

THE  
BELIEVER'S  
PATHWAY.

DEVOTED ENTIRELY TO

The Great Truths of God's Word for His People.

EDITED BY A. J. HOLIDAY.

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VOLUME XI., 1890.

*(Important Announcement on next page.)*

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## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT.

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OUR esteemed brother, Mr. Holiday, owing to his late serious illness, has found it necessary to reduce the permanent strain that resulted from his numerous responsibilities in the Lord's service. In accordance with this desire, arrangements have been made to relieve him, in the meantime, of the editorship of "The Believer's Pathway."

Mr. Holiday trusts, however, to continue his help by contributing articles to its pages, as strength and opportunity are granted; and others, who have written for it in the past, will continue to do so as before, if God permits.

It is intended to give the author's initials with each article, and to carry it on in dependence upon the Lord and with the help of a number of His servants who minister the Word in the British Isles and abroad.

Its pages will be mainly devoted to articles suited for young and inexperienced Believers, and for Christians in the various denominations.

We heartily invite papers—short, simple, spiritual—from brethren who are exercised before God concerning such, extracts from books or pamphlets which have been helpful or refreshing to the soul, notes from Bible margins, or other *short* articles (old or new) which would be of real benefit to the people of God.

All MS. should simply be addressed, *Editor of Believer's Pathway, 180 Buchanan Street, Glasgow*, when they will be entered as received, and either used or returned to sender on the *10th* of following month.

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# THE BELIEVER'S PATHWAY.

**"THOU ART GOOD, AND DOEST GOOD."**

(Ps. cxix. 68).

**S**O 1889 has gone! Joined its well-nigh six thousand fellows, who make up past history. Gone, but not done with. Parted from for a little time, to meet us again at the judgment-seat. Do we look back with regret and even sadness? Do thoughts of wasted opportunities and idle moments come before us; nay, worse, of foolish words and sinful actions? Let the memory humble us, and yet stimulate us to better things in the coming year.

If we have tears for the past, we may yet have hopes for the future! Happy are those who can look back on the year that has gone with the assurance that though, at best, they are but unprofitable servants, yet by grace they have been enabled in some measure to please God, and to make progress in the Divine life. Let victory, as well as failure, help each to press on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

But, it may be asked, What have we got for 1890 more than we had in 1889? For ourselves, we reply, Nothing! Neither do we desire anything more for our readers. Strange, do you say, when the air seems full of good wishes. Ah! but we write for those who, having Christ, have all things (1 Cor. iii. 21). Do we hear someone say, feebly, "You don't know my case; why, I don't know where to-morrow's dinner will come from." Not so strange after all, brother; for it was written of some before you: "Poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. vi. 10). Our New-year's wish, then, for those who read these pages, as well as for ourselves, is not for fresh blessings. Already we are blessed with ALL spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. i. 3). Our choice is that we may know, and enjoy, and put to use what we have. David cried, "How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures" (Ps. xxxvi. 7, 8).

*"Thou art Good, and Doest Good."*

Blessed portion! Yes, but it is ours, only we forget to enjoy it. Ps. xxxvi. is a very sunny experience; but Ps. lxxiii. and lxxvii. are very different. They show us the Psalmist down in the valley of discontent. That is where we often get, and we always find it to be a very gloomy place. We feel great sympathy with those who are *obliged* to go to drear and dreadful places. But, strange to say, there is not only no need for the believer to leave the sunshine, but doing so is positive disobedience; for the command is, "Abide in Me," and the promise follows, "Ye shall bring forth much fruit," and we know that fruit needs sunshine. The trouble in Ps. lxxiii. comes from looking at others; *hence envy*. In Ps. lxxvii. it is from looking in at self; and hence despondency. Both lead to discontent. The cure in each case is getting back to the Lord and delighting in Him. Ecclesiastes is the portion "under the sun," and it is proved to be too small for the heart. "All the labour of a man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled" (Eccl. vi. 7). The good house-wife says, "I shall never be satisfied till we get a new carpet." The new carpet is laid down, and it is at once seen that the curtains look shabby. A Christian man once said to us, "When my income was half what it is now, and I lived in a smaller house, I was much happier and *had more to give to the Lord.*" How could that be, we wondered. His *wants* had grown more quickly even than his income!

Child of God; if riches increase, set not your heart upon them (Ps. lxii. 10). Seek not your good from any earthly source, lest like David you have to mourn over "feet almost gone" and "steps well-nigh slipped" (Ps. lxxiii. 2). Rather let it be ours to make the Lord the portion of our inheritance and our cup; so shall we find that the lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage (Ps. xvi. 6). Psalm lxxiii. begins with the blessed, unchangeable and unalterable fact, "*God is good to Israel.*" Then come two statements about self: 1st, "*As for me, my feet were almost gone; . . . I was envious*" (verses 2 and 3); 2nd, "*It is good for me to draw near to God*" (verse 28).

May this last be our joyful experience during the days that are left us, rather than the first; nevertheless, "*God is good to Israel.*"

---

EVERY murmuring thought is the child of unbelief, and makes God a liar.

## THE FEASTS OF THE LORD.

### XIII.

**T**HREE times over the word "all" is used in connection with this solemn confession by the high priest. "And 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" (Lev. xvi. 21). But, notwithstanding this, no shedding of blood follows, no fresh work of atonement is done. The far-reaching effects of atonement have just been declared as they never were on any other occasion. On that day alone the blood of a victim was carried into the holiest of all, and sprinkled upon the very throne of God. The confession of the people's sins by Aaron, following after this, is only with a view to their never being mentioned, never even coming up to remembrance, again. The whole confession is made in the light of that wonderful unfolding of the fulness of the atonement; and seems to say that everything was known to God, and completely provided for by Him, when that blood was carried into the holiest. True, a remembrance was made again of sin, and an exceedingly solemn one; but the whole of the sins thus brought to remembrance could but enhance the value of the atoning blood that bore witness from the mercy-seat that the claims of God were fully satisfied.

And is not this just what will take place at the judgment-seat of Christ? In 2 Cor. v. 10, we read, "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." The word "appear" is, more correctly, to be made manifest, as it is twice translated in the following verse: We must all be made manifest; or, as we are told in 1 Cor. iv. 5, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts." In this last passage the work of the judgment-seat is put in the closest connection with the Lord's coming, as though the one followed immediately upon the other. This exactly agrees with the teaching of the day of atonement. In the type, the high priest went *alone* into the holiest, though he went in on behalf of the people. But when Christ comes for His own, it will be to receive the accomplishment of His heart's desire, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me *be with Me* where I am" (John xvii. 24). The full value of the atoning blood of Christ will then be seen as it never was before; for in person, not in spirit only, redeemed sinners will have been brought nigh to

*The Feasts of the Lord.*

God. All the claims of God's holiness will be seen to have been satisfied, and the saved sinner's title to dwell with God will have been fully established. Then comes the judgment-seat. The bringing to light of the hidden things of darkness, and the making manifest of the counsels of the hearts, when every one is made manifest at the judgment-seat: these things correspond to the solemn confession of all Israel's transgressions by Aaron. In neither does any sacrifice follow. The full value of the one great atonement has just been declared, and the subsequent confession is made in the light of it.

Perhaps an illustration may help to make this clearer. A father of a family has been absent from home for a long time. During his absence the mother has continually informed him as to all that was taking place at home, and particularly as to the children's conduct. On many occasions they have misconducted themselves, and have needed to be punished; and all this has been reported to the father. But in addition to this, their good behaviour, their diligence at their studies, and their general obedience have been reported too; and all this the children are well aware of. At last the day of the father's return home arrives. He has told them that he is coming, but without fixing a time. All are eagerly expecting him; and, when his voice is heard, there is one general, joyous rush to meet him. For the moment, all besides is forgotten in the delight of seeing their loved one; for, indeed, they do love him dearly, every one of them. But after the first greetings are over, the remembrance of transgressions during their father's absence begins to rise up in their minds. They are not afraid of punishment; for that had been inflicted at the time, and will certainly not be repeated. But they cannot feel quite happy and at their ease until it has all been gone over. So presently the father has a little talk with each one. He has brought gifts for them; but the very gifts that mark his approval of what had been satisfactory in the children's conduct, mark also what had been of an opposite character. He would gladly have given larger rewards to some of them, but that certain acts of disobedience forbade it. But now all has been gone over, and though there has been many a humbling remembrance, and even many a tear shed, the father's patient, loving dealing with all the past has made a final end of it all. Nothing will have to be brought up again, and nothing remains to interfere with the full enjoyment of their father's presence and of all his love to them.



### *The Feasts of the Lord.*

This may help faintly to illustrate one aspect of the judgment-seat, and one which is particularly brought out in connection with the feast of atonement. As we have already remarked, that feast gives special prominence to three things—atonement, humbling, and rest; and these are just the three things that stand out in the most striking manner in connection with the judgment-seat. The value of *atonement* is so abundantly declared, that the bringing to light of every hidden thing concerning the believer, the very manifesting of the secret thoughts of all hearts, cannot take from him his title to stand before God. Yet, it does call for *humbling*; and the very last time when the child of God shall afflict his soul because of his transgressions will be at the judgment-seat. But, for that very reason, it brings into rest; for it is the last, the final mention of these things. Just as the scape-goat, over whose head all Israel's sins had been told out, was driven away, never to be seen again, so the precious result of atonement will be manifested, not only because the blood claims our place before the throne, but because it ends for ever the very mention or thought of our sins.

Aaron's confession on behalf of all the people on the tenth day of the seventh month was the supplement of their very imperfect confessions all the year through. Many a time had one and another come with a sin or trespass offering, as the conscience was burdened about some particular transgression. On each occasion the victim had been slain, and some of its blood had been put on the horns of the brazen altar of burnt-offering. In this way each confession of sin had been connected with the satisfying of God's claims by atoning blood, and the maintaining of the offerer's standing before God. Yet all this was very incomplete. For one sin thus dealt with in God's presence, how many would be left unnoticed. But every deficiency was made up on the day of atonement. Then, first of all, the blood was carried, not to the horns of the brazen altar out in the court, nor even to the horns of the golden incense-altar before the veil, but right past the veil to the very throne itself. And then, without a single omission, Israel's high priest, the very one who had carried the blood into the holiest on behalf of the people, tells out everything over the head of the scape-goat. All heads may well be bowed in deepest humiliation during the recital; but with it all is the knowledge of the blood upon the mercy-seat. And when all has thus been told out, the last mention of it has been made,

### *Believers' Baptism.*

and nothing remains to mar the perfect bliss of the Feast of Tabernacles.

In the same way the judgment-seat of Christ will be the supplement of all our too sadly imperfect work of self-judgment down here. Self-judgment connects the sins which we confess with the cross of Calvary. It leads to truest humbling of soul, because it helps to a right understanding of the hatefulness of sin. It also leads to rest, because it puts away the remembrance of the sin, as a barrier to the soul's communion with God, revealing the double efficacy of the blood of Christ. Well for us, indeed, if this solemn and searching exercise of soul were more constantly practised by us.

### BELIEVERS' BAPTISM.

**N**OTHING is more clearly and distinctly declared in the Scriptures of Truth than believers' baptism. It is the mind of the Lord that, at the very threshold of the new life, the young convert should confess his allegiance to Christ as Lord by submitting to this ordinance. Of such it may be said, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." To die to the claims of the old man, that we may live unto Him who died and rose again for us, is the glorious privilege of the child of God. Other precious and spiritual truths are connected with the ordinance, but this is the most obvious to one who is newly born again.

As to Israel, they were baptised unto Moses in the Red Sea. He was their leader and law-giver (1 Cor. x. 1). But Christ is the Apostle of this dispensation; hence, "As many of you as have been baptised unto Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 27); or, again, "Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death?" (Rom. vi. 3, R.V.)

In the past it could be said, "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (Rom. ix. 6); but such a condition is in marked contrast to the present, when God *only* owns as His, those who have been brought nigh by the precious blood of Christ, through personal appropriation, by faith, of the value of His atoning sacrifice. Now, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. viii. 8); so it follows that, while in the Jewish economy, those who were not "of faith" (Gal. iii. 9) took their part in that which proclaimed that Jehovah was their God, and that they were His people, it is a fatal mistake to attempt to

### *Believers' Baptism.*

repeat this now. And for those who have not been born again, to be taught that they may, by certain forms, profess Christ to be their Master, is to make void the counsel of God.

In Rom. vi., Gal. iii., and 1 Peter iii., believers are reminded of their baptism, as an incentive to holiness of life. But can the dead serve God, or the evil tree bring forth good fruit? "The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can be*" (Rom. viii. 7).

To baptise unregenerate persons is therefore, unknowingly, it may be, but, nevertheless, most truly, to act out the most hideous lie. Think of it. It is to teach the unsaved to own Christ in baptism as Lord. What a mockery! What an insult! An incident may be useful to illustrate our meaning. Many years ago a gifted teacher (the late J. N. D., who taught that unsaved persons might be baptised if they were the members of a household, whether as children or servants, of which the heads were converted) turned to one who would not yield to such false teaching, with *these* words, "If all were like you, brother, there would never have been a 'great house.'" "Exactly so," was the quiet reply of the brother, "I always thought 'the great house' was the work of the devil." After this there was silence. By the great house was meant the large circle of profession where there is no possession.

Had the precious truth of believers' baptism been maintained, the line of demarcation between the Church and the world would have been sharp and clear. You may not be able to tell where one British county ends and another begins; but any one can tell what is English ground and what French, for the blue sea rolls between. The waters of baptism should mark off the saved from the unsaved in a manner as clear and defined.

But, says one, do not we read of household baptism? Yes, we reply, a limited number of such cases is recorded; but, as it nowhere declares that any such household included unsaved persons, we must look elsewhere for support of the theory which, point-blank, contradicts, aye, and makes void, the written Word of God.

Before Peter commanded the household, or houseful, of Cornelius to be baptised, he first gave as his reason, "They have received the Holy Ghost" (Acts x. 47). Who will be so bold as to declare that Peter need not have been so particular? The household of Lydia (concerning whom there is no reason to suppose that she was married) are spoken of as brethren (Acts xvi. 40). The household of the keeper of the prison at

### *Believers' Baptism.*

Philippi heard the word, believed, and rejoiced. As to the household of Stephanas, whom Paul baptised, why should it be thought that they formed an exception to the rule. "Many of the Corinthians, hearing believed, and were baptised" (Acts xviii. 8). Yet, that every mouth may be stopped, we read again, "Ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints" (1 Cor. xvi. 15). And these are all the households that we read of in Scripture as being baptised.

But it may be asked why we should be so particular about a matter which is only a form. We answer that unscriptural forms are the offspring of false doctrines, and that they help to establish the doctrines that gave them birth. Thus we find the Lord saying, "In vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark vii. 7). Is it a light matter that, instead of yielding obedience to the Lord's command to be baptised as a confession of faith, believers should be carrying out a device of Satan, which turns the truth of God into a lie?

But, more than this, we are persuaded that the false teaching, underlying the false mode of baptism, is only a counterpart to the action of those men who came down to Antioch, teaching, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts xv. 1). The epistle to the Galatians is the Divine reply to such. And as Paul said then, so would he repeat now of similar false teachers, "I would they were even cut off which trouble you" (Gal. v. 12). In that day, graceless religious professors made their boast in circumcision. It was the badge of their religious orthodoxy. Baptism, the typical burial and resurrection, declared the worthlessness of the flesh and its religion, as wholly dead and unable to bring forth anything which God could accept. Thus baptism is peculiarly associated with the *reproach* of the cross; for the cross not only tells how atonement has been made, but also declares the utter corruption of human nature. Infant sprinkling and the baptism of unsaved older persons give the lie to all this, and so help to avoid the reproach of the cross. What the apostle said of circumcision holds good to-day of these human inventions—"And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased" (Gal. v. 11).

THE thickest cloud brings the heaviest shower of blessings.

## COMING.

**O**H, the time is quickly passing,  
And the night is almost done :  
Soon the voice of the archangel  
Shall proclaim the Coming One.  
Soon the trump of God shall echo  
In each true believer's ear ;  
And the dead in Christ and living  
Shall be brought from far and near.

Oh, the rapture of that moment !  
Oh, the bliss beyond compare !  
When His loved ones all are gathered  
To that meeting in the air.  
Ah ! we wait with eager longing  
That glad summons to obey,  
When the long dark night of weeping  
Shall be changed to endless day.

When our hearts shall own, with rapture,  
That His beauties far excel  
All we ever thought or uttered,  
All that human tongue could tell.  
When we see Him in His beauty,  
When we see Him face to face,  
We shall own with hearts adoring  
All the wonders of His grace.

All our sorrows then shall vanish  
Like the mist before the sun ;  
All our griefs we'll leave behind us,  
All our labours will be done.  
And the loved ones we are mourning,  
Then shall meet us on the way ;  
And together we shall enter  
Into God's eternal day.

Keep us, then, O Saviour, keep us  
By Thy Spirit's mighty power ;  
Living daily in the prospect  
Of that quickly coming hour.  
May our lives be living echoes,  
Till the sands of time are run,  
Of our hearts deep inward longing,  
"Come, Lord Jesus, quickly come."

