy place—a precious pledge of covenant mercy secured by the sacrifice of the sin-offering.

We will now speak of the difference designed in the two goats, and explain why in this service alone the sin-offering consisted of *two* goats instead of one, as in every other case. It deserves special notice, that while the burnt-offerings and peace-offerings were mostly composed of many victims—and except on specified occasions it was left optional with the worshipper to offer as many as inclination or ability suggested—in the sin-offering the victim was always one, and that not subject to the will of the worshipper, but to the absolute appointment of God, the victim being either a bullock or a goat, a male or a female. Sin involves a breach of some appointment of God, whereby a debt to God is incurred, for which He alone can appoint the atonement to meet it so as to secure pardon, and man has but to obey. The unity of the sin-offering beautifully brings before us the one sacrifice and one atonement for sin, and this makes it the more

remarkable that here, while the sin-offering is spoken of as *one*, "two goats for a sin-offering," there should be two, and not one, as elsewhere. Of these goats we read (*v.* 8), "And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat," or "for *azazel*."* Owing to the marked antithesis in verse 8 between "for the Lord" and "for Azazel," very many of the later interpreters understand the word as a description of a personal being—an evil spirit, Satan—following therein many of the Jewish rabbins. It was, however, not so understood by the Jewish translators of the Hebrew Scriptures, nor is there anything in the word of God that would justify such an interpretation, or give a sanction to the thought that God would place Himself in anywise in such a connection with Satan as would be implied in casting two lots—one for God, and one for Satan. Spiritual instinct revolts against such an association. We feel constrained to adhere to the interpretation that applies the word to the goat itself.

We have already observed how the work of atonement for sin is in this chapter seen in the first place in its reference to God alone, and to this the ritual connected with the first goat—that on which the Lord's lot fell—has almost exclusive reference. But in the question of sin, no sooner have the demands of God's holiness been met by death as its penalty, and blood as indicating a forfeited life poured out to God, than the demands of the sinner's necessities come into view, and this seems to be intended

* Few words have perplexed scholars more than this word **אֲזָאֵל**. The translators of the Greek Bible rendered it *αποπομπαιος*, the one sent away; and it is rendered by Aquila, *τραγος απολελυμενος*, the goat that is let loose, or set free. The same view is taken in the Vulgate, the word used corresponding with the "scapegoat" of the English Bible; *azazel* being regarded as composed of two words—*az*, a goat, and *azel*, to go away, to vanish.

in the ritual connected with the second goat, which is represented as the *sin-bearer*, and not as the *sin-atoner*. Thus we read that, after all the work of atonement ("reconciling" is in Hebrew *atoning*) in the holy place has been accomplished, Aaron comes out, and, while still in his linen garments, stands before the scapegoat; and we read, "Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit person:" (*i.e.* a man prepared for the purpose:) "and the goat shall bear (שָׂא) upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited," or more properly, a land cut off and excluded, so that God should see the sin no more, an idea similar to that of casting sins into the depths of the sea, or casting them behind His back.

The point brought out thus so blessedly in the scapegoat, is the manifest bearing away of all sin that had been put on its head by the high priest, and hence the antithesis virtually lies between God, to whom the first goat made atonement, and man, to whom the second brought forgiveness. Thus by this twofold arrangement we have the absoluteness and universality of the atonement expressed in the matter of expiation Godward, together with the limited character of the sin-bearing which is confined to the sins confessed on the head of the scapegoat. The word for forgiveness very frequently used in the Hebrew is that which signifies "to bear," the word used here of the goat bearing away sin. Sin to be forgiven must be borne away, and to be borne away must be preceded by an atonement.

There is an expression in verse 10 that calls for a little mention, as it seems to militate against what has been

said. We there read, "The scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement *with him*, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness." There is no warrant for the rendering "*with him*." The expression here used invariably relates to the object for which the expiation is effected, and therefore can only be translated, "make an atonement *for him*." This contains the important truth, that sin-bearing can only result from sin-atoning; and hence in the type before us the sin-bearer must have an atonement effected for it by the blood of the sin-atoner; and this confirms what we have been saying, that Christ has to stand first Godward in His atonement, before He is manifested to us as the scapegoat. It is further deserving of notice here, that while in all concerning the one goat man is to take no part, here man comes in, and in the manward part of the ceremonial takes his place as a witness that the sin has been carried away.