J. P.

## Talks, Short and Simple, for Young Believers.

### I.—JUSTIFICATION.

**I**T is a great many years since Bildad the Shuhite asked the question, "How then can man be justified with God?" but this still remains the most important question that can be put to us. Some make light of it; some turn from it; some try to make the problem out, only to fail. But, blessed be God, some can tell out in glad words "God's simple, easy, unencumbered plan," by which the unholy are justified and the guilty pardoned. Reader, can you? Height implies depth. Think, then, how far apart are a holy God and a guilty sinner. I think of God—He is holy. I look inwards, and shrink back alarmed. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. xvii. 9). How can the sinner ever be at home in God's presence?

Human effort fails here, and fails utterly. But man's failure only makes room for God. All human religion is, in some form or other, *man's best for God*. But the Gospel is, *God's best for man*. Hence, while human remedies will only avail for those who are strong, God's remedy reaches down to those who are without strength; yes, even to the dead.

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," even the chief (1 Tim. i. 15). A gospel that has not arms long enough to reach to the uttermost is not of God; but that which saved the dying thief is unmistakably stamped as Divine.

"**GOD JUSTIFIES SINNERS**" (Gal. iii. 8; Rom. viii. 30; Rom. iv. 5). How blessed! It is not, "What can I do?" but, "What has God done?"

I have no need, then, to justify myself, for my business is to condemn myself. With a closed mouth I take the place of the guilty one (Rom. iii. 19, 20). Then God can speak, and He speaks pardon and peace. He proclaims me justified. "It is God that justifieth" (Rom. viii. 33), and only He can do it. He is willing to do it. Alas for the sinner who justifies himself, and so takes his case out of God's hands!

"**JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE**" (Rom. iii. 24). This tells the source of it. We like to trace up the mighty river to its source in the mountain range. The source of the mighty river of salvation is in the heart of God. God justifies not because of anything in us, but because of His own great love. This turns the eye from the creature to the Creator. Nothing that we can do can make God *more* willing to justify the sinner. Neither can any process through which man may pass make him a more fit subject for grace. The only reason for God's

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mercy is to be found in His own great love. Hence there is no difference (Rom. x. 12).

“**BEING NOW JUSTIFIED BY HIS BLOOD**” (Rom. v. 9). This is the ground of justification. The blood tells of the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ. “The blood is the life.” It is because Christ has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. ix. 26) that God can be “just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus” (Rom. iii. 26). There is no other way. “Without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. ix. 22). “For if there had been a law (or could have been) which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law” (Gal. iii. 21). In heaven eternal praise shall be given to Him who was slain, and so (by His blood) redeemed the hosts of the saved ones. Blessed to learn heaven’s song on earth.

“**JUSTIFIED BY FAITH**” (Rom. v. 1; Gal. iii. 24). This tells how we get it. Faith is just the empty hand that takes hold of God’s gift. It is not enough that Christ, by His death, has met all Jehovah’s claims; nor that God has made known His satisfaction by raising Christ from the dead; nor that the Gospel, the good news concerning Christ to the sinner, is preached. All this is not enough, unless the sinner believes it for himself, and, by faith, avails himself of Christ’s work for him. By believing, we appropriate, or make our own, God’s gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ. The word is “*take*” (Rev. xxii. 17); and take we must, or never have.

“**BY WORKS A MAN IS JUSTIFIED**” (Jas. ii. 24). This is the evidence or proof of justification. When God works in the soul it is soon seen in the life. God does not need evidence for Himself, for “the Lord knoweth them that are His” (2 Tim. ii. 19); but we, who cannot read the heart, do. Hence, it is added, “Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

“Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Rom. iv. 3; Gen. xv. 6), is the Scripture record. It was a heart matter; and God knew that Abraham believed, though no one else could. Some forty years after, on the slope of Mount Moriah, it was proved to all that Abraham believed God. For then he offered up Isaac, his only begotten son, the son of promise, “accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead” (Heb. xi. 17-19).

What God works *in*, we should work *out* (Phil. iii. 12, 13). May we so live that our faith may be known by our works.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

*Question.*—Should a Christian belong to the Evangelical Alliance, or to the Young Men's Christian Association, or to any other religious association?

*Answer.*—In bygone days, the professing church relinquished, little by little, the faith once delivered to the saints, till at last human tradition and the lordship of human authority reigned supreme in Christendom. After long ages of gross darkness came a period of reformation. The authority of Scripture was reasserted by many; and as one doctrine or practice taught by the Word of God was brought to light after another, sect after sect was formed to give effect to such doctrines and practices. All this, however, did not tend to union, but the opposite; for the centre and gathering point of each newly-formed party was a doctrine, an ordinance, or even a man who had taught these things, and not "Jesus only." Among those who were really filled with the love of Christ, there would always be a desire to find some ground that should draw saints together instead of separating them, and no sectarian position offered such ground. The only foundation for real union, as for every other good thing of God, is to be found in returning to what He has laid down in His Word. But, in place of this, numerous attempts have been made to form a basis for united action, or united enjoyment of the things of God, which should not interfere with the sectarian positions to which believers were attached. Hence such associations as those above named. God has laid the foundation of our fellowship with Himself and with one another in Christ (see 1 John i. 1-4); but when we come to inquire what are the conditions under which this fellowship can be enjoyed, we are reminded that "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (ver. 5). Consequently, later on in the epistle we get a solemn test by which to try our profession of love to the brethren. "By this we know that we love the children of God, *when we love God, and keep His commandments.* For this is the love of God, that we *keep His commandments*" (ch. v. 2, 3). It seems to us that all such religious unions as the question refers to are unable to abide this test, and that, consequently, those who seek to "fear the Lord and think upon His name" (Mal. iii. 16) should have no part in them.



## THE FEASTS OF THE LORD.

### XIV.

**W**E get another beautiful illustration, in the present dispensation, of the way in which godly dealing with sin is made the soul's preparation for fellowship with God. In 1 Cor. xi., we read: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (verse 28). And again, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (verses 31 and 32). And just as self-judgment prepares us for a right partaking of the memorial feast here, so will the judgment-seat of Christ be the fitting and needful preparation for the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the eternal and unbroken communion which it ushers in.

But now, as then, the soul-humbling must go hand in hand with the full knowledge of what atonement has wrought, and of the rest that flows from it. All true self-judgment must be after the pattern of the work of the judgment-seat, as set forth in the type of the Day of Atonement. Apart from a true realisation of what the blood of Christ has wrought, the soul is neither willing nor able to deal honestly with itself, in the presence of God, about transgression and sin. If we do not apprehend what the blood upon the mercy-seat signifies, of the satisfying of all the claims of God, so that His throne has indeed become a throne of grace, instead of confessing our sins we shall be endeavouring to cover them up or to find excuses for them. On the Day of Atonement the carrying of the blood into the holiest went before the confession of sins over the head of the live goat. At the judgment-seat of Christ, the saints will all have been changed and caught up to the embrace of the Lord, before the manifestation of the secrets of all hearts. So with our present exercise of soul in self-judgment; it should always be based upon the knowledge and realisation of redemption through the blood of Christ and of our acceptance in Him. It is this that alone will make true self-judgment possible, while it will also make it deep and real. Then follows true rest of soul, true communion with God. Like David, in Ps. xxxii., when he had made full confession of his sin, the soul can sing, "Thou art my hiding-place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance."

But in all this we have only been considering the type of the Day of Atonement, in its bearing upon the saints of God who will

### *The Feasts of the Lord.*

be caught up at the coming of the Lord Jesus, to meet Him in the air. As we noticed in connection with the previous feast, from the Feast of Trumpets onwards, all the feasts have a double application; being illustrative of the dealings of God with believers of this dispensation, and also with Israel. We must turn, then, to the scriptures that tell of Israel's future to learn what is this second application of the present feast.

Here, as in the case of the Feast of Trumpets, the wholly different circumstances of the nation of Israel from those of the Church will make the application of the type to differ greatly; but no less will each detail of it be found applicable. Let us turn to the twelfth chapter of the prophet Zechariah, and read carefully from verse 9: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart. All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness."

The Spirit of God sets this picture before us quite by itself, mentioning the Lord's deliverance of His people by the destruction of their enemies, only as to its bearing upon the solemn time of mourning that follows. The full account of this deliverance, and the extremity of anguish and woe immediately preceding it are given us in chapter xiv.; but here it is the effect of that deliverance upon the people of Jerusalem that is brought under our notice. Let us consider the whole circumstances. The antichrist king has gathered the confederation of nations who own his sway to fight against Jerusalem. The city has fallen into his hands, and a terrible slaughter has commenced; when suddenly, the Lord Jesus, descending from the clouds with His attendant hosts, alights

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upon the Mount of Olives, the very spot from which He ascended to heaven (see Acts i. 9-12). The manifested glory of His presence is instant destruction to the antichrist (2 Thess. ii. 8), and all the confederate armies are routed with an awful slaughter; while the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who, a moment before, were in the direst peril, now find themselves saved with a deliverance as complete as it was sudden and unexpected.

And who is this mighty deliverer? As their eyes behold Him, they see the wounds in His hands and feet, and they know that He who has thus descended in the clouds of heaven, from the right hand of power, is no other than that Son of Man, who stood before Caiaphas and was mocked and spit upon in their very city by their fathers. Ay, and they had confirmed all the deeds of their fathers, and had fully appropriated to themselves the awful curse that had been so wantonly uttered—"His blood be upon us and upon our children." What shall they say, what shall they do, in the presence of Him against whom they and their whole nation have so long and so fearfully sinned? Neither the fear of judgment, nor the sense of deliverance, is of itself sufficient to break down the enmity of the natural heart and lead to soul-humbling. But God's time to magnify His Son and to show mercy to His ancient people has come, hence the Spirit of grace and of supplications is poured upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the heart of Israel is turned to the Lord.

But how shall words describe the sorrow, the deep mourning and repentance, that will accompany the conviction brought home to every heart—this is the One whom we have pierced? Then will the language of Isaiah liii. have its full meaning, as their eyes are opened to see that the deliverance just accomplished is the very outcome of the agonies of Calvary's Cross—"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." Pardoning grace and delivering power from Jehovah, their God, are made known to them through His beloved Son, and with them comes the sense of the deep sin of their long rejection of Him.

Mark how this humbling work of God's grace in their souls isolates them, shutting up each one, so to speak, alone with God. In the case of those who believe to-day in an unseen Saviour, the same thing has already taken place. Nothing so isolates a man from his fellows as the conviction of sin,

*"God was in Christ."*

wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit. It is only those who have never felt the burden of guilt who are found saying, "Oh, yes, we are *all* sinners." And such are content to know Christ as "*a* Saviour," or, at most, as "*our* Saviour." But, where the Spirit has convinced of sin, "because they believe not on Me," as the Lord Jesus said, how different the language becomes. Like Job, the heart exclaims, "I abhor myself"; or, like Isaiah, "I am undone; I am a man of unclean lips." And then nothing short of the sense of forgiveness and salvation, personally received, can satisfy, and Christ becomes "*my* Saviour" to the believer's soul.

In the case of these people of Jerusalem, in Zech. xii., they had never believed until they saw, and it is only when they are saved that they learn who it is that has saved them. It is on this account that the work of bringing them all apart, each one to mourn and humble himself for his guilt alone before God, becomes needful. The bliss of the millennial reign of Christ over His restored people could not be complete without it. It is the solemn, soul-humbling dealing of God with all the sin of the past centuries, culminating in the iniquity of mocking God with renewed sacrifices in a rebuilt temple at Jerusalem, while they were still rejecting God's blessed Son, and accepting, in His stead, the man of sin. It is all brought home to them now, but it is by the revelation of the Lamb of Calvary's Cross as their Messiah and Saviour.

In this way we see here, also, the three great characteristics of the Day of Atonement. The full declaration of the value of the atonement itself; the consequent humbling of soul of those whose sin, though forgiven, is yet made manifest; and the perfect rest of communion with God thus established:

**"GOD WAS IN CHRIST."**

(2 Cor. v. 19.)

**N**O man can, by searching, find out God; the only-begotten Son hath told Him out. Satan had long belied God's character; Jesus came to bear witness to the truth (John xviii. 37). Jesus came in His Father's name; what He said and did was not in His own character independently, but as the representative of another (John v. 43). The life of Jesus should be studied in the light of Col. i. 15: He was the "image of the invisible God." As a word represents a thought, and makes known what must

*"God was in Christ."*

otherwise remain unknown, so did Jesus, the Word, make known Him who is invisible. The invisible God was shown forth in the life of a visible Man; and the Lord Jesus said, "He that had seen Me hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 9).

If we would know the character of God the Father, we must ponder that which was shown in the life of the Lord Jesus on earth. In Ps. cxlv. 8, we learn that God is full of compassion; but this is much more impressed upon us when we see the man Christ Jesus putting forth His hand to touch the leper, from whom everyone else shrank with loathing; or stopping the funeral procession to sympathise with a widowed mother's sorrow (Luke v. 13; vii. 13). It is easier for us now to say, "He knows." It is possible to understand that He feels with the feeling of our infirmities. We have not merely been told about His sympathy, but have seen it in exercise.

"He knoweth our frame," we read (Ps. ciii. 14); and the same truth is told out, with the added force of an object-lesson, when the Lord Jesus is not too much occupied with the important teaching, which has kept the people hanging upon His words three days in forgetfulness of all else, to remember that they have had no food (Matt. xv. 32). And did not He know by experience what it was to be hungry and weary (Matt. iv. 3; John iv. 6)?

Perhaps it may be difficult to realise that God has personal affection for individuals. This also is shown in Emmanuel—God with us. "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus" (John xi. 5). Not that He had exclusive affection for these, any more than for the "disciple whom Jesus loved"; but they are selected to illustrate the distinctly personal love which does not embrace mankind as a mass, but as so many separate souls, each with its own need and capacity.

We see Jesus again receiving all who come to Him, whatever their degree of faith.

"Jesus never answered 'Nay,'  
When a sinner sought His aid;  
Jesus never turned away,  
When request to Him was made."

The healing was always ready, for body or soul. Is not God the Father equally ready to receive, to forgive? Do we not see more plainly than ever He is a God "ready to pardon"? "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"; and so we know there is the same heart of compassion, tenderness of

### *What is Confidence?*

love, quickness to help, willingness to forgive, in the invisible God, who was in Christ manifest in the flesh.

And in that last great sacrifice, the death in the stead of sinners, the life given a ransom for many, not only do we see the love of the Son, but no less the love of the Father; for "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."

In these, and all other words and deeds of that wondrous life, we see Jesus as the image of the invisible God, showing forth Him whom we cannot see, proving to all who will behold that "God is Love," and giving the lie to Satan, who would malign His character as that of a tyrant to shrink from; while the Son, who is the express image of His person, is spoken of as "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild."

### WHAT IS CONFIDENCE?

"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward" (Heb. x. 35).

**I**T is not just to walk by sight,  
When all thy way looks clear and bright;  
Nor when thy heart with joy can sing,  
As sunshine rests on everything.

'Tis this—to give thy hand to God,  
And bravely face an untried road;  
Contented, be it light or dim,  
To follow blindly after Him.

It is not anxiously to press  
Right onward in thine eagerness,  
When He has whispered, "Stand thou still,  
And wait to know thy Father's will."

It is the recklessness of faith  
That launches out on what God saith,  
And finds His power is strong to keep  
Above the ocean surging deep.

'Tis *not* to fathom hidden ways,  
Or murmur at the long delays;  
While thou wouldst fain the reason see  
For each command He gives to thee.

'Tis prompt obedience to the Word  
Of Christ, thy Ruler, Sovereign, Lord;  
All self-willed thoughts hushed into rest,  
Because it is His loved behest.

Glenvar.

W. A. G.

## SERVANTS AND SONS.

**W**HEN Ahaz was sorely pressed by the kings of Syria and Israel, he sent a message to Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, saying, "I am thy servant, and thy son; come up, and save me." There was very little sincerity about this double plea, as used by Ahaz; but, where it can be honestly pleaded, what a mighty argument it is in the mouth of the weak and the needy who are seeking for help; and this is just the plea that God puts into the mouths of His people. When God teaches us that we are His sons and His servants, He reminds us at the same time that He is our Father and our Master. It is true that a father has great claims upon his son; but the claims of the son upon the father are far greater. The same is true as regards the master and servant. It is not seen so much, perhaps, in the case of a hired servant, who draws his wages, and expects nothing further from his master. But in the case of a slave it is plain enough; for, just because he is the property of his master, it is the master's business to provide him with home and food and clothing, and, if he is sick, to have him nursed and cared for till he is well. Now it is the bought servant, the slave, that is always used in Scripture to illustrate our relationship to God as His servants; and so, while we do well to think of how much He rightly claims from us, we must not forget the other side of the matter. For, indeed, we are utterly unable to meet those claims, except as we realise our corresponding claims upon Himself, and are drawing from the infinite resources He delights to place at our disposal.

In this, as in everything else, we have a perfect pattern in the Lord Jesus. Long before He came to earth it was all set down in "the volume of the Book" concerning Him. Thus, we read in Ps. ii. 7, "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee." And, again, in Ps. lxxxix. 26, 27, "He shall cry unto Me, Thou art My Father, My God, and the Rock of My salvation. Also I will make Him My first-born, higher than the kings of the earth." Then, if we turn to the prophecies of Isaiah, we see how God delights to dwell on the servant character of His beloved Son. "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth" (Is. xlii. 1), and so on, right through this section of the book to chapter liii., where it is as the Servant of Jehovah that the Lord Jesus is shown as the One who justifies many.

But, if Old Testament prophecy tells us how much God

### *Servants and Sons.*

expected from His only-begotten Son, the Gospel narratives show us how abundantly those expectations were realised. From first to last He displayed, alike in words and in ways, the perfect dependence of a son and the perfect obedience of a servant. Though from all eternity He had been the sharer of the Father's glory, He emptied Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant (bond-servant or slave), and was made in the likeness of men. He took that likeness, not as Adam, who was created a full-grown man, with all his powers of mind and body fully developed, but, as all have done who have come after Adam, He first bore the likeness of men when He was born of Mary. He was nourished as a dependent babe at His mother's breast; and thus He made practical experience of child-like trust. Long after, amid all the agonies of Calvary, we find Him saying, "But Thou art He that took Me out of the womb; Thou didst make Me to trust when I was upon My mother's breasts" (Ps. xxii. 9, R.V.).

But if He was always a dependent Son, He was always equally an obedient Servant. "I came down from heaven," He could say, "not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (John vi. 38). And, again, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" (John iv. 34). Thus we see one side of the picture, and we are shown how perfectly the claims of Jehovah and the desires of the Father's heart were met and satisfied by the child-like trust and implicit obedience of the Son.

But we must not omit to take notice of the other side, and to see how all the claims of that trust and obedience were acknowledged and met by God. Let the voice of the Son Himself bear witness. In John viii. 28, Jesus had said to the Pharisees, "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things." Speaking in this way, He takes the place He always took, of dependence and subjection. Now see what follows. If He can speak of His own trust and obedience, He can testify also to unfailing faithfulness of God in answer thereto. "And He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him" (ver. 29). To have God with Him was to have everything, for He could truly say at all times, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee" (Ps. lxxiii. 25).



*“Why Speak ye not a Word?”*

Trust and obedience always make room for God, and afford Him the opportunity to show us what He can be to us. When disobedient Israel were ignoring His claims in Malachi's days, He appealed to them thus—“A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a Father, where is Mine honour? and if I be a Master, where is My fear” (Mal. i. 6)? But, having pressed His own claims upon them, He goes on to show what blessed results shall flow to them from the acknowledgment of those claims, and the yielding to God the honour of which they had been robbing Him. “Prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Mal. iii. 10). Once, in Noah's time, man's rebellion and unbelief led to the opening of the “windows of heaven” to let out the floods of His wrath; but how long God waited in forbearing grace before He acted in judgment! How different when He is waiting for the opportunity to make His love and goodness known! The plea that Ahaz used in hypocrisy, never fails to bring an immediate response when presented with a true heart to God.

**“WHY SPEAK YE NOT A WORD?”**

**P**AUL asked the Corinthians, “How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation” (1 Cor. xiv. 26).

In some assemblies it would be more to the point to inquire of the brethren, How is it that when ye come together ye have no words of thanksgiving and praise, no exhortation to give, no scripture to read? What means this spirit of dumbness? In the worship-meeting and in the prayer-meeting how often the silence of poverty hinders, if it does not almost quench, the spirit of praise and prayer.

The cause is not far to seek. Pride is commonly allowed to hinder the Spirit's leading. “If I could teach like brother So-and-so, of course I should not mind taking a part,” says one. And yet it may be, if only that one was simple enough to give thanks according to his measure of faith, the amen of the rest would be hearty and real, and their souls would be refreshed. One reason of this would be that his experience would doubtless answer more nearly to that of the greater part present, than would that of one who was further advanced in the Divine life. Hence the wisdom of diversity of gift. Another says, “I don't

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want people to think me forward," or "I don't want to break down." Alas, these are but two forms of pride, which tell that we are more occupied with self than with the Master.

Dear brethren, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith given us (Rom. xii. 6 ; 1 Peter iv. 10, 11).

A few short words of thanksgiving ; an appropriate scripture read ; a simple exhortation given : these, coming from one evidently fresh from the Lord's own presence, may be as helpful to the assembly as the utterance of the God-given teacher.

Let us not be so foolish as to set off the importance of one member against the other. We need all—feet, hands, eyes, ears, as well as joints and nerves. A stiff joint may hinder the growth and destroy the comfort of the body. It is by that which every joint supplieth that the body is to grow (Eph. iv. 16).

We know that, in some quarters, there is a danger of the other extreme ; but nothing so quickens the energy of the flesh in some as the laziness of the flesh in others.

We would point out here that an exhortation like the present is altogether out of place and useless when the ministry is of human appointment.

Let us remember that all that limits the Spirit's operations, whether in the way of man-imposed arrangements or self-imposed ideas, is not of God. May the flesh be restrained, so that we may be constrained to come before His presence with singing, and into His courts with praise (Psalm c. 4), so that amongst us may be found joy, gladness, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody (Isaiah li. 3). Then, in part at least, shall be fulfilled the promise, "The tongue of the dumb shall sing," and the cold formal meeting, like a wilderness and a desert, shall bloom like the garden of the Lord (Is. xxxv.).

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II.—SANCTIFICATION.

**L**AST month we had "Justification" for our subject, and we propose to follow it up this month with a talk about "Sanctification."

Justification tells of our title, whilst sanctification speaks of our fitness for God's presence. Scripture always links together these two aspects of salvation.

Christ not only gave Himself for our sins, but, also, that He

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might deliver us from this present evil world (Gal. i. 4). In a word, the salvation of God is from the power as well as from the penalty of sin.

John, the beloved disciple, standing by the Cross, is very emphatic in his testimony, that from the Saviour's pierced side "forthwith came out blood and water" (John xix. 32-37). The blood brings before us particularly the truth of justification, and the water that of sanctification. This will be more plainly seen if we go back to Old Testament pictures. In Egypt, under the sprinkled blood, Israel's first-born were sheltered from Jehovah's wrath. But not till they reached the other side of the Red Sea were they fully delivered from Pharaoh's power. Again, in the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, before the priest could enter the holy place to worship he must pass the two (there were only two) vessels of the court, the altar and the laver. The altar speaks of that which gave the right of entrance, while the laver tells of the fitness. It has been illustrated in this way. When the Queen holds a levee in her palace, two things are needed to get an entrance: first, the royal invitation, the title; second, the court dress, the fitness. No use the court dress without the invitation: that comes first; but, then, no use that without the fitting attire.

Does some troubled saint say—"Ah, that is just it. I feel I am so unworthy. If I had more power over sin, more joy; but I—I—" Friend, don't seek a court dress in your own efforts at holiness, or in anything else of self. Christ is our fitness; nothing less would meet God's claims or our need; and, blessed be His name, this is just what God provides.

"Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us . . . sanctification" (1 Cor. i. 30). Of the Corinthian saints, who were indeed carnal (1 Cor. iii. 3), Paul writes that they "are sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. i. 2). The perversion of the term "saint," which is but the noun form of the verb sanctify, is the best proof how the truth has been turned upside-down.

In New Testament times it was the most common title given to believers; now, in the minds of many, it belongs only to eminent Christians. A straw shows which way the wind blows. To speak of Saint John or Saint Paul, as if all believers were not saints, is to give countenance to the error. We read of "all saints" again and again, "poor saints" (Rom. xv. 26), and "supplication for (not to) all saints" (Eph. vi. 18). Wherefore saints? Because set apart (this is the meaning of

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sanctify) in God's grace for Himself, through faith in Christ Jesus. Hence we read, 'Giving thanks unto the Father, who *hath* made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light' (Col. i. 12). From the opened heaven our Lord commissioned Paul, the persecutor, to proclaim such a message that those who accepted it might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith that is in Him (see Acts xxvi. 18).

In Heb. x. the Spirit teaches us that the words of Ps. xl. 8, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God," was the language of Christ, even when that will led up to the Cross. Every other sacrifice failed, gave no pleasure; for it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats could put away sin. Then it was that the blessed Son of God stepped down from the throne to the cross to do God's will. That will has been gloriously done. Resurrection vouches for it. Now can we say, "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all"; and, "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 10, 14).

In this, as in justification, there can be no question of degree or attainment; the only measure being the infinite perfection of Christ. But there is another aspect of this blessed truth that must not be overlooked. Set apart in God's grace through Christ, we need the power of the indwelling Spirit to apply the truth of this to our daily walk, and to help us to manifest it. God would have our *walk* to be worthy of our calling.

This is a matter of experience, hence the measure of it will depend on our walking in the power of the Spirit. For the perfecting of our walk two means are used. First, the Word of God—"Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth" (John xvii. 17). Second, separation from known evil—"If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, *sanctified*, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. ii. 21).

As the believer grasps what he is to God in Christ, and seeks to live it out in the power of the ungrieved Spirit, in subjection to the Word, and in separation from evil, will the apostle's prayer be fulfilled—"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. v. 23).

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“Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied” (Acts ix. 31).

**T**HERE is blessing in the winter storms and frosts, as well as in the summer sunshine and warmth. There is blessing in the Marah, and blessing in the Elim; blessing in the time of trouble, and blessing in the time of rest; and it is our privilege, as those who are walking in fellowship with the Father and with the Son, to get blessing out of all circumstances and all times; and we will get the blessing if we walk through them in fellowship with God. We sometimes hear of the soul-withering character of church troubles. Dear friends, I have known in my day a little of church troubles, and I know you can get your soul withered in them; but I know also you can get your soul blessed in them: all depends on how you go through them.

We sometimes hear church truth put in opposition to individual truth for the conscience. I do trust that those who seek to minister for God will learn to put truth, which is two-sided, in the position of the two sides of an arch, the one supporting the other, instead of putting them as in conflict with one another. We need both: the individual truth for the conscience and the godly walk, and church truth to guide us as God-gathered ones in an evil day. I say, we need both; but we need to receive truth with humble, lowly hearts that will bow to conscience-searching, and are ready to receive what God may give. The question of self-judgment and self-examination we need deeply. If a man is to be an acceptable worshipper at the breaking of bread, he is to do it in the spirit of self-examination. If a man is to restore another, he is to do it in the spirit of meekness, considering himself. That implies self-examination. If a man is to pluck the mote out of his brother's eye, he is first of all to cast it out of his own.

Whether it is worship or service it must be first dealing in God's presence with self. I believe we utterly fail in seeking to help in matters of difficulty and trial amongst saints, because in many cases we have not been first down in the presence of God ourselves, and we go to it with a carnal hand and a rough touch. In that word, Gal. vi. 1, “Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one”; the very thought of the word “restore” is the setting of a broken limb. You know the tenderness,

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the firmness, the accuracy that is required, combined with skill and knowledge to set a broken leg.

Now, then, a point or two in connection with the verse, read "Had the churches rest," &c. It was an Elim time. I dare say we ought to thank God a great deal more than we do for the liberties we have in this country to serve God; but when people tell me it was gained by the Covenanter's sword, I have nothing whatever to say to that. God can give us rest, and God can give us trouble; and when He giveth trouble, who can give quiet? and when He giveth quiet, who can give trouble? Never give credit to the sword for what God hath given us. Do not trace it to the Covenanter's sword, which should never have been unsheathed.

The churches in Judea had had a time of terrible trouble, but now God gave them a little while of rest. In outward things we have got rest, but perhaps we have not got rest in the inward things. Perhaps there are trials and roots of bitterness that are making it a time of trouble. I will not say that God has sent them, but I will say that God has permitted them, and now He calls each one in the time of trouble to Himself. We sometimes hear it said that if we had a time of persecution all saints would be driven together. The Laodicean time of Revelation iii. of lukewarmness never could exist in the day of persecution. There was more warmth in the days of the faggot fire. It was a day of decision when the line was straight drawn between the church and the world, but the time of lukewarmness is when all is mixed up.

And what is to separate? What is to gather together in one? What is to make us a true united testimony for God in the time of lukewarmness, when God is *NOT* sending the fire and the faggot? What is to do it but the ministration of the Word of God in wisdom, in love, in the power of the Holy Ghost, and that Word brought home to the understanding, and to the heart, and to the conscience, so that we may go on in the path which we know is the path of God, although all around be lukewarmness.

I hear people sometimes decrying knowledge, and saying we have our heads stuffed full of knowledge. Where are the people that have got so much knowledge? I don't know them. I am not one of them. The more I know, the more I feel I don't know. "If any man thinketh he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing as he ought to know" (1 Cor. viii. 2). Truly, we are ignorant of the mind of God as to many

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things that we ought to be acquainted with; and we ought to have careful, patient, diligent searching intelligently into the Word of God about every point that may be raised, so that we might be "thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

The churches had rest, and it says they were edified. But how were they edified? Turn and read with me 1 Cor. xiv. 3, 4, 5; last clause, verse 12; last clause, verse 17; and verse 26. How is the church to be edified? We read, 1 Cor. viii. 1, "Love buildeth up, knowledge puffeth up." That is true. There is a danger and a snare connected with everything, and the snare connected with knowledge is to puff up. Love buildeth up, and knowledge apart from love, and apart from the lowly heart, will puff up, and do damage—undoubtedly it will. But what is the main element in the building of the church? Is it not the ministry of the Word of God? That is what we need, and we need it from God, and we need it through the channels that God sends it, and we need it from each one that God has qualified for it. We need the word of exhortation, and we need the word of teaching. The teacher gives the intelligent opening of the Word of God, comparing scripture with scripture, and giving the sense as we have it in Neh. viii. 8. The exhorter should be ready to follow the teacher, not to overturn what has been said, nor to insinuate that perhaps he has only been "filling the head," but to rivet what has been taught with the hammer of the Word, and drive it home. Are we seeking thus to serve God? Oh! do let us learn the wisdom of God in these things. I tell you the devil is busy on all hands trying to neutralise the truth, and take the edge off it, and instead of one coming after another with the hammer to clench the nail, how often is it the case that there is something to take the edge off it. That is just our folly. I do seek of God that I may be enabled to put whatever truth He may give me in such a way that it will go to further press home what any other brother has said. We need this in our little assemblies. We need two or three to take part, and to do so in fellowship with God. But to get the mind of God involves waiting upon God; and then we will not come with a prepared address, but be in God's hands—vessels just ready for the Master to take up and use. That, however, cannot be without the Word of Christ dwelling in us richly; but oh! how few there are that you come in contact with who have got the Word of Christ dwelling in them richly. I know

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what a blessing it is to my soul when I come across a brother or a sister in whom the Word is dwelling richly, and whose heart is so exercised in it that they have either something to give me, or what is often just as edifying, something to ask. Ask one another questions. Give one another thoughts. Make the Word of Christ occupy your thoughts and heart. And remember, it is to be the Word of *Christ*. It is not Shakespeare. That is dead. It is the Word of the living Christ. It is a ministering "one to another," as well as in the assembly that edifies. It is each member fulfilling its own function. Then notice that besides edifying there comes the "walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." The result of true edification will be a godly walk. There may be ministry—a blessed ministry of the Word in a sense—but if it is not backed up by a walk outside, in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost in one's own soul, there will be no multiplication. Do not think that the multiplication is all going to come through the evangelist, or the teacher in the meeting. No! the multiplication has got to come the way the flock is multiplied, as we read in the Song of Solomon iv. 2, "Every one coming up from the washing, and each one bearing twins." That's the multiplication! Each one clean and fruitful, "walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost"—that is clean; and were "multiplied"—that is fruitful. And if I see an assembly, professing to be gathered out by God unto the Lord Jesus Christ and they don't increase, there is no gathering power, depend upon it there is something wrong. I do not report exceptional cases where there may be a continual passing through. They are multiplying, although they may be going abroad over the whole world. I confess that in the assembly I have been connected with for twenty-five years I have not seen the multiplication that I would desire; but, at the same time, from every corner of the world I can get letters from those who have been with us, and are there bearing testimony for God. That is what we need. We need to have that edification in our midst, and that walking in the fear of the Lord which will receive the multiplying blessing of God. The churches were edified, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, and the result was they were multiplied. You need not be afraid of the multiplying if you are walking in fellowship with God.—*Notes of Address by J. R. C.*



## NADAB AND ABIHU.

(Leviticus x.)

**I**SRAEL, we are distinctly told in 1 Cor. x., in their failures, &c., are our "types." Their mercies and deliverances are written for "our comfort"; their failures for "our admonition."

It is striking to observe, that no sooner do we find the tabernacle in the wilderness set up, the commands given concerning the offerings, and the priests consecrated (see Lev. i.—ix.), than the very next thing we find (Lev. x.) is *failure in worship*.

God had commanded Moses respecting the *anointing oil* and the *incense* (Exod. xxx. 22-38), and had said, that if any man compounded oil like the anointing oil; or made any incense of his own, "to smell thereto," like unto that which He commanded, "he should be *cut off* from his people."

Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, committed this last-mentioned sin. They "took each of them his censer, and put fire therein, and *incense* thereon, and offered *strange fire* before the Lord, which He *commanded them not*." The result was, a fire came forth from the presence of the Lord, and devoured them both.

Nadab and Abihu had both been "consecrated" with Aaron their father. Both of them had been sprinkled with the blood, and anointed with the oil. But their failure was in *worship*—they disobeyedly offered "strange fire."

"God is not mocked." "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me." "Let us," says the apostle, "serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire."

We have already said that Israel are "our types." And how remarkably this is seen by comparing the Church's failure with theirs.

That which in Christians corresponds to the sin of Nadab and Abihu is this—worshipping God in *ways of their own*. In other words, *self-will in worship*.

Let us prayerfully look a little at this subject.