That Aaron laid his hands on the live goat in his holy linen garments we are specially told, and this unfolds the important truth that "Jehovah laid on him the iniquity of us all," and therefore did it according to the measure of His knowledge of our iniquities, and not according to our feeble and imperfect conception of them. Christ is, therefore, seen acting on God's behalf in the matter of our sins.

We have again to refer to the change of Aaron's garments; for as soon as the atonement for sin and its bearing away had been typically effected, we read (*v.* 23), "Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there; and he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and *put on his garments*, and come forth and offer

his burnt-offering, and the burnt-offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself and for the people." The burnt-offering is the offering of acceptance that represents God's people as accepted in a crucified and risen Christ. In it is represented our union in Christ, and hence the burnt-offering (*i.e.* the resurrection or ascension-offering) becomes associated with the very names of God's people; and the high priest in his proper garments again assumes his representative character, which for the time had been set aside by his substitutionary work. In the one case Christ was *for us* with God, as in the other we are *in Him* before God. Yet the burnt-offering must never be viewed as separated from the sin-offering, for the fat of the latter was incensed up (the proper word for *burn* being never used in Hebrew for anything burnt on the altar) upon the altar, upon the burnt-offering.

One interesting point of connection between the two goats is, that the man who carried out the one and burnt it without the camp, and the man who led away the scape-goat into the wilderness, were both to wash their clothes, to bathe their flesh in water, and afterwards to come into the camp. Thus it is indicated that sin attached to both the goats of the common sin-offering—to that which was burnt under divine wrath outside the camp, and to that which carried sin away into the land of forgetfulness. Connect further these two goats with this passage: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hades; nor suffer thy Holy One to see corruption."

May God lead His people more deeply to ponder over the mysteries of the atonement, that they may have power to answer the doubts of the unstable, and to meet the objections and difficulties—often very real—of those who know not God's mightiest work.

H. G.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

ITS FACTS AND TEACHINGS. IV.

THE fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians is indeed a rich and mighty scripture as to the resurrection of the dead, and a most familiar and well-known one. But its national use in this and other countries over the graves of all who die, makes it only the more needful to guard against its painful and soul-deluding misuse and to point out its real meaning. This chapter is used throughout Christendom, more or less, as elegant and assuring language concerning all the dead; and thus mourners are often falsely comforted about those who have died in their sins and really destitute of Christ, while they too are helped to believe that it is well with themselves also. "Peace, peace" is said to them, when "there is no peace," and that too by the untrue sounding in their ears of the voice of even God's word itself. What a device of Satan! Truly, Satan does make himself "an angel of light;" and his servants speak, like Balaam of old, as if they were "ministers of righteousness!"

The truth is, this scripture is just one paragraph of an epistle addressed to children of God, and to them only; and it is raised SAINTS (*i.e.* sinners justified by faith in Christ) who are spoken of in this chapter, and raised *saints* only. Every raised dead one mentioned in it rises in "*the image of the heavenly,*" which the *unbelieving* dead never do, and this one fact should have utterly forbidden its general and indiscriminate use over all who die. The whole epistle is to believers in Christ; and just as well

might any other portion of it have been falsely applied to *men at large* as this portion. But this chapter furnished, alas! too ready and too agreeable an opiate for hopeless tears and terrible thoughts about the eternity of the unsaved for it to lie unused; and hence the injury to souls by its wide application.

But turning from this misuse, of the chapter, let us now look into its real meaning. A false teaching had sprung up amongst Corinthian saints that there was "no resurrection of the dead." (v. 12.) Probably these children of God at Corinth still believed in a future state for themselves and their fellow-saints, and that future state to be one of happiness; but they regarded it as only a *spirit* state, and not one of bodies. Their faith had got staggered as to the rising again of their martyred fellow-saints, whose very bodies perhaps the wild beasts had devoured, and old heathen ideas had woke up in them again of only happy *spirits* in the Elysian fields. "With what *body* do they come?" was the question they asked; meaning by it, that through lapse of time in the grave, or by rough usage, there was *no body left* on which resurrection could do its work. Hence perhaps the general assertion that there was "no resurrection of the dead."

Blessedly does the apostle take advantage of this error to re-affirm the gospel itself, the key-stone of which he shows to be resurrection of the dead as seen in the person of the Lord Jesus Himself. That Christ had been dead amongst the dead none could doubt; for His enemies were allowed to make that a sure and proved thing. Hence the gospel truth of His having risen refuted the assertion that there was no such thing as a rising of the dead. But it does much more; it shows three triumphant glories of God's grace.