When the Lord came, He introduced a new order of worship (see John iv.). It was not, as it had been heretofore, to be a worship connected with certain *places*. "Neither in *this mountain*," says the Lord to the woman of Samaria, "nor yet at *Jerusalem*." It is no question of place. It is a question of *relationship*: for as many as received Jesus became the *sons of God*; "and *the Father* seeketh *such* to worship Him."

*Nadab and Abihu.*

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” Hence, the apostle says, “we are the circumcision, who *worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*”

Let us now inquire, “What *is* worship?”

It is the thankful expression of the heart to God in acknowledgment of grace bestowed. The deeper, therefore, the apprehension of God’s grace, the more spiritual is the worship.

In the type:—the anointing oil is the *Holy Spirit*; the sweet incense, or perfume, is the fragrant excellency of *Christ*.

And this will ever test *true* worship:—Is it “in the *Spirit*?” Is it full of *Christ*?

This it is which delights *the Father*. He beholds *all* the preciousness of Christ; and “rests in His love.” We, by the Spirit, enter into somewhat of that preciousness; and express to God in thankfulness what we have thus enjoyed of Christ. *This* is worship.

Worship is not *fleshly excitement*. The poor world may dream of its being so; but, alas! it knows nothing of “the *power*,” *i.e.*, the Holy Ghost; it rests in “the *form*” (2 Tim. iii. 5).

“Do not drink wine, nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee,” said God to Aaron after the death of Nadab and Abihu, “when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die . . . and that ye may put a difference between *holy and unholy*, and between *unclean and clean.*”

Fleshly excitement will not only lead men to offer to God “strange fire,” *i.e.*, other incense than the fragrance and excellency of His precious Son; but it also dims the spiritual perceptions. There is no difference made between “holy and unholy, unclean and clean.” And all this *confusion* (which in God’s sight is *Babylon*) passes off under the false name of *charity*. But the liberalism of the human mind is *not* charity: faithfulness to God is.

To call things by their right names—to call light, light; and darkness, darkness—and to treat them accordingly, is God’s good way. To call darkness, light; and light, darkness; is man’s bad way.

May the Lord graciously deliver His people in this present *evil* day from offering the *strange fire*, and from confounding together things which He would have *separate*.

**"THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME."**

(1 Cor. xi. 25.)

JESUS, Lord, my heart is swelling  
With a joy I cannot tell,  
As before Thy table seated  
On Thy matchless love I dwell :  
Love my raptured thought can never  
In its highest flights divine,  
Love that bids a rebel sinner  
Welcome to Thy " House of Wine."

Free from fear, from danger sheltered,  
Naught can hinder, nothing move,  
For the Royal banner's o'er me,  
Blazoned with Thy name of " Love."  
Oh the bliss, the bliss unbounded,  
With my loving Lord to sup,  
Whilst by faith I hear Thee whisper,  
" Eat the bread and take the cup."

" Eat the bread, in symbol showing  
All My passion on the tree,  
All My agony and sorrow ;  
Eating thus, remember Me.  
Take the cup, the simple token  
Of the blood I shed for you,  
When I bowed My head and tasted  
Death, the death to sinners due."

Now, I know what love accomplished  
On the cross of Calvary,  
When, within that awful darkness,  
All my sins were laid on Thee.  
Yes, it was for me, Lord Jesus,  
Thou didst suffer, Thou didst die ;  
And it is with Thee, my Saviour,  
I shall live and reign on high.

Still I wait Thy further whisper—  
" Rise, My fair one ; come away  
From the wild, dark night of winter—  
Rise to My eternal day."

Oh to catch the welcome summons !  
Oh to hear the Bridegroom's call !  
Oh to stand in Thy bright presence,  
Lost in Thee—my " all in all !"

## Talks, Short and Simple, for Young Believers.

### III.—TWO NATURES.

**F**EELINGS of disappointment and despondency often creep in to spoil the new-found joy of sin forgiven; and this notwithstanding the blessed fulness and suitability of God's salvation.

Trial or testing ever follows blessing. As it was in God's dealings with His people of old, so is it now. The song of redemption has hardly died away on the banks of the Red Sea, ere Israel has to experience wilderness trials and Marah's bitter waters (Ex. xv.). So now trial and bitter temptation often quickly come to test the joy which the new life brings.

Then comes the disappointment. Disappointment, *not* at what Christ is or has done, but at what we are made to learn about ourselves. And the more the eye is turned inwards at self, instead of outwards and upwards at Christ, the more crushing the despondency and the more successful are Satan's wiles.

"I thought I should have been so different; but, alas, that I should have *within* me that which so readily responds to Satan's temptation! Can I be saved after all, if I have such evil thoughts? Why, since I professed to be saved, instead of being more holy, I have found within me depths of sin which I never knew existed before! Not that I have fallen into what men would call outward sin; only, as I have sought to have holier thoughts and live a better life, I have found that my whole nature seems to take sides against me, and instead of peace like a river, it has been like the raging of the sea. Can I be born again? With such an experience how can I suppose that I am led and indwelt by the Holy Spirit?"

And so the conflict rages. Well, at any rate, better the terrible fight which tells of life than the awful stillness that proclaims death. A graveyard is very quiet.

To the troubled saint we would say at once that faith finds its "*evidences*" not in self at all. It looks higher, even to the risen Christ. "*He is our peace.*"

But to return. Such a conflict is described in Romans vii., from verse 7 to the end. The poor "*I*," having done its very best, has to come to the "*O wretched man that I am!*" Only a few verses, a terrible struggle, and the personal pronoun "*I*" used well-nigh fifty times.

Self always leads to despair. But what is the way out? First the apostle learns the forces that are for us and that are against us. The mind serves the law of God; the flesh the

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law of sin. These two natures are in one person; altogether opposed to each other, and never to be agreed. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John iii. 6).

The flesh, or the old Adam nature, remains unchanged in its evil desires and appetites even in the Christian. It is flesh, and it remains flesh to the end; that is, as long as we are in the body.

What, then, is the Christian to do? To pass sentence upon it as evil; to reckon it as dead (Rom. vi. 11); to mortify it (Rom. viii. 13 and Col. iii. 5); to starve it and make no provision for it (Rom. xiii. 14). "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin. . . . Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body that ye should obey the lust thereof" (Rom. vi. 6-12, R.V.). That is to say, that when we yield to the desires of the mind of the flesh we are not treating it as crucified.

But, alas! this old man refuses to be buried, and cries out with a lusty voice, When and how do you get power to put me down in the dust? The answer is that the old man grows weak as the new man grows strong; and the new man becomes strong as the indwelling Spirit is yielded to and obeyed. "But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusted against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other, that ye may not do the things that ye (the old man) would. If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk" (Gal. v. 16, 18, 25, R.V.).

In the eighth of Romans the apostle sums up the subject thus: "So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (verses 12 and 13, R.V.). However advanced the believer may be, he must still be always on the watch, and ready to deal a heavy blow whenever the flesh raises its head.

What an example of this we get in the man caught up to the third heaven. Wondrous visions of glory were shown him, marvellous revelations were made known to him. Yet even such a one needed a thorn in the flesh lest he should be exalted above measure (2 Cor. xii. 7).

That same apostle declared, "I buffet (or bruise) my body, and bring it into bondage; lest by any means, after that I have

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preached to others, I myself should be rejected" (1 Cor. ix. 26, 27, R.V.).

An ever watchful (never boasting), yet always trustful, conflict should ever mean victory, and not defeat. Remember that there is no sin that the blood of Christ cannot cleanse; neither is there any that the Holy Spirit in us cannot overcome. The secret of power is to feed the new nature and to starve the old.

**MAN'S CONDITION—GOD'S PROVISION.****I.—MAN'S CONDITION.**

"There is NONE righteous, no, not one." "ALL have sinned." "The HEART is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." "By NATURE" (not merely by practice) "we are the children of wrath."—(Rom. iii., Jer. xvii., Eph. ii.)

**T**HE law of progression in a fallen being is not from bad to good, but from bad to worse. To look upon humanity as getting better and better is a mere philosophical fallacy, and quite opposed both to Scripture and fact. Things got worse and worse from Adam's fall to the deluge. Then things got worse and worse till Israel was delivered by the mighty hand of God. And, even with Israel, things got worse and worse, slaying God's prophets, &c., till His wrath arose against them, and there was no remedy (2 Chron. xxxvi. 16). And after their restoration from captivity, things got worse and worse, till they murdered the Son of God, and resisted the Holy Ghost—then wrath came upon them to the uttermost (1 Thess. ii. 15, 16). And so with that which is called the church. So far from being put under *the law of PROGRESSION*, when miracles, &c., had passed away, it gradually DECLINED, till "darkness that might be felt" (even the darkness of *Popery*) spread over nearly all the people. And from the time of the Reformation (though God in His mercy still checks the *decaying progress* by occasional revivals, as in the case of Israel under the judges), yet we find that ritualism and rationalism are insidiously creeping on and on; and false doctrine with many intellectual champions vaunting itself. Alas! Alas! for those who think that man is getting *better* because he is more *refined*. The HEART, the INSIDE, is the great thing, not the *outside* (Matt. xxiii. 25, &c.).

2 Tim. iii.—"This know also, that in *the last days* perilous times shall come. For men shall be *lovers of their own selves*, covetous, boasters, . . . having a *form of godliness*,

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but denying the *power* thereof"—*i.e.*, unbelievably slighting the work and energy of the Holy Ghost, the only true source of life and power in the church. The close of this dispensation is *judgment on evil* (and judgment *begins* at the house of God), as it ever has been in all past dispensations.

#### II.—GOD'S PROVISION.

"By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace." "He that believeth on ME HATH everlasting life."—(Eph. ii., Rom. iv., John vi.)

It is incorrect to say—man is merely surrounded by good influences, by yielding to which he secures his own salvation. There is an absolute necessity that he should be "*born again*" (John iii.). Conversion cannot be *advance*; it must be *new creation*. For if a man in nature makes *advance*, it is only in evil, EVEN IF HE BECOMES RELIGIOUS; for the religion of the natural man only makes him a self-righteous Pharisee. Cain was *religious* in his way; but he brought an offering without *blood*; he had no love to God in his heart; and the issue was, he slew his brother. The Pharisees were *religious*, making long prayers, &c.; but they and the chief priests were the great enemies of the Son of God. The natural man may love a god of his own; but he does not either know or love *the only true God*, the God of the Scriptures, for "it is life eternal to know Him" (John xvii. 3). And there is no saving knowledge of God except we know Him as the HOLY One as well as the GRACIOUS One; and He can only be known thus in Jesus Christ our Lord.

The moment I know God as the *Holy God*, I find myself condemned; not merely because of what I have *done*, but because of what I AM. I *am a sinner*; sin is in me; it may not have shown so much bad fruit in my practice as in others, but I *am* a corrupt tree—that is my natural condition. And the corrupt tree can only bring forth corrupt fruit, even though it be improperly taken into the church of Christ (Matt. vii. 15-20). Therefore the remedy, the only remedy, is—make the tree *good*. And this is effected, not by education, or good influences, but by a positive act of regeneration, which the *most moral* man requires ere he is fit for heaven, as much as the poor publican and harlot. Without this work in the soul there is no real love to God, or faith in Christ. For regarding Christ as a teacher merely is valueless, though He

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certainly did teach. The great point is, "He came into the world *to save sinners.*" And this He did by dying for them. "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree"; and shed His precious blood to make a full atonement. "It is *the blood* that maketh an atonement for the soul." A religion without the atoning blood of Christ is pharisaism at the best. And no matter *how young* the sinner may be when converted to God, he is *saved as a sinner* by the *atonement* of the Lord Jesus. Indeed, that *atonement* is the ground of salvation for all who die in infancy. There will not be one in heaven who cannot say, "Worthy is the Lamb that was *slain.*"

How the apostles gloried in the *finished work of Christ!* "He hath put away sin by the *sacrifice* of Himself." He has gone into heaven as our interceding Priest, "*having obtained* eternal redemption for us." "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood . . . . to Him be glory for ever and ever." This is the way their souls rejoiced in the Christ of God. Oh, that our hearts may thus rejoice also! and then, we shall not only enjoy *settled peace* ourselves, but be able to *preach*, in our measure, "Christ crucified"—"the power of God and the wisdom of God."

When a man *is* "born again," there *is* progression, there *is* growth. This is plainly declared. "*Grow* in grace," &c. And God is glorified by our increased fruitfulness in every good word and work. "Herein," said Jesus, "is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." But, remember, "Without Me ye can do nothing . . . . Abide in Me, and I in you; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me" (John xv.).

"WE which have believed do enter into rest" (Heb. iv. 3). Many circumstances try and perplex the hearts of God's people while they journey through this wilderness; but when the soul is in communion with Him about them, it finds peace, and even rest. Rest, however, is not our portion here. God's holiness will not let us find it where there is sin; and His love will not let us have it where there is sorrow. The rest that "remaineth" for us is God's rest, and sin and sorrow can have no place in Him. If we knew more of the comfort of drinking into His love, we should use above circumstances. Let us press forward, seeking, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to realise all that is ours in our Lord Jesus Christ.

W. G. S.



## SERVICE IN THE GOSPEL.

**T**HE epistle to the saints at Rome is the great Gospel epistle. There are four brief sentences in its opening chapter, more connected with the apostle's service in that Gospel than with its doctrine, on which we may dwell with profit for a little time: They bear their message to all of us who seek to spread the Gospel of God among our fellow-men. The first is found in verse 1.

**"SEPARATED unto the Gospel of God" (Rom. i. 1).**

Of old, Priests were separated unto God's worship; Levites unto His service; Nazarites unto Himself. Paul was separated, literally "marked off by line," unto the Gospel of God. This ministry he "received of the Lord" (Acts xx. 24), and in this he abounded. "The Gospel" was his life-work, not his trade. By craft he was a tent-maker; but if in this he laboured, it was for the Gospel's sake. All his movements were regulated, so as to subserve the Gospel. Neither the tears of his friends, nor the wrath of his foes, could lure him from his God-appointed path. Surely we may learn from this, although our measure may be small compared with his. The devil is busy at this present time decoying God's "gospellers" from their appointed toil.

**"WHOM I SERVE with MY SPIRIT in the Gospel"**  
(Rom. i. 9).

This word "serve" means to "serve as a priest"—to serve as in the sanctuary of the presence of God. His was not the mere external act of body service, but he served with his "spirit." The Gospel claimed his highest and noblest powers: it had the monopoly of his being. His heart and soul were in it. All his service was rendered as one serving in holy things, as a priest in the temple of his God. He was not a philanthropist seeking only the good of man, without regard to the means whereby it might be attained, or whether God was glorified thereby; but his service in the Gospel was rendered as an offering unto God, as something laid upon His altar, for His approval, for His acceptance. Not the maimed and the halt: the dregs of his energies after the world had received its full share, but his *very best* was given to the service of his God in the Gospel. Alas! alas! few follow in his steps. Business, family, self, put in their three-pronged fork, and seize their portion, like Eli's sons of old (1 Sam. ii. 13), leaving nothing but the shattered energies of an evening hour, wherein to "serve" our God in the Gospel of His Son.

### *Service in the Gospel.*

**“READY to Preach the Gospel”** (Rom. i. 13).

The word “ready” here implies—eagerness. He longed to reach the imperial city with the message of God’s grace. He felt himself to be their debtor, and his fervent spirit yearned to tell to both “wise” and “unwise” the joyful tidings. His desire was granted, but it cost him something. Carried as a prisoner, through stormy seas, shipwrecks, and perils, he reached Rome; and the record of his early labours reads, that in his own hired house he spake of Jesus “from morning till evening” (Acts xxviii. 23). In prison, and market-places, by night or by day, he was always ready, ever on the outlook for an opportunity to “preach the Gospel.” Do we blush as we read it. Full well we may. With all our boasted knowledge and attainments, we look very small alongside of such a record. Yet in our varied spheres, and according to our measure, it is the holy privilege of every saint and servant of God to be always “ready to preach the Gospel.” It need not be a public ministry to thousands. This would be out of the question for the many; but the daily wayside ministry, the Sychar-like dealing with individual souls, the faithful word to fellow-workers and fellow-travellers: such a service is within the reach of all. Our eagerness to share it: to embrace every opportunity, to turn to account every chance of speaking forth God’s Gospel to our fellows, will be regulated by the *condition of our souls*, rather than by our gifts. This “eagerness” to reach souls is not the fruit of nature; it does not “come naturally,” as men say. It is the fruit of God’s grace in us, the outcome of a soul abiding in communion with a God who “so loved the world that He gave His Son.” This, and only this, begets and sustains the yearning desire expressed in the thrilling words, “I am *ready* to preach the Gospel.”

**“I am NOT ASHAMED of the Gospel”** (Rom. i. 16).

He need not be; it carried its own credentials, it bore its own witness. It was *God’s* Gospel, and God’s *power* to save. How our souls need to grasp this thought in a day like ours, when many who profess much love for the Gospel are turning aside to seek embellishments and attractions to popularise it. But it needs no borrowed beauties; it requires no garnishing from man’s hand. To say so is to impugn the wisdom of God whose Gospel it is. To abbreviate, or to supplement it, is to be “ashamed” of it, virtually to set it aside as insufficient, and to

### *God's Threefold Rest.*

adopt "another Gospel." Brethren, let us zealously watch against this; let us take heed lest unconsciously we drift into the world's reckoning, and be found adopting the world's tactics. I fear we have done so to a greater extent than many of us are aware, in order to keep pace with others. But the Gospel of God, in its simplicity and plainness, spoken from lips and a heart in communion with God, will never fail to be used by Him for the accomplishing of that for which He has sent it. Thus entrusted with God's Gospel, separated from vain pursuits to become its heralds, let us yield ourselves heartily to the honourable work, serving as priests, always ready, and at no time ashamed to herald forth "the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God" (1 Tim. i. 11) R.V.

### GOD'S THREEFOLD REST.

**T**HIS may be said to be—**First.**—In HIMSELF, as Father, Son, and Spirit, the one ever blessed God! So perfect and complete was God in this His own boundless blessedness that He lacked nothing! He needed not to create any creature, either invisible or visible, in order to supply any deficiency in Himself: for He had none! "I AM hath sent me unto you," was a name for Himself, which God supplied to Moses. A name that only He could give who was "over all (and above all), God blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 5). And this is equally true of the Father, the Son, or the Spirit, individually and separately, as it is of the one "only true God" in His unity (John xvii. 3). This truth divinely learnt enables us to see God as His own blissfulness and therefore as His own perfect REST.

**Second rest.**—Nevertheless it pleased God to be a Creator—both in His unity and in His trinity He became such. This we learn from Gen. i. 1: "In the beginning God (plural) created (singular) the heaven and the earth," which means that the Divine and holy *three* were engaged in the *one* act of creation and therefore in all other of its acts. In this, His creation work, God found again a REST; not merely in the negative sense that He rested (*i.e.*, ceased) from all His work which He created and made (Gen. ii. 3), but also in the positive and fuller sense "that God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was *very good*." The whole of His handiwork reflected His own likeness as far as created things could do it, and His creature *man* most so of all: and because the whole

### *God's Threefold Rest.*

reflected His image and displayed His attributes, therefore creation was God's rest. True, it was only a shadow and prefigurement of another creation that should one day be His fuller and His eternal rest; yet was the first Adam and all that surrounded Him a perfect and a Divine work so far as it went, and was therefore God's *rest*—yea, more, it was His refreshing! See Ex. xxxi. 17: "On the seventh day He rested, and was *refreshed*." This **second** rest we know was broken by sin's entrance into it; for the blessed and ever self-delighting God cannot rest in any living creature, visible or invisible, that is morally unlike Himself, nor in any handiwork of His which such sinful ones have stained and have therefore, in His account, polluted. Hence, from the day sin entered, God's rest in this creation was at an end, His "Sabbath" in it (Sabbath, in Hebrew, means "rest") was broken. As our Lord Jesus mysteriously said to the Jews (John v. 17), when they reproached Him for doing works of mercy on God's seventh day, or what was in Eden's garden His Sabbath day, "My Father *worketh* hitherto (*i.e.*, ever since sin and sickness entered into this creation), and I also *work*."

But no sooner was His creation rest broken by man's sin than God began His **third** or new creation rest, by His promise of the Woman's Seed who should be born. Out of chaotic darkness (Gen. i. 2) God's word of power did day by day bring into being all this first creation; and now, by promise after promise, and by stages of grace and glory, our God is bringing, and will yet bring, all His new creation work to pass out of man's dark guilt and dark doom, and will build it up for Himself, as the co-equal *rest* of Father, Son, and Spirit *for ever!* Called into being, and built up by the glory of the Father, through the obedience and humiliation of the Son, and by the ceaseless gracious operation of the blessed Spirit; the *sustaining* of which eternal "rest" of God will be to neither Father, Son, nor Spirit, any cost or toil when once it is done. "This is My *rest* for ever," said Jehovah of Zion (Ps. cxxxii. 14), when once Zion was redeemed from its heathenism and was built up by God through David and Solomon. "It is done; I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end," is the word of Him who *sits* upon the great white throne, and says, "Behold I make all things new," and "God's tabernacle (*i.e.*, His dwelling-place of rest) is with men" for ever; even with the "last Adam" and his completed Eve, for whose sake that Adam once lay in the "deep sleep of death."

### *God's Threefold Rest.*

Here, then, we have God's threefold rest; and Jesus in His three sonships is the fulness and joy of all three of them. In His pre-incarnate eternal sonship, Jesus Himself says (Prov. viii. 23-30), "From everlasting . . . . I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." As to God's rest in Eden and its surroundings, it is said (John i. 3), "All things were made by Him (*i.e.*, the Word), and without Him was not anything made that was made." And of the new creation, Paul writes, "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by *Jesus Christ*."

Whoever, then, would know God's own threefold rest, must see that it is as Father, Son, and Spirit, that God possesses them.

But when God works for Himself His redemption and new creation rest, into which He brings the once lost and unrested rebel sinner, He accomplished that rest for the sinner by a "threefold cord not quickly broken," indeed, never to be *broken*; albeit, the ransomed sinner's present enjoyment of it may vary, and often does. We would describe this threefold cord as—1st, conscience rest in the precious atoning blood of Christ (Matt. xi. 28); 2nd, service rest under the "easy" yoke and the light burden of following Christ (Matt. xi. 29); and 3rd, the glory rest when Christ shall come (2 Thess. i. 7, and Heb. iv. 9).

The first of these is a rest once and for ever *given* to all when first they come to Christ. According to Heb. x. 2, "once purged . . . . no more conscience of sins," *i.e.*, as forbidding their approach to God."

The second is a rest we continue to "find" as we increasingly learn how sweet Christ's service is to the renewed soul.

The third is that "blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ," which will in a moment for ever make us to be both with Him and like unto Him.

Are not these God's threefold cords of grace and glory by which He makes us, even now, in this tossed, guilty, and unrested world, to know something of His provided rest in Christ, and to have them and hold them fast, whilst He draws us by them "upward, onward, homeward," to dwell with Him and with the Lamb in His own glory rest for ever.

Another word may follow on the practical outcome of this our threefold rest in the fourfold sphere of the closet, the family, the church, and the world, with all their respective toils and conflicts.

## "THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED."

John xxi. 20.

**T**HERE was no peculiar perfection in the character of John; no special incident in his life that gives us a reason why he was so precious to the heart of Jesus. As a man in the flesh he would call fire from heaven to destroy. But I think we can read the secret in the line that follows: "Which also leaned on His breast at supper." John *understood Him*. Jesus came from the Father's bosom, the very out-shining of His love; but "the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." He was full of grace and truth; but they lacked room to receive the blessing He brought to them.

"That disciple whom Jesus loved." It was not in one sense the word of Jesus, but of John. Jesus had a heart for all. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you." They might all have leaned on His bosom; but only John took his place there. Peter beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom He spake. John said, "Lord, who is it?" Faith can be at ease in His presence, because it apprehends the love that put us there. "I have not called you servants, but friends." Again, we find, as they went to the sepulchre, the other disciple did outrun Peter. Love always outruns. He could trace the Lord on the sea of Galilee in His ways of abundant grace, because he *knew Him*. There may be much service and little intercourse with Jesus, the only source of strength. Hence, how much of all we do will stand, in the day when the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is? Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God; not in His aspect as the Holy One, in whom Satan could find nothing; but as Son of Man, *abiding* in the Father's presence, and shedding from thence on those around the light that could not be hid—the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Beloved, if we would be approved of God, we must get our *service* as well as our strength from Himself. We must get something of His own light and love in our vessels, if we would have Him sup with us. We must lean much on His bosom, if we would manifest His name. We must gaze much upon His glory—full of grace and truth, if we would be changed into the same image. "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." There is no lack here: "Whom He justified, them He also glorified." Surely it is the desire of His heart to bless us, if we will receive of Him.

**"COME YE APART."**

O JESUS, Lord, it is my gain  
Thyself alone to know !  
I thank Thee for these hours of pain  
That come to lay me low.  
The message Thou art pleased to send  
In mercy from above,  
Appoints the silent hours I spend,  
Reposing in Thy love.

I leave awhile the thronging crowd  
To be apart with Thee ;  
I hear not now the strivings loud  
That vex the distant sea.  
The heavings of its stormy tide  
Sound faintly on mine ear,  
And in Thy haven fair and wide  
I see that home is near.

I know not what may be in store ;  
The charge is Thine to keep ;  
Perchance my bark need nevermore  
Launch forth upon the deep  
But whether toward the golden strand  
Be set the vessel's prow,  
Or whether sailing far from land,  
Doth not concern me now.

Thou art Thyself, O precious Lord !  
My one eternal Gain !  
Thou art my Solace and Reward  
Alike in ease or pain.  
Because Thy love enfoldeth me,  
No ill can e'er befall ;  
'Tis perfect peace to rest in Thee,  
My Lord, my All in all !

## THE LORD'S WAY WITH THE SINNER.

Nicodemus : The Samaritan : The Multitude.

John iii., iv., vi.

**T**O apprehend the light or truth of the Lord is needful to our safe conduct through the scene around us ; but to discern His spirit, His tastes, habits of thought, sympathies and aversions, all pure and perfect as they were, so many expressions of the Divine mind, gives elevation to our conduct.

Something of His sympathies and aversions may be discovered from His different method with Nicodemus, the Samaritan, and the multitude, in John iii., iv., vi.

There is this common purpose in all these scenes, *the Lord is putting the soul upon a sinner's ground,*

This, however, is done in a different method in each case ; and in this different method His spirit, His taste, His sympathies or aversions, as we have expressed it, manifest themselves.

Nicodemus was "a master in Israel," a religious "ruler of the Jews." He was of the Pharisees, one, therefore, of a party that had set itself boldly against Jesus. But at this time there was evidently some working of conscience in him.

He comes to Christ as a pupil, to learn lessons and mysteries. The Lord transfers him from that ground, and puts him under the uplifted serpent—that is, instructs him to come to Him as a bitten Israelite, or as a poor sinner that needed life.

He does this, as we might say, shortly or at once, stopping him at the first utterance of his lips. But withal patiently, and with evident interest in him personally.

The Samaritan woman was one of the thoughtless children of the world. Life and its enjoyments and occupations were all to her. She was shrewd, and a woman of a good understanding, and, as far as that led her, not ignorant of the religion of the day. But life in the world was her object. She was on the ground where the common fallen nature had put her. She had not, therefore, sought the Lord, like Nicodemus, but one of the ordinary circumstances of human life had thrown them together.

Such an one, I may say, was just the one for the Son of God. He meets her, therefore, in her place, and speaks in her own language to her. But from that place, without rebuke, without abruptness, He removes her on the ground of a convicted sinner, and then reveals Himself to her.

She had not assumed a place as the ruler had ; and Christ allows the whole passage from darkness to light to be made



### *The Lord's Way with the Sinner.*

more rapidly. The same occasion witnesses the whole journey, as it does not in the case of Nicodemus. The Lord at first only turns him *towards* the right road.

The multitude are distinct from both. There was no working of conscience in them, as in Nicodemus, nor were they simply on the ground, or in the place of nature, like the Samaritan. They were in the religious activity of the day, and were making their profit by it. They followed Jesus, "not because they saw the miracles, but because they did eat of the loaves and were filled." They followed Him for what they could get.

Such a material is very offensive to the mind of Christ. Nothing more so. But He does not at once cast it aside. He can bear with anything in the patience of His grace towards sinners. He does not, therefore, cast the multitude aside, though they did thus form a material so repulsive to Him. He was decisive and yet patient with the Jewish master. He was leading the poor Samaritan from first to last, without a strong or relenting word—and now, in a long discourse, He strives with the multitude, and would fain put them on paschal ground, or in the place of sinners who needed the life of His flesh and blood; evidently, however, throughout with a mind much averted from the place and character in which they were showing themselves, and begins His answer to them *re-bukingly* (vi. 26).

How perfect in patience and grace, and yet in the various expressions of taste and of sympathy, all these ways and methods are! But let me say, there is no joy like that of learning our lessons from the Lord in the place and character of sinners, that place which the Lord is putting us all into, ere He will teach us anything.

Peter was on that ground to which the Lord was here either turning, or seeking to turn Nicodemus, the Samaritan, and the multitude (see vi. 62, 69). His soul dealt with Jesus as its *life*—that was the true apprehension, the apprehension of one who stood in the place, to which the drawings of the Father always lead.

"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months, it shall be the first month of the year unto you" (Ex. xii. 2). The beginning of the year was changed, to let Israel know that their life was not the life of *creatures*, but of *ransomed sinners*, that eternity with God is to be spent in that character. The passover was the moment in their history, when they

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formally entered on that character, being then sheltered from destruction by blood sprinkled on the door posts. And, therefore, that month was made the beginning of the year to them.

The early chapters in John's gospel, as we have now seen, have this object—to show how the Lord put all those who came to Him on the ground of sinners. He would receive them (whether Nicodemus, the Samaritan, or the multitude) only as sinners. None others *really* came to Him.

I ask, was not this the echo of Ex. xii. 2? Was not this a telling of them, as they had already been told by that ordinance, that they must *begin* as poor sinners?

Most happy for our souls is it, to see, and see so clearly, this way of the Lord. He cannot welcome us, if we bring not with us the confession of sin, if we come not as to a *Saviour*.

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IV.—CONFESSION OF SIN.

**O**UR joy as believers can only be full as we walk with God (1 John i. 4). Once God came down and walked with man. That was the glory of Eden. Again the shout of triumphant joy shall proclaim, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them" (Rev. xxi. 3); that will be the glory of the coming age.

Now man is called to walk with God, but that can only be in the light. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" asks the prophet (Amos iii. 3), If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth (1 John i. 6).

Sin is our great enemy; it robs us of our joy and drags us down from the place of blessing; Satan will seek to injure when he cannot destroy. His object is to make us joyless, and therefore powerless Christians; for the joy of the Lord is our strength. And to accomplish this he seeks to allure us away from Christ, so that the world may take His place in our hearts. The love of Christ once constrained Demas to find out Paul at Rome; the love of the world was presently as powerful to take him to Thessalonica (2 Tim. iv. 10).

The means the devil uses is always and only sin; therefore, we should be afraid of, and hate, sin. But if we sin, what

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then? "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." And again, "If *we* (believers) confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9, and ii. 1, 2).

This is God's gracious and blessed way. But Satan, that old adversary, whispers ever, "Stay away. Why, how can you be a Christian and do like this? It is no use for you to pray, particularly just now; wait till you are in a better state of mind. God would not hear prayer from such as you." How often this wile succeeds. We say to the sinner, "If you tarry till you're better you will never come at all," and forget that this applies also to the saint.

At such a moment such a verse as Hebrews iv. 12, 13, comes with terror to us. Yes, it is all true, God's word is sharp. It has smitten us. Our secret sins are known to Him. What shall we do? Our shame covers us; we forget to read on about the tenderness of the High Priest (though always separate from sin, hating it, never smoothing it over with nice names), and the invitation that follows. But to what is it that we are invited? Why, to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy for the past and grace for the future time of need. This is just what we need, so it is just what God provides.

Have we not read that when David kept silence his bones waxed old through his roaring all the day long (Ps. xxxii. 3). Aye, day and *night* God's hand was heavy upon him. But the moment the guilty silence was broken with words of confession, sweet forgiveness kissed away the darkness. The chastened memory of the sad past teaching him ever to make God his hiding-place, where floods of temptation cannot reach.

Our safety (that is from sin) depends on our walk with God. Our wisdom is to return as quickly as we may, if sin and Satan have allured us from the blessed highway of holiness. The best is to keep ourselves in the love of God (Jude 21). The next best is to return at once, if so be we have left it. Satan would have us come down. Coming down is easy, and becomes more and more so. The Holy Spirit would lift us up, and the more we get down the more difficult (to the flesh) is it to climb back. He who would get back must climb the hill of confession. This is the only way. To confess sin is one thing, to ask forgiveness another. At the close of the day, as we commit ourselves to God our Father's gracious keeping for the night, it is well to ask forgiveness for all sins of the day, known

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and unknown, but the general prayer should not be a substitute for the special confession of the particular transgression.

To drag the thought, word, or deed, that defiles our conscience, into the light of God's holy presence; to own it as sin without any "but," that is confession; and, if it be honestly done, it enables us to claim by faith the promised forgiveness and cleansing. God links mercy and grace together. If we only desire mercy to cover, and not grace to deliver, then the confession is not real.

Psalm xxxii. tells the sorrows of holding back and the joys of making confession; Psalm li. tells us what confession is. Sin first defiles, and then, if unconfessed, hardens the conscience. Therefore, to maintain a tender and good conscience, we must keep short accounts with God. Sin confessed at once will soon be sin conquered, but sin unconfessed becomes sin allowed.

Sin unconfessed, and therefore unjudged, not only hardens the conscience, but raises a cloud between us and our Father, so that fellowship is broken. Then are we cut off from the source of our heavenly joy and comfort.

We dare not look up; the heavens are brass; within all is hard, rebellious. What wonder then, if in such straits, the despairing one becomes the backsliding one. This is what Satan seeks; but it need not be so—only confess. The Father has only the kiss of forgiveness for the child who owns "I have sinned." Sin loved can't be sin confessed; in such case confess the guilty love, so that it may become sin hated. A very small bit of glass in the wound will fester and fester if not removed, and make even amputation necessary; so a little sin, little according to our reckoning, unconfessed, will hinder fellowship and drag down the soul, bringing about the most terrible consequences.