1st. That sinners' sins laid on Jesus at His death have

by that death been put away in the case of every one trusting in Him.

2nd. That Jesus risen is the FIRST-BORN from the dead, or "first-fruit," to whom ALL who believe in Him for salvation are by resurrection-power to be conformed.

3rd. That the risen Son of God is Himself the One by whom God will sooner or later accomplish this resurrection work in the case of every believer.

What the "image of the heavenly" is, which ALL believers shall at last bear, is more fully shown in verses 42-49, by contrast of it with the "first man Adam" and "the image of the earthly" in which in this life all Christ's saved ones are seen. "Corruption," "dishonour," "weakness," "a natural body," shall give place in the case of every child of God to a body of "incorruption," "glory," "power," and "a spiritual body." This BODY is said by Paul, in 2 Cor. v. 1, to be "a building of God, an house not made with hands, *eternal* in the heavens;" and to be that with which he for one longed to be "clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." (2 Cor. v. 4, and compare 1 Cor. xv. 54.) We see in this resurrection-body that "image of the heavenly" in which ALL believers in Christ must at last *eternally* appear. This, then, is what it is for Christ to be the "FIRST-FRUIT," and for all that are in Christ to be "made alive," as in Adam they "all die."

But we have also in this chapter the "ORDER" in which this resurrection host of the living God come forth at His bidding, from the darkness and corruption of death and the grave.

First in this divine "order" is seen the "Captain" of our salvation *Himself*, with none other sharing this honour of being in the first rank with Him. *Alone* He fought the fight, and in this scene of the "victory" He must be shown as the One through whom *alone* it is *given* to us.

But time rolls on; more than eighteen hundred years have already elapsed, and the next "rank" of this goodly host of the dead have not even yet come forth; but they soon will. It will be all that "are Christ's at His coming." Not a dead one of Adam's race, whom Jesus by that time can claim as His by redemption, but will in that "moment" spring forth from the grave in the full "image of the heavenly."

Again time rolls on, and a thousand years later "cometh the *end*" (that is, the *finishing*) of this glorious raising of the righteous dead. This final triumph of Christ for His saints will be at the day of the great white throne, when there will be the resurrection of both *just* and *unjust* which we have already been considering in John v. 28, 29.

For "the *last* enemy that shall be destroyed" (*i.e.* by Jesus' reigning power) "is DEATH," and death is "destroyed" by its being "swallowed up in victory."

Thus does the great host of

"Victors o'er the tomb"

both lengthen before our view, and swell out in numbers as it issues forth from the grave, rank after rank. Nor is it formed of the *raised* ones only; the multitude of the living *changed* ones must be added in order to give us the total of those who shall for ever bear "the image of the heavenly!" The words "corruptible" and "mortal" are used in verses 53 and 54 of our chapter to describe the bodies of departed and of *living* saints; and in v. 51 the word "changed" is used with a similar width of meaning, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall ALL *be changed*," are words to include those believers who never die, as well as those who do die. Resurrection power is taught us equally concerning the living and the dead of God's people, and is brought to pass in the case of both these classes at one and the same moment.

What a vision, then, fills our eye in this chapter of the victory and reigning power of the Son of God! Three great elements of His divine might are here seen in the resurrection of the redeemed.

1st. The *character* of the work done; viz., the changing of "this corruptible" into so glorious a workmanship of God as our raised Lord Jesus already is.

2nd. The *moment of time* in which divine power does it. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," do mortal saints get changed into that which stands FOR EVER: one *moment* of change, and they are possessed of "a house . . . *eternal* in the heavens."

3rd. The *leisure* God gives Himself in carrying on this resurrection of His saints, and in completing it—there being a pause of nearly two thousand years already between Christ as the first rank, and ourselves at His coming as the next, and then another thousand years before the finishing.

Verily, in all God's ways He waits for "the fulness of the time" to come. He did so as to man's iniquity before the flood, and as to Israel's iniquity before their captivity; and though His love yearned over an undone world, and His purposes of blessing for it were formed, yet only when "the fulness of the time was come" did He send "forth His Son" to redeem the lost. And now that redemption is accomplished, it is with a similar majesty and *leisure* that God works out its glorious results. Hence the length of time given both in this age and in the next for the glorious *gospel* of His grace; hence also these divine waitings ere we get the completed resurrection of ALL the saints. Hence also, on the other hand, God's solemn pauses between His judgment acts upon the ungodly.