Therefore *confess*, and having done so, put in exercise the simple child-like confidence which appropriates the blessed assurance. "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9). Having confessed to continue in the place of an unforgiven one is God-dishonouring unbelief. Faith accepts the forgiveness as a present enjoyment, and looks up, even though through tears, with thanksgiving; counting on the cleansing from all unrighteousness as much as on the forgiveness of the sin that has laid us low.

God's dealings with the backslider who does not confess we will seek to trace in our next paper.

## The Aggressive Character of the Gospel.

**W**HEN the risen Lord was sending forth His servants with the Gospel's message to the sons of men, His twice-repeated word to them was, "Go" (see Matt. xxviii. 19, Mark xvi. 15). There was to be an aggressive service and warfare. They were not to expect that sinners, lost and needy though they were, would flock around them, desiring to hear the good tidings of salvation: they were therefore to "Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." They were not to expect that men in rebellion against God would of their own free will come and surrender themselves to Him, owning Christ as their Lord, and seeking to learn the laws of His kingdom; therefore they were commanded to "Go" and make disciples of all nations, baptising them, and teaching them all things that He had commanded.

The commission given by the Master to His servants then, abides unrepealed throughout this Gospel age. The work of evangelisation is an aggressive work. It does not progress according to the course of natural laws as men speak: it is against nature. The bearer of the Gospel must press himself forward into the enemy's camp; he must learn to "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. ii. 3). A brief consideration of man's condition, and the Gospel's object, will make this more plain.

Man is the slave of sin (John viii. 35): the Gospel is sent to set him free from sin's dominion (Rom. vi. 6-22). He is in Satan's empire (Eph. ii. 2), a subject of his rule (1 John iii. 8): the Gospel is sent to "turn him *from* the power of Satan *unto* God" (Acts xxxvi. 18); to deliver him "from the power (authority) of darkness," and to "translate" him into the kingdom of God's Son (Col. i. 13). All this cannot be effected without a struggle. So long as the sinner continues to quietly serve as a slave, the devil holds his goods in peace (Luke xi. 21); but immediately the voice of the Lord through the Gospel breaks in upon the soul, it becomes with the sinner as it was with Israel by the brick-kilns of Egypt, his state is worse than before. The enemy's rage is aroused, and his kingdom stirred from its centre to its circumference, to hinder the emancipation of those to whom the Lord has sent His messengers and His message. Then it is that magicians and men of war are all stirred up to activity, seeking by craft and force to militate against the Gospel and its messengers. Thus it was that the early bearers of the Gospel's message encountered the rage of men

*“Sleep on now.”*

stirred up by Satan at every step. They suffered bonds and imprisonment; they were in hunger and in thirst because the hand of Satan had gone forth against them. Yet amid all this opposition the servants of the Lord remembered their Master's command, “*Go ye,*” and pressed forward with their message. Circumstances have changed; there is no longer the outward opposition of priests and princes against the name of Christ and Christianity. Many professed the Christian name, and the tactics of the enemy have changed. But there yet remains his opposition to the spread of God's Gospel among men, and those who go forth as the ambassadors of Christ may count on his rage being awakened against them as they declare the Gospel of God seeking the salvation of men and the discipling of saved ones for Christ. Nevertheless, let the servants of the Lord, girded by Almighty strength, go forward, pouring forth from hearts and lips the fulness of the Gospel. And as it was said of old, so yet shall it be said, that “the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned to the Lord” (Acts xi. 21).

**“SLEEP ON NOW.”**

Matt. xxvi. 45.

**I**N a previous paper something was said of God's threefold rest—First, in Himself and His own perfections; second, in this first creation, till sin entered it; and third, in Christ and the new creation in Him. Our present calling is to *fellowship* with God in this His new and eternal rest which He has in Christ, both as respects its finished work of eternal redemption of us, its happy rest in wearing Christ's yoke, and its sure and certain hope of sharing Christ's coming glory. But though fellowship with God in all this is our birthright and our portion, it deeply needs that we should “watch and pray” that we may enjoy it. Our foolish, timid, sinful, unbelieving hearts are soon disturbed from this God-provided rest. Hence our Master's word to His little band: “Sleep on now, and take rest; behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.” As if He should say, “My death on your behalf is a settled, sure, and perfect thing; it includes in it all the will of God (Heb. x. 7), and also all that ‘the hands of sinners’ can do: ‘sleep on,’ then, and ‘take rest.’ God provides it, and I provide it; let your souls repose in it, and

*“Sleep on now.”*

that, too, undisturbed by a single misgiving Godward or a single fear manward. Also, let it be *continuous*—‘sleep on’—let nothing interrupt it.” Compare S. Song ii. 7; iii. 5; viii. 4, “Stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please” (see Heb.), also Isa. xxvi. 3, “Thou wilt keep him in peace, peace” (marg.), (that is, in continuous peace), “. . . because he trusteth in Thee.” And again, our Master’s thrice-repeated words, “Peace be unto you” (John xx. 19, &c.): the first of which is “Peace” as against any fear of what man can do (ver. 19); the second, “Peace” in all gospel testimony to the world (ver. 21); and the third, “Peace” in our church work and our assembly care one of another (ver. 26). This last is a deeply-needed “peace” for us at the present time. In Philippians iv., also, it is when speaking of a Euodias and Syntyche difficulty in the church that Paul bids us “Be careful for nothing; but in *every* thing” (even in these sorrows in the church) “let your requests be made known unto God, and the *peace* of God shall keep your hearts and minds by Christ Jesus.”

All this, and many other scriptures, may remind us of that loving Gethsemane word, “Sleep on now, and take rest.” When the tabernacle was making in the wilderness there is an extra mention of the “Sabbath” (rest)—Exod. xxxv. 2, 3—along with the account of its construction, as if to show that no delight that Bezaleel and Aholiab had, or any of their many helpers had, in that work of glory and beauty, nor any zeal for its completion, was to prevent their keeping God’s “Sabbath of rest.” In 1 Chron. iv. 23 we are told that certain ones who were “potters” “*dwelt* with the king for his work,” *i.e.*, they *lived* with the king whilst they served him. It was *with* the king that they got their needed rest, as well as served him.

These last days are days of ceaseless unrest; it is an age of hurry and fretting anxiety. Israel of old was caught in this snare of the world’s rush and haste. In vain did God say to them, “In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength,” but they only answered, “No, but we will flee upon horses, and we will ride upon the swift” (Isa. xxx. 15); and in subsequent days, when the “Songs of Degrees” were sung by the returning remnant of Ezra and Nehemiah’s time, in Ps. cxxvii., they were still reminded that “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it,” and that “it is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows, for so He giveth His beloved *sleep*.”

*“Sleep on now.”*

The truth is, there is not a single sphere of our redeemed life as God's saints and servants, that may not be invaded by this spirit of toilsome, careworn unbelief. An aged one amongst us has well said, *Faith* is the only true Sabbath-keeper, and unbelief is that incorrigible Sabbath-breaker that deserves to be stoned to death by all the congregation (Num. xv.). In the closet, the family, the church, and the world, we have to preserve this repose of our souls in God and Christ inviolable. For lack of it how often is closet reading of God's Word and closet prayer both shortened and impoverished! Anxious and wandering thoughts too soon distract the mind, and dim the precious page we are reading, and stain the prayer whilst we still are on our knees! As to the family also, in these days of early marriages and rapid families, what need of repose of soul in parents! Jacob had his twelve sons with him, and in Gen. xxxii. he touchingly pleads to God for their safety from Esau, but follows his prayer with such anxious plans for saving at any rate one-half of them, that God had in the night to put the ford Jabbok between him and the whole of them, and wrestle him down to a clinging weakness that clung only to the Mighty One. And in church work also, and amongst the precious, God-ordered assemblies of the saints, who does not know what it is to lose the soul's rest instead of preserving it? And yet it is in this same connection that Peter says, “Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.” In 1 Peter v., he is speaking of how all saints should be “subject one to another,” since each should be caring for all the flock, and be strengthened for this brotherly labour by casting the care it causes us upon the Chief Shepherd, who Himself is always at hand. How sweet to our souls would our church work then be, and how diligently we should pursue it!

Nor is this repose of soul in God and Christ to be less known by us in our outside lip and life Gospel testimony to the world around us. In Matt. xi., it was when our Master had to pronounce woes on Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, and had to accept only “babes” as the fruit of His ministry, that He said, “Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight,” and thus His “yoke” of service was *easy* and His “burden” *light*! Paul, too, in all his fervour of Gospel toil, rests in this that he was “to God a sweet savour of Christ both in them that are saved and in them that perish!” And how many gossellers have rested, after their apparently un-



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successful work,\* in that Divine assurance, "My Word shall not return to Me void: it shall accomplish that which I please" (Isa. lv. 11), gloriously to be fulfilled in the Israel nation ere long, but true *now* to all who know and keep their resting-place in God, whilst they serve in the Gospel of His Son. "Sleep on," then, dear fellow-believer, and "take rest."

### THE SCRIPTURES.

**I**N these days, when the Scriptures are being set aside, it becomes us to cleave with purpose of heart to the unerring words of the living God, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him at that day" (John xii. 48).

The Scriptures, Old and New, come to us as the Word of God; they judge us, not we them. To these writings, then, we must appeal; not to our reason, but to *what is written*. The several writers of the Old Testament are classed together by Peter, and defined as "holy men of old, who spake *as they were moved* by the Holy Spirit." So that while it is not unimportant to define who was used of God to write, a doubt as to the author of any one of the sacred oracles does not affect the point *that God spake the words*.

We are at present moving our pen to express our words; even so the Holy Spirit took up Moses, David, or Paul, and *moved them* to express His thoughts. Again, David says, "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer." David's *tongue* was the pen, *God* the ready writer. In 2 Timothy, Paul says, "All Scripture is God-breathed." He speaks here of a recognised, defined collection of writings, called *the Scriptures*, and every Jew would understand he referred to that collection of oracles of God committed to them (Rom. iii.). Stephen emphasises this by declaring in Acts vii. that the fathers received the lively oracles to give unto us. An "oracle" clearly indicates a voice of a certain sound. Even heathens had their oracles, and were guided thereby. The Scriptures are the living oracles—they never pass away. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the Word of the Lord never. The Lord Jesus came to fulfil the Scriptures: "Lo, I come to do Thy will, oh God, in the volume of the book it is written of Me." Besides, He constantly appealed to the Scriptures. In Luke xxiv. He "began at Moses and all the Prophets, and expounded unto them in all *the Scriptures* the things concerning Himself." So thoroughly

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did Jesus believe in their *verbal* inspiration that on many occasions He founded what He taught on *one* word of Scripture. For instance, "If David then called Him *Lord*, how is He his Son?" Then, when demonstrating the resurrection, He founds His teaching on the *tense* of a verb: "I *am* the God of Abraham, . . . God *is* not the God of the dead, but of the living." In like manner, Paul, in Hebrews, follows the same course: "I will declare Thy name unto my *brethren*." From this *one* word he shows that Jesus owns us as brethren. Then, in chapter viii., his conclusion is again founded on *one* word of Scripture: "In that He saith a *new* covenant;" and in chapter xii., the word in Hebrew "yet once more" is the basis of his teaching. In 2 Peter i. the Scriptures are declared to be *surer* than the voice Peter heard on the mount: "We have also a *more sure* word of prophecy," and he tells us that more sure word was spoken by men of old, as God moved them; and, at the close of this epistle, Peter classes Paul's *writings* with the *other Scriptures*, thus putting Paul's and the old Scriptures under one title—"the Word of God." In Jude 17 all the apostles' words are thus referred to, and we are to be mindful thereof, while Peter, by *writing* his ere his decease, does so, that we might have "these things always in remembrance." Not less worthy of note is Paul's statement in 1 Cor. xiv. 37, "If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that *I write* unto you are the commandments of the Lord."

Thus the Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, claim to be *the very words of God*. Were this not so, we have no authority to rest on. In contending for the verbal inspiration of Scripture, it must, of course, be understood that we do not contend for the verbal inspiration of any *translation*; for all translations are the work of man and liable to error, and consequently demand revision and amendment. Neither do we contend that every word of any manuscript or copy of the Scriptures is necessarily inspired, for manuscripts differ materially and copyists have often blundered. What we contend for is, that the words, as originally spoken and written by the prophets, were the words that God gave. It is because we believe this that we welcome with thankfulness the results of the labours of godly men who, by critical comparison of manuscripts, have done all that can be done to arrive at the exact original divinely-given words. And it is for the same reason that we welcome every honest effort to render faithfully into our own English language, as

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well as into all other languages on the earth, the Hebrew and Greek originals. Once let go the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, and we put reason in their place. For, if the book is only partially inspired, then our intellects are the judges as to what is and what is not inspired. This is Satan's aim—the old serpent's hiss, "Yea, *hath* God said?" If, like Eve, we allow the doubt, then we shall believe the lie. Souls are wrecked thus. Many driven to Rome for authority to lean on, others into the regions of cold infidelity. May the Psalmist's conviction ever be ours: "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."

### ON SEEKING GOD.

**F**ROM the day when Adam and his wife hid themselves among the trees from God's presence, right on to that future time described in the sixth chapter of Revelation, when great and small will hide themselves in the dens and rocks, praying to the rocks and mountains to fall on them to hide them from the Lord, man, in his natural state, continually flees away from God; so that we have it recorded in Scripture: "There is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. iii. 11).

How it magnifies the grace of God and melts our hearts to learn that, notwithstanding that man thus turns his back upon God, nevertheless He gave His Son up to the Cross for His rebellious creatures—that Son of whom we read that He "came to *seek* and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10).

So that having been found of Him, we can sing—

"Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wandering from the fold of God;  
He, to save my soul from danger,  
Interposed His precious blood."

Zacchæus is not, by any means, the only lost one found by a seeking Saviour. We can trace Him going after the sinner all through the sacred record. See, for instance, Jesus crossing Galilee's sea, amidst the storm, that He may bless two demoniacs; again, follow Him as He seeks out the twelve that they may be with Him; behold Him, as He first creates the desire and then satisfies it, of the sinful woman at Sychar's well; and yet, a crowning instance, observe Him going after

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Saul, the persecutor, journeying from Jerusalem while still breathing out threatenings, yea, and murder, against the disciples of the Lord.

Yet, one may object, "are we not often commanded in Scripture to seek the Lord?"

Yes, indeed; but who are those that are told to seek Him? Turn to the sixty-third Psalm and read the first two verses: "O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary." And again in the eighth verse: "My soul followeth hard after Thee." David knew something of the power and glory of God. He had proved the Lord who had delivered him from the lion and the bear, so that, trusting in the name of Jehovah, he could even boldly run to meet the giant Goliath, of whom all else were afraid. Here, in this Psalm, he confidently calls Elohim, the triune God, his God; yet he says: "*Early will I SEEK Thee.*"

Is it not therefore plain that the believer is the one that is exhorted to seek God, and that he alone has any desire to do so?

Just as, where human affection is drawn out, earthly love is never happier than when in the company of the object of its delight, so when the enmity of the natural heart has been broken down, as we receive the knowledge of God's love and are able to reply, "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John iv. 19), is it our longing desire to dwell in His presence, fully realising that there alone is fulness of joy, even now, while upon earth.

It was that response of love that brought the woman of the city, that notorious sinner, in spite of the looks of the proud Pharisees, openly, before all the assembled guests, to break the precious box of perfume to anoint the Saviour's feet, while she washed them first with the yet more precious tears from her overflowing heart. Not, indeed, to get forgiveness were those tears; nay! she had been forgiven much and so she loved much, and thus she sought out the object of her love.

A further lesson we can learn from those men, outcasts, full of loathsome leprosy, standing afar off and crying for mercy. Jesus sends them to the priest; he who was to examine the lepers when cured. Going, in faith, the *ten* are cured; but only one returns to Jesus, and that despised Samaritan receives a

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deeper blessing. "But where are the nine?" They had received all they wanted; so, instead of the Giver drawing out their love, they are off to seek in other scenes their joy. Are there not to-day many like those nine lepers, "saved," one can really hope, and yet apparently no longing to "seek" and then dwell in the presence of the Lord?

Israel's history is a sad picture of a backsliding nation. Alas! alas! that that chosen nation should be such a fitting picture of the church.

As has been well pointed out by others, the fifteenth of Luke more exactly describes God's dealings with His backsliding children, than with those who have never known His grace.

The sheep, the silver, and the son, tell of that which is of value to their owner, and are the very names by which His people are called.

I dwell not on this to bring it out in fulness, but to call attention to the two sons. The one away in *deed* seeks his father and is restored; but of the one who openly has never broken a commandment, away in *heart*, we never hear of restoration.

Indeed, it is often easier for the one who has fallen into open sin to discover his true position, away from God, than for the one who continues zealous in outward service, while away in heart, to realise his backsliding position.

Such a one is apt, like MARTHA, to blame someone whom, it may be, the Lord commends, than to see that the much service, out of communion, is only cumbersome instead of helpful.

Self-confident PETER could strike with his sword without a tear of repentance flowing, for then he appeared to bystanders as a valiant defender of the Lord Jesus; but his subsequent denial, with an oath, is quickly followed by tears of heartfelt grief.

In conclusion, we find the Lord, in the sermon on the mount, after many directions to His *disciples* (Matthew v. 1-2), giving them a threefold command with corresponding promises:

ASK,	-	-	-	-	IT SHALL BE GIVEN;
SEEK,	-	-	-	-	YE SHALL FIND;
KNOCK,	-	-	-	-	AND IT SHALL BE OPENED.

It is with the centre promise we have now to do. "Every one that seeketh, findeth." We are persuaded that the earnest son who seeks yet more deeply to know what it is to walk in God's presence, will find out, to the joy of his soul, how much more our heavenly Father delights to bless His children than does the most loving earthly parent.

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### V.—BACKSLIDING.

“**T**HE backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways” (Prov. xiv. 14). Alas! how many have proved the force of these words in sad experience. This scripture (the only one in which the word “backslider” is used) is not only full of warning, but helps us to understand what backsliding is. It begins with a wrong state of heart, and is manifested by a self-willed walk. “Turned every one to his own way” (Isa. liii. 6). “A deceived heart hath turned him aside” (Isa. xlv. 20). It is always sad when we tread along the by-path of self-will instead of the King’s highway. “This shall ye have of Mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow” (Isa. l. 11). In this, as in other matters, “small beginnings make big endings.” Another has said, “Unconfessed sin deadens the conscience, and renders a close walk with God impossible. Many complain of coldness in prayer and a lack of enjoyment in spiritual things, the secret cause of which is unconfessed sin. Sin unjudged estranges the heart from the enjoyment of God’s presence.” “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth” (1 John i. 6). Such a state is dangerous in the extreme; for, unable to make God our hiding-place (Ps. xxxii. 7), we become the easy prey of Satan, and the dupe of his wiles.

The devil’s object is to entangle us the more in his meshes, so that God may be robbed of His glory, and our souls of blessing. To this end he uses different methods, and baits his snare according to his bird. Those who, like Paul, can say, “We are not ignorant of his devices,” will, with that same apostle, beware, lest Satan should get an advantage (2 Cor. ii. 11). Others, like Hymenæus and Alexander, having lost a good conscience, are deceived by Satan’s wiles, and take up with some evil doctrine, thus making shipwreck of the faith.

It seems difficult for some to see that the receiving of evil doctrine is as much an evidence of backsliding as the moral fall; and because of this, it is the more difficult to reach the conscience of those who thus fall. To build again the things I once destroyed makes me a transgressor (Gal. ii. 18). If God’s Spirit, by His Word, led me to destroy, then it must be the devil that leads me to build, for God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. xiv. 33). Such building is both the evidence and the fruit of backsliding. Some, like Peter, who follow afar off, deny their Lord, as they warm themselves at the world’s

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fire. Others, like Demas, depart from the place of testimony, having loved this present world. Terrible and bitter is the experience of such. "Feeding upon ashes" (Isa. xlv. 20). Knowing enough truth to make it impossible to enjoy the world, or, at least, without bitter remorse afterwards, but not having grace to forsake the evil and turn to the Lord. Memory enough of the plenty of the Father's house to make more bitter the present hunger. Remembrance of the happy time "when first my sins were washed away," to make the present gloom more dreary, and yet no power, nay, no inclination, to cease to do evil and learn to do well. Alas, poor backslider, the path thou hast chosen is a hard one. Verily, thou art miserable. Thou canst not enjoy the portion God has for thee, because of thy sin. Thou canst not enjoy the world and sin as thou once didst, because of that new nature which grace implanted within thee. What wilt thou do? Nay; it is more to the purpose to ask, What will thy Lord do with thee? Cast thee off as unprofitable? Nay; though thou dost deserve to be so treated, yet for His own great name and honour's sake He cannot do this. As the Good Shepherd He will yet be able to say, "Those Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost." Does one sheep go astray? Then the Shepherd seeks it *till* He finds it. As the Son of Man in the midst of the golden candlesticks, He cries, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Rev. iii. 19). The Shepherd has the rod as well as the staff (Ps. xxiii. 4). If the guiding of the eye is not heeded, then the bit and bridle must be used (Ps. xxxii. 9). "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. xi. 31, 32).

The judgment of the world will be the penalty of sin; whereas the judgment of the saint is for his restoration and blessing. The difference is obvious. In one case the punishment is in proportion to the sin; in the other the chastening is according to what is needed to lead to repentance. Thus a saint may fall most sadly, like Peter, and yet the very fall may be enough to open the eyes of the erring one, and lead at once to repentance, and so no chastisement may be needed. Another time, a much smaller failure, as we view it, may be the occasion of such self-will that much chastisement may be needed; yea, blow after blow, before the proud spirit gives in.

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All God's dealing with the believer is for his restoration. Does the assembly put one away? Then it should be not to get rid of a troublesome saint, but that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. v. 5).

Should this fall into the hands of one who feels that the word at the head of our paper describes his condition, then, dear fellow-believer, suffer a few words of exhortation. Read the Lord's words by His prophet to Israel, when in a backsliding state, and remember such are His words to you. The most tender, loving, gracious words of entreaty in the book are to backsliders. It is always, "Return."

Remember the words, "My son, *despise* not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor *faint* when thou art rebuked of Him." On the one hand, do not make light of the Lord's dealings with you, and yet, on the other, do not despair. These very scourgings, so hard to bear, are the messages of love and the evidences of your sonship. To live in sin undisturbed, and to love it, is the evidence of profession without possession. The scourging is for your profit, that you may be a partaker of His holiness.

In Jeremiah iii., three potent reasons are given why you should not longer stay afar off, but at once return. Verse 12, "Return, thou backsliding Israel; . . . for I am merciful, saith the Lord." Verse 14, "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you." Verse 22, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." Do you say, How shall I return? Hosea xiv. explains: "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord, and say, Take away all iniquity, . . . for in Thee the fatherless findeth mercy." That is: "I am so weak I cannot conquer sin; so sinful, I cannot soften my hard heart: so I turn to Thee, tell Thee all, cast myself on Thy mercy." If this be real and honest, then comes the gracious answer, without one "but" or "if": "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely." Healing first, so that we may enjoy the love. How blessed! Truly the heart shall cry out, "What have I to do with idols?" One has said, "I think, if there is a verdant spot in this wilderness world, it is where a poor, believing sinner, with a contrite, broken heart, sits at the feet of Jesus." The sinner confessing, the conscience cleansed, all sense of guilt removed, and the child of God rising from his knees rejoicing in the Lord his God.



## THE GATHERING NAME.

**I**T is the purpose of God,—to be fulfilled on a future day,—to “gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth” (Eph. i. 10). In the heavens above, the glory of the celestial will have its centre in Christ, and around the throne, the heavenly host will gather, ascribing dominion and honour to the Lamb who is in the midst. Down in the earth below, the glory of the terrestrial will also be of, and unto Him, as from David’s Son on David’s throne the law goes forth, and to Him the worship of the nations is brought; while around Him, near to Him, are the earthly chosen race: the nation who once in ignorance despised Him, now grouped around Him, and under His sheltering wing, according to the prophetic word,—“Unto Him shall the *gathering* of the people be” (Gen. xlix. 10). Then it shall be, that He who was “in the midst” on Golgotha in humiliation and shame, around whose cross and against whose Person both “Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were *gathered together*” (Acts iv. 27),—gathered together for the *one* purpose of disowning Him and mocking His claims. So in that coming day shall all be gathered together, unto and under Him, to “Crown Him Lord of all.” But the time of this universal owning of His claims is not yet. “We see not yet all things put under Him” (Heb. ii. 8). The kingdoms of this world are yet beneath the usurper’s sway. But from these kingdoms, by the preaching of the Gospel, God is “taking out a people for His name” (Acts xv. 14). This people He is giving as a possession to His Son, to be unto Him a “kingdom” (Col. i. 12; Rev. i. 6, R.V.), during the time of His rejection by the world. This present out-calling of men from the world is what in New Testament Scripture is named the “*ecclesia*,”—The Church. Of this church, Jesus Christ is Head and Lord. Unto Him and under Him His saints are called together, according as He said, “For where two or three are *gathered together* in (or into) MY NAME, there am I in the midst” (Matt. xviii. 20). The name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His name alone, is to be the centre of gathering for His saints. Thus the churches of early times were found gathered; they were gathered *in* His name, and *with* His presence and power (1 Cor. v. 4). They owned His authority; they sought no patronage, but that of God: they were gathered and builded together by Him. Now it is otherwise. Other names have been

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added to His; other wills have been allowed to rule. We have "The Church of England," "Church of Scotland," "Church of Ireland," supplanting "The Church of God." We have "Lutherans," "Wesleyans," "Calvinists," with their churches and their creeds, over against and alongside of "the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. i. 10). Some of His saints gather in one of these human names, and some in another. Some are governed by the words of Calvin, some by the will of Wesley, with the result that all are divided. In the midst of this Babel of sects and parties, churches and creeds, few of the saints know each other, and those who do, are so far sundered by the sectarian names and doctrines that they have espoused, that they know little of that fellowship which ought to be known by those who are one in Christ. In the midst of the wreckage, one unfailing resource remains. "God and the Word of His grace" (Acts xx. 32). Whoever returns to Him in heart, and allows His Word to guide, will find that "the Name of the Lord is a strong tower." Gathering unto Him, and in His name alone, they will prove the promise true: "There am I in the midst," and in His presence they will rejoice. May we, therefore, dear saints,—as one sang long ago,—

"Let names, and sects, and parties fall,  
And Jesus' *Name* be all, in all."

J. R.

**WALKING IN HIS WAYS.**

"Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in  
His ways" (Psalm cxxviii. 1).

**B**LESSEDNESS is only another word for happiness. But the one who fears the Lord is not always happy, though this verse may at first sight seem to declare otherwise. A second reading will show that a condition is attached. All who fear the Lord are happy, *when walking in His ways*; but the moment the consciousness is forced upon them that the way they are taking is not His way, self-reproach takes the place of happiness, which is banished till, by confession, the soul is restored.

This is not the worldly happiness in temporal things by which the "sons of this age" seek to satisfy themselves and forget God. It is the joy which springs from perfect satisfaction and rest in His presence, and which is, therefore, undisturbed by other things. Independent of prosperity,

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uninterrupted by adversity. It is neither noisy mirth nor frivolous gaiety ; it is peace.

This happiness is the portion of those who answer to this two-fold description—fearing the Lord and walking in His ways. The first form of this fear is terror. As Josiah trembled when he first heard the law of the Lord read (2 Chr. xxxiv. 19), because its non-fulfilment must bring condemnation, so does each awakened soul tremble at the first consciousness of responsibility to God. He is dreaded and shrunk from. His presence can be only condemnation, and it is therefore avoided as far as possible. The impossibility of avoiding it altogether only deepens the terror. But when the kindness of God our Saviour and His love toward man appears, and it is found that the Judge Himself has devised means that the guilty ones should be delivered from going down to the pit, then grateful love changes the fear into watchful care, not to wound that love which has been proved so great, and leads to walking softly before Him, because holy and reverend is His name. The previous terror never provoked such reverence as now results from seeing at how great cost His justice must be satisfied, His character vindicated. Love and reverence now constitute that fear in which the Lord would have His children walk.

“By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil” (Prov. xvi. 6). Terror of the Lord’s anger and punishment will sometimes deter from sin. The fact that each man shall be judged according to his works has led men to depart from evil. But this can never cause men to hate it. Love leads the mind and heart of the child into sympathy with that of the Father, and then “the fear of the Lord is to hate evil” (Prov. viii. 13). Evil is shunned from hatred of its nature as well as from fear of its consequences. “It is joy to the just to do judgment.” Joy most of all because it gives pleasure to the One who now has the first place in the heart. So the one who fears the Lord is led to walk in His ways. But the eye must be kept steadfastly upon Him to make it possible. His ways are not always learned from His people. Older Christians have not infrequently led astray the young convert who thought to be guided by them. It is only possible to keep right by constant intercourse with the Lord Himself. “Make Thy way plain before my face,” needs to be a frequent prayer. And not only so, but “Is this Thy way, Lord?” for each occasion. The conscience thus exercised becomes very sensitive. The Lord’s

*A Hymn for Worshipers.*

voice is readily heard, and He will not leave unanswered the question honestly asked. This comes into every moment of daily life—Would this be His way of acting? His way of speaking? It might be our way, the world's way, or even the way of fellow-Christians; but is it His? Study the record of His life on earth; for He left us an example that we should follow His steps. Study the whole Scriptures, that better knowledge of His character may help us to recognise His ways and walk in them.

M. M. A.

**A HYMN FOR WORSHIPPERS.**

LORD JESUS, in Thy name alone,  
Thy saints together meet,  
Adoringly with hearts as one,  
Would worship at Thy feet.

Drawn to Thyself by cords of love,  
Our captive hearts are Thine;  
And thankfully we eat the bread,  
And drink this cup of wine.

Bless'd symbols of Thy body bruised,  
And blood for us once shed;  
Now risen and exalted high,  
Thou art our glorious Head.

Divinely and securely Thine,  
Our life is hid in Thee;  
We fear no harm, we dread no foe,  
For Thou our shield wilt be.

And till the hour of Thy return,  
Responsive to Thy word;  
We own no other name than Thine,  
Our Head and only Lord.

PAIGNTON, DEVON.

S. B.

## Talks, Short and Simple, for Young Believers.

### VI.—WITNESSING.

“Ye shall be witnesses unto Me” (Acts i. 8).

**T**HESE were almost the last words uttered by our Lord on earth. He had led the little company out as far as Bethany, up the slope of Mount Olivet, for the last time. He was about to be parted from them. The cloud was ready to receive Him out of their sight. The angel host were waiting to welcome Him. Then, just then, looking upon His disciples for the last time, He gives them this new name, ordains them to this new office—“Witnesses.” Glorious title! splendid service! Witnesses unto Him. How they gloried in it. There seems to be an exultant ring in the oft-repeated confession, “We are His witnesses” (Acts v. 32, see also Acts ii. 32, iii. 15, x. 39, xiii. 31).

Paul can sum up his manner of life in no better way, when defending himself before Agrippa, than by saying, “Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, *witnessing* both to small and great” (Acts xxvi. 22).

Yes; this is the calling of every saint, to be a witness unto Him. “Witnessing” is our great business, from which we are never to retire.

Remember, Christ did not single out Peter, and say, “Because you are bold you shall be My witness.” Nor did He say to James and John, the sons of thunder, “You shall be My witnesses.” Nor to Matthew, “You gained a good experience of the world by sitting at the receipt of custom; I will choose you.” Nathanael, the Israelite, indeed, or Philip, to whom the Greeks came, we might have thought fitted to be witnesses more than all others. But Christ did not select them particularly. No; He said to all and each, women as well as men, “Ye are witnesses of these things” (Luke xxiv. 48).

There were great differences amongst them, truly, but all were alike in this: *Christ made them witnesses.*

The form of the witnessing would differ, and differ greatly; yet all were equally witnesses. Peter's loud and courageous utterance was needed; but the gentle tones of Mary, in her more private sphere, could not be dispensed with. There was need for all. As then, so now. The crying need of the time is men and women who shall be witnesses unto Him.

A witness is one who tells out that which he knows. Only those who possess can confess; all else is sham. Out of a full

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heart the mouth speaks. For this there must be the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, "I believed, therefore have I spoken" (2 Cor. iv. 13).

The man out of whom Christ cast the legion of demons was a good witness. He had wished to go with Christ, but he was sent back with the commission, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee. And he departed and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel" (Mark v. 20, 21).

It is safe to make men marvel at the grace of our Lord, but dangerous to call their attention to ourselves. We are to witness to Christ, not to self. It is blessed to witness for our Lord, and on the other hand it is dangerous to be silent.

An open mouth is not only the sign of good health, but a means of maintaining it. A closed mouth tells of distance from the Lord, and keeps the soul in bondage. Confession of Christ brings liberty. "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans x. 10). Satan ever seeks to keep our mouth shut, so that our testimony may be marred, and our souls kept in darkness. Particularly is this the case when a Christian moves into a fresh sphere, such as a new situation, another home, or, in some way, amidst new companions. Satan, as an angel of light, whispers, "I would not say too much; let them find it out by your life." They *should* find it by our lives, and part of a godly life is a bold yet gracious confession of the lips. At the hem of the garment of the high priest there were to be "a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate" (Ex. xxviii. 34). Testimony and fruit going together. The life and the lips together witnessing for our Lord Jesus; this is what should be.

How often Satan succeeds with his wiles, and manages to shut the Christian's mouth. When the shutters are up not much business will be done. Soon temptation comes; the simple, manly confession, "I am a Christian, and can't do this," is withheld, and thus the vantage ground is lost. Some other reason is given, and soon the temptation is yielded to. Satan now turns round with the whisper, "You can't now say you are a Christian, for everyone would call you a hypocrite."

Another says, "If I say I am converted, everybody will watch me to see if I live up to it." A good thing too. The ill odour of gas is its greatest safety; therefore don't quarrel with it. The knowledge that the world watches those who profess

### *Spiritual Addition.*

to be saved helps them to watch themselves. Christians, burn your boats! Be out and out for Christ. Have no back way to the world. Let every retreat be cut off.

Rejoice to be a witness! The Lord is the faithful and true Witness (Rev. iii. 11). He takes the title; shall we be ashamed to share it with Him?

Peter says, "We are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (Acts v. 32). Shall we be ashamed to share with the Holy Spirit in this glorious testimony? May the dumb spirit be cast out, and our prayer be, "O Lord, open Thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise" (Psalm li. 15). "A true witness delivereth souls" (Prov. xiv. 25).

## SPIRITUAL ADDITION.

A BIBLE-READING ON 2 PETER i. 5-8.