None of these delays imply either feebleness on His part or wavering of purpose. (See 2 Peter iii. 9, 15.)

Jacob's *weakness* made distance and pause between the different portions of his present to Esau, in Gen. xxxii., to make it seem greater than it really was; but God's intervals in His arrangements are as truly for His glory and for our blessing as His marvellous events are, and yet will be, when they come to pass.

Well may Paul say of God's successive dispensations of *grace* (Rom. xi. 33, 35), "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! . . . For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

And of His works of millennial and resurrection *power*, the four-and-twenty elders also say (Rev. iv. 11) "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are [or rather they *were*] and *were created*."

Surely all these ways of our God, both in *grace* and in *power*, should make us abound, as the apostle says, in "thanks to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," and should strengthen us to be "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," even "'till He come." Amen. H. D.

THE WORD OF GOD.

V. OUR USE OF IT.—IT SHOULD BE

Received. "He that receiveth seed into the good ground is he that heareth the Word, and understandeth it." (Matt. xiii. 23.) In Scripture the heart stands for the *will*, and hence to believe, or understand with the heart, implies the bringing the will into subjection to faith and knowledge. The Bereans "received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily." (Acts xvii. 11.)

Dwelling in us. "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom." (Col. iii. 16.)

Kept. "That 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." (Luke viii. 15.) "Let thine heart keep my commandments." (Prov. iii. 1.)

Delighted in. "His delight is in the law of the Lord." (Ps. i. 2.) "Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors." "Let Thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for Thy law is my delight." (Ps. cxix. 24, 77.)

Loved. "I love Thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold." (Ps. cxix. 127.)

Remembered. "They remembered His words." (Luke xxiv. 8.) "His disciples remembered that it was written." (John ii. 17.) "I will never forget Thy precepts: for with them Thou hast quickened me." (Ps. cxix. 93.)

Meditated on. "Thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein." (Joshua i. 8.) "It is my meditation all the day." (Ps. cxix. 97.) "In His law doth he meditate day and night." (Ps. i. 2.)

Obedied. "Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." (Rom. vi. 17.)

Spoken of. "I will speak of Thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed." (Ps. cxix. 46.) "Thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." (Deut. vi. 7.)

Reverenced. "And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people . . . and when he opened it, all the people stood up: and Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the

Lord with their faces to the ground." (Neh. viii. 5, 6.) "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. iii. 15. See 2 Kings xxiii. 2, 3.)

Accepted as the rule of life, in opposition to all traditions of man. "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle." (2 Thess. ii. 15.) "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. i. 13.) "These things teach and exhort. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing." (1 Tim. vi. 2-4.) "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." (Deut. iv. 2.)

VI. OUR SUBJECTION TO IT.

Our Lord tells us to take heed *how* we hear (Luke viii. 18), as well as *what* we hear (Mark iv. 24); that we lean not to our own thoughts in the things of God, but, having His Word *abiding* in us (John xv. 7; 1 John ii. 14), to follow it according to the "due order." (See 1 Chron. xv. 13, and Lev. x. 1-3.)

Our subjection to the Word is beautifully indicated in Deuteronomy and Proverbs, where we are told to *bind* it on the *heart* (Deut. vi. 6; Prov. vi. 21, 22); *to write* it there (Prov. iii. 3), and to *hide* it there as a sacred treasure (Ps. cxix. 11); also *to tie* it as an ornament about the *neck* (Prov. iii. 3; vi. 21); and then follow the precious promises—"It shall lead thee, it shall keep thee, and it shall talk

with thee." (v. 22.) We are further told to "bind it as a *frontlet* between *the eyes*" as a confession to others, and "upon *our hands*" as a reminder to ourselves; as the rule of family life, to write it "on the post of *our doors*;" and for our heavenly citizenship, to write it on our *city gates*. (See Deut. vi. 8, 9; xi. 18, 20.)

Lastly we are commanded to teach it diligently to our children. (Deut. vi. 7.) The word for teaching here used implies sharpening to a point, as a goad, or as the teeth of a saw; that is, a teaching that pierces the conscience, and lays hold on the heart.

In the foregoing a few only of many Scriptures have been noticed. The careful reader will add indefinitely to these precious testimonies to what the Word of God is to those who love it; and may all be fulfilled in the daily experience of all saints, enabling them to say, "Thy Word was found, and I did eat it, and it was the joy and the rejoicing of my heart."

[Extracted from *The Yearly Bible Calendar*, by H. Groves. Shaw and Co., London.]

NOTES AND REPLIES.

Are the Lord's words at the Supper to be used by us?

We need to remember that we are all communicants, and that no one is an administrator, at the Lord's table, and everything that savours of this has to be carefully avoided. That we should remind one another of what our Lord said to His disciples when He first instituted the ordinance, and says to us by His Spirit each time we partake, is surely proper, and demanded of us; but to attempt to occupy His place is a usurpation and akin to the priestly sentiment that dares to speak of man's consecrating the bread and wine. It is well to regard the Lord's table as *one*, from the first time it was spread in Jerusalem to the last time that it shall be spread before our Lord comes to gather us around His heavenly board. Our part is not to

break and give, but to take and eat what Christ blessed, and brake, and gave; and when we take and eat, it is our privilege to give thanks together for the broken bread and for the cup of blessing.

What are we to understand by "the green tree" and "the dry" in Luke xxiii. 31?

THE preceding verses contemplate the destruction of Jerusalem, and the calamities connected with it, that would befall those to whom the Lord spoke; and the expression "the green tree" seems to apply to Himself as One in whom no fault was found, and "the dry" to the nation at large, which by its wickedness and its rebellion was but as wood dried and ready for the fire. This seems its present and immediate reference; but it has a further and more general application. If Christ, who had no sin *in* Him, was subject to such shame, suffering, and death, when sin was laid *on* Him as sin-atoner and sin-bearer, what, the inference is, may not the guilty unsaved sinner expect, who has to face the judgment of God with sin both on him and in him? The awful wail of the sixth seal will be the utterance of all such when they cry "to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. vi. 16, 17.) The figurative language as to "the green tree" and "the dry" is taken from Ezekiel xx. 47; with which compare xxi. 4.

What is to be gathered from Matthew v. 32 with respect to divorce?

ONE thing in regard to marriage has to be distinctly understood—that it is a *divine* appointment, subject to divine rules; and that therefore while the laws of the land have to be observed, in the Church of God the divine law, which recognizes but one ground for divorce, cannot be violated. (See also Matt. xix. 9.) The question whether one divorced according to divine law can be lawfully married again, seems in scripture to be taken for granted. It is the bond of the "one flesh" that makes all divorce sin, except in the case of that sin which alone breaks and dissolves the bond. Though there is no law forbidding marriage with one scripturally divorced, there would be to the soul in real fellowship with God the higher question as to whether the marriage could possibly be really "in the Lord;" and even then, whether it would be according to spiritual and godly expediency. But in the latter case, as no express Scripture to the contrary is to be found, there can be no Church action.

In the expression "death reigned," in Romans v. 14, would it be correct to understand death as referring only to the body?

SCRIPTURE, when speaking historically of the death of any one, uses the word as commonly used among men; but when speaking doctrinally of death, speaks of it, not as affecting the body, but the man, "spirit, soul, and body." Hence our Lord says, "If any man keep my saying, he shall never see death." (John viii. 51.) The body may be laid in the grave; but the man shall never see death. To understand aright what death is, we must read what God says about it, from the first word spoken to Adam in the garden to its final unfolding in the book of Revelation. He only who knows what life is (and man has ever failed to understand it) can fathom what death is.

What are the leading features of Paul's prayer at the close of Eph. iii.?

THE prayer seems to divide itself into three parts by the thrice-repeated *iva*, "that." (1) "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might [rendered mighty with power] by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell [to the dwelling of Christ] in your hearts through faith," referring mainly to the work and operation of the *Holy Ghost*. (2) "That ye may be able [strengthened] (being rooted and grounded in love) to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." The object here is pre-eminently *Christ*. (3) "That ye might be filled with [unto] all the fulness of God." The object here is *the Father*. It is thus a prayer that the Name into which we were baptized may be fully realized. The three words, "*power*," "*love*," and "*fulness*," form the key-words of the prayer, which ends with a doxology: "But unto Him that is able to do above all things, very far above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations of the age of the ages. Amen." The words, "according to the power which worketh in us," stand in designed contrast with the words, "which He wrought in Christ," in the prayer in chap. i. 20. The prayer in chap. i. is that we may know our standing, and the prayer in chap. iii. that we may realize and live up to its mighty conditions.