**F**AITH:—Begin with faith; for without faith it is impossible to please God. Moreover, it is faith that gives value to all that comes after. Like the leading figure in a row of ciphers, take away this and all the rest are worthless; but with a good leading figure at the head every cipher becomes important. Faith is the link that unites to Christ, and brings Divine life into the soul, imparting vitality and worth to all that follows. **COURAGE**:—Having obtained "precious faith," go on to add "virtue" (literally courage). This is a very important addition to begin with. The new-born soul needs courage to take a decided stand at once for Christ, and to show himself on the Lord's side; for it is always more difficult to do so after repeated delays. The woman that received healing through the touch of faith was not allowed to depart until she had "declared before all the people" why she had done so, and had confessed Christ as her healer. **KNOWLEDGE**:—Next to courage add "knowledge." We read of some that had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. The best mode of acquiring knowledge is to habitually study the Word of God; it is there we learn God's character, there He has revealed His will and made known His requirements. Many that have added to their faith courage, and have exhibited much zeal, have been sadly lacking in knowledge, and much dishonour to the Lord's name is often occasioned thereby: a little knowledge often saves a

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good deal of wasted energy. "If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct (Eccles. x. 10). SELF-CONTROL:—To knowledge add "temperance," or self-control. This is indispensable; not only in relation to eating and drinking, but the whole body must be brought under, and the entire person thoroughly subjected to the control of the "new man." The tongue and the temper, the lusts and the passions, the habits and pursuits of daily life, at home and abroad, in the church and in the world, all need bringing under the exercise of a rigid self-control. Apart from this, a man may possess many excellent qualities, yet is he only as a vessel at sea that has lost her rudder; the chart and the compass are of little use if the rudder be wanting (James iii.). PATIENCE:—"Patience" comes next in the sum of Christian graces. It is to those who patiently continue in "well-doing" that the reward will be given (Romans ii. 7). Also for the patient endurance of trial the "crown of life" is promised (Isa. i. 12). "Let patience have her perfect work." It is easy to write about patience, and to speak about it, and to extol it as a Christian virtue; but perhaps it is about the most difficult item we are to add to our "faith," and this is just the point at which many of God's children break down. Their circumstances are so peculiar, their path so intricate, their trials so painful, their sufferings so protracted, and a host of other things combine to make their lot intolerable; they fail to endure, the strain is too great, their patience is gone! The only cure is to "consider Him that endured, . . . lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." "Looking unto Jesus, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross" (Heb. xii. 2, 3). GODLINESS:—And to patience add "godliness." The exercise of godliness is altogether foreign to our nature; "There is none that seeketh after God," and men left to themselves become "haters of God" (Rom. ii. 30). The image in which man was created was soon lost. But having been created anew in Christ Jesus, we are to become imitators of God, and the "Divine nature," of which we have become partakers, requires exercise and development. "Godliness is profitable unto all things"; "Exercise thyself unto godliness" (1 Tim. iv. 7, 8). The more "godliness" we add to our faith the less we shall be conformed to the world, and the fiercer will be its enmity and opposition. For "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii. 12). BROTHERLY KINDNESS:—



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To godliness add "brotherly kindness." "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter i. 22). "Having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" (1 Peter iii. 8). Now is the time to show love to the brethren; when we get home to glory we cannot do any other. But now, oh what constant need for the exercise of this grace! And yet, alas! how little is seen. In our Father's family are children of various dispositions and temperaments, and it becomes us to show kindness and love to them all, not only to the amiable and lovely, but to the unattractive and self-willed; "brotherly kindness" is due to all. Members of the one family, partakers of the same life, quickened and indwelt by the same Spirit, redeemed at the same infinite cost, journeying to the same home, to dwell together for ever in the Father's house above. Lord, help us to add the grace of "brotherly kindness." LOVE:—And finally, brethren, add "charity," or love; for "love never faileth," it is the fountain from whence all other graces flow, it is the girdle that binds them all together (Col. iii. 12-14). It is by the constant glow of Divine love in our hearts, infusing holy fervour into all our words and actions, that this chain of virtues will be linked together, as an ornament of grace, to adorn the walk and life of a child of God in this corrupt and sinful generation. Love is the element in which Christians should habitually live and move; for "God is love: and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John iv. 16). "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter i. 10, 11).

J. H.

**FAITH AND LOVE.**

(1 Thess. i. 3; 2 Thess. i. 3.)

**F**AITH and love characterised the Thessalonian saints. We find them mentioned again and again in these two short epistles, in a way which may prove instructive to us. Let us begin by noticing something of what is here brought before us in regard to faith.

### *Faith and Love.*

I. We find, first of all, that their faith was God-ward (1 Thess. i. 8). Long ago, Jeremiah warned his hearers against faith in any other, and the Spirit of God still declares to us, "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm" (Jer. xvii. 5); the reason being that, in proportion as he does this, his heart will depart from the Lord. These Thessalonians had turned to Jehovah from the idols to which they had been accustomed to bow. They had learned and believed that He who had made the heavens and the earth, He was the God. Then they learned also, that this God had provided salvation for them through His Son Jesus, who delivered them from the wrath to come. This, Paul had not merely declared to them, but proved to them from the Scriptures (Acts xvii. 2), and that was why their faith was in God. Had they merely believed the gospel because Paul preached it, their faith would have been in Paul. But they accepted the message he bore, not as the word of man, but, as it was in truth, the word of God (1 Thess. ii. 13). Our faith is not to God-ward, unless that which we believe has been proved by the word of God. If we believe anything before straining it through the sieve of the Scriptures, our faith is in the brother who makes the statement, and we are as likely to be led into error as into the truth. We have no safeguard, unless we do as these same saints were exhorted to do, "Prove all things" (1 Thess. v. 21).

II. Their faith was not suffered to remain long untested. They did not prove stony-ground hearers (Mark iv. 17). Persecution soon arose, and the young plant was so severely shaken that it could not have endured unless the root had been good. But they were not moved by these things, and Paul was able to glory in their faith in persecution (2 Thess. i. 4). They were not moved, because they had been taught to expect affliction in a world that knew not God. They learned to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ who suffered for them. They had learned, also, that these same trials were working for them a great recompense of reward. Their faith in God—their belief of what God had said—led them to anticipate with confidence the time when all this would be exchanged for rest and peace, glory and joy. Their faith, therefore, led them to endure, and not to resist. They knew the kingdom of their Master was not of this world now, else would His servants fight. The weapons with which their defence was made could be only spiritual. The shield of faith and sword of the Spirit would avail better than earthly armour.

### *Faith and Love.*

They were down-trodden ; but their faith looked forward to the time when they would reign with Christ. They lost goods ; but faith reminded them of better substance which would endure, already theirs in the heavens. Their trust was in the living God, and why should it fail till He did ?

III. Their faith, thus exercised, grew exceedingly (2 Thess. i. 3). The more trust they reposed in their God, the more trustworthy they found Him. The greater the trial, the more faith it called into exercise. Faith is very precious to God ; more precious than tried gold. It gratifies His heart that His children can trust Him. It leads Him to make known more and more of the goodness He has laid up for them that put their trust in Him (Ps. xxxi. 19). As He reveals Himself more fully, the soul goes on to know Him better, and therefore to trust Him more. "They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee" (Ps. ix. 10). Faith in God is for salvation first of all ; but the soul learns, as it knows Him better, to trust Him for all things in life, in every circumstance as it arises, even in things dark and not to be understood. Faith must grow, if it is exercised, but it always increases in proportion to the knowledge of God. Learn to know Himself, and His words must be relied upon.

IV. Faith proves a breastplate to shield the heart against temptation (1 Thess. v. 8). The worldling may call the Christian, of all men, most pitiable, because shut out from so many enjoyments, riches, and honours. But faith says these things are only postponed, not lost. As Christ refused the kingdom, when offered by Satan, yet will one day receive it from His Father's hand, so the Christian knows that pleasures, riches, and honour form part of the treasure reserved for him in the heavens. Thus he is preserved from grasping the forbidden pleasures of the world, or resorting to unholy means for increasing his goods and position, by the knowledge of that which will be his. Belief also in the reality of the judgment-seat of Christ is a protection from many things which might otherwise prove too strong. They might be hidden now ; but how will they look when revealed then ? The world may smile approval ; but what will the Master say in that day ? And faith sees Him while He is invisible. Will He smile approval and lift up the light of His countenance upon the one who is so acting ? "In the light of the King's countenance is life" (Prov. xvi. 15). There is nothing for which it is worth while to forfeit that. Sons of the day cannot expect their deeds to

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be hidden, for "the night shineth as the day" to Him with whom they have to do.

V. All work for God must be work of faith (2 Thess. i. 11). The self-denial involved seldom meets with reward now; but faith awaits a day when the righteous Judge will remember it. Weary, very weary, may the worker be, but he forgets it in looking forward to the rest which remaineth. The word spoken is often as seed cast into the ground to die; but the Master has said, "No word from God shall be void of power" (Luke i. 37, R.V.). In confidence that the Lord is working with them, a feeble band will go forth amid derision and reproach, knowing that "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John iv. 4). It is one thing to hope a certain state of things to be true; quite another to press it upon others with positive assertion of its truth and importance. Only faith can say with Paul, "I know Him whom I have believed," and, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." There is no provision here for disappointment. Neither shall they be ashamed that wait for Him. The Lord will fulfil every work of faith with power.

VI. When Paul heard of the faith of these young converts, he was comforted amid his trials (1 Thess. iii. 7). It proved that his labour in carrying the message of God to them and others was not in vain, and so encouraged his faith. "Your word was blessed to my conversion, sir," has often renewed the strength of one ready to cry out in despair, "Who hath believed our report?" The Lord has made His saints mutually dependent, and the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee. And those members which seem to be more feeble are necessary. It was both joy and strength to Paul to see and know of his children walking in the truth, growing in faith.

VII. Paul was tenderly anxious over these young converts, longing to help them (1 Thess. iii. 10). They were growing strong, but he sent to establish them, lest some should be fainting under the burden. He knew it was necessary for faith to have something to feed upon, if it was to grow, so made known to them more of God, His ways and works. The Lord has given ample food for faith in His Word, and expects His children to feed upon it that they may be well provided against any circumstance of difficulty or danger which may arise, and also that they may be prepared to strengthen and comfort one another. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. xi. 6).

## A GREEN OLD AGE.


**W**E sometimes hear it said, concerning certain men, that they have "a green old age." This means that, in their advancing years, they retain the vigour and freshness of their early days. They are hale and hearty, and able to share with zeal and enthusiasm pursuits that others of corresponding age have ceased to find enjoyment in.

The words apply with peculiar force to some among the people of God. We say to *some*, for they would not be applicable to all. In the spiritual life, as in the natural, there is such a thing as a *premature* old age, bringing with it a decrepitude and languor which are inexpressibly sad to look upon. The backslider knows full well what this means. The world, to which he turned for satisfaction, has failed to satisfy. It has proved a broken cistern; and not only so, but it has robbed him of his joy in the Lord and that brightness and buoyancy of spirit which characterised his early Christian days. Alas, how many have proved in the bitter experience of their souls that the world's fair promises give no lasting happiness to the saint any more than to the sinner. Like Samson of old, they who "go down" to the "vineyards" of the world, come back shorn of their spiritual power, and become the "sport" of those who knew them in their better days. Like Lot, who exchanged the pilgrim path and the altar for well-watered plains and a home in Sodom, the believer who migrates toward the present world for gain, and leaves the path of obedience and the fellowship of those who continue therein to obtain his prize, will find, in the end, as did that man whose "righteous soul was vexed" from day to day, that he has paid too high a price for it, and that, after all, it has only eluded his grasp, and left him to end his earthly days in a lonely cave in dark dishonour. O that the solemn voice that comes to us down through the ages, from these and kindred cases which God has recorded on the eternal page for our admonition, may fall upon our hearts, whose lot is cast amid the seductions of this evil time—a time that may be truly said to be characterised by decrepitude and grey hairs among the people of God. How few survive to see a green old age! How few to stand in their lot, like Caleb of old, and tell of God's faithfulness "these forty and five years," and of being as strong and as able "for war" as in the day that they first went forth (Josh. xiv. 10). Yet, blessed be God, there are such to be found, although they may be few and far between. Men who have "wholly followed the Lord" all along the line, turning neither to the right hand nor

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the left ; men who would not be turned aside by the sight of "giants," nor frightened by threats of being "stoned" by an unbelieving people ; men who have endured the desert's toil, and borne the heat and burden of a long day of service for their Lord, as did Moses, the man of God, and who yet are found, as they near its close, to the praise of God's abounding grace, with the undimmed eye and the dew of youth retained (Deut. xxxiv. 7). But the secret of all this is to be found in the fact that they went on with God, they wholly followed the Lord. They were men of purposed heart and of one desire. They had the same temptations, the same enticements, the same opposition as other men ; but the difference lay in this, that they set *God* before them. They made it their chief concern to please Him. This was the secret of their steady steps, their unwavering courage, their unflinching zeal. They had one object in life : that was to be *for* God ; and this being so, God was for them, and sustained them right on to the end. Thus they went on through the years renewing their youth like the eagle's, and bringing forth fruit even unto old age (Ps. xcii. 14). Dear young believers, does the sight of these thrice happy saints raise within your heart the longing desire to close *your* earthly course in triumph and joy ? It may be yours, as well as theirs, to retain the brightness and joy of early days ; yea, more, to go "from strength to strength" in spite of all earth's blasts of sorrow, and, amid conflicts with open and secret foes, to reach the end of the pilgrim pathway, "always rejoicing" and retaining "the dew of youth."

**UNITY BY THE WAY OF THE BIBLE.**

T the last annual meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Mr. Spurgeon, who was one of the speakers, made use of the following notable words : "I want to give voice this morning to certain earnest hopes that are in my soul that make me love the Bible Society, and one is that I have a lurking hope somewhere about me. I hardly know whether I can speak it very loudly, but I will whisper it. I sometimes hope that it is by the way of the Bible that all believers in Christ will come together. . . . There is nobody here that loves the divisions of Christendom. We would all end them if we could. How to do it I cannot tell. Unity I love ; but attempts at unity always create fresh divisions. All the schemes I have ever seen have been but

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partly successful. When we shall all come to the Word of God, and each man shall say, 'There, I will retract everything I have said, if it is not in accordance with that Book; I will come down to the strict Word of Christ, and walk in the spirit of it to the utmost of my ability'; then shall we all come together."

These are surely very suggestive words, and it may not be unprofitable to consider some of the points to which they call attention. Mr. Spurgeon says he sometimes hopes that it is by the way of the Bible that all believers in Christ will come together. And he further seems to see that in order to such a coming together, by the way of the Bible, every man will need to bring all his words and ways to the test of Scripture, and to give up everything that is not in accordance with it. Most assuredly there can be no godly unity upon any other principle. But if this is what each one needs to do to bring about unity, then everyone is responsible to do it; not merely with the view to attaining to unity, but because this is the will of God for him. And this brings us to a very important principle, though one that is sadly overlooked. A simple illustration may help to show what the principle is. A father, going away from home for the day, gives two instructions to his six children. One is that they are all to play together, and the other that they are not to go outside the grounds attached to the house. He lays especial stress on the first, reminding them how grieved he is when they quarrel and disagree, and entreating them to behave kindly to one another, as becomes brothers and sisters. He does not say much as to the second commandment, but simply tells them they are not to go beyond the grounds. After the father has been absent for a time, one of the children takes it into his head to go for a walk outside. The others remonstrate, but he will not listen. Presently he returns, with glowing accounts of the enjoyment he has been having, and succeeds in persuading two of the others to go with him. A little later two more join the three disobedient ones, and only one is left behind. Great effort is made by the five to induce this one to go with them. "Don't you remember," they urge, "how much father said about our all keeping together?" "Yes," he replies, "I know that; but he told us not to leave the grounds. I wish we were all together, for I am very sorry to be left alone; but we must be where father told us to be, if we are really to obey him." "Oh, but you forget," they answer, "how much he

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said about being together, and he only just once spoke of not going out of the grounds. We don't see that there can be much harm in going out so long as we all keep together, for that was certainly the thing that father cared most about." Now, will anyone be deceived by this kind of argument? If the question be asked, Who was the most obedient? the answer is plain. The one who remained at home was the only obedient one, and he was obedient to both commandments, though he was by himself. Obedient to both commandments, we say, for he was where his father told them to be, and was ready there to join-happily and lovingly with the other five.

The principle, then, that we want to call attention to is, that God claims our individual obedience to His commandments, whether others obey or not; and that when any commandment is addressed to saints collectively for their united obedience, those who are ready to carry it out as God has commanded are truly obedient, though the refusal of others to unite with them may make it impossible actually to do the thing required. In Hosea's day it was as much the will of God that all the twelve tribes of Israel should go up to Jerusalem to worship, as it had been in the times of David and Solomon; but the ten tribes that had revolted under Jeroboam preferred to go to Dan and Bethel, and refused to join with Judah and Benjamin. Yet this in no way altered what God required of those who clave to His word. God had said that all were to be together, it is true, but they were to be together in the place that God had chosen to put His Name there; and to come together in any place of their own choosing was utter disobedience, while those who came to the place appointed by God, and were ready there to worship God in company with all who were similarly obedient, were fulfilling the commandment of God, whether the others came or whether they stayed away. Therefore it is that we find the prophet saying, "Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints" (Hos. xi. 12).

But let us carry our little parable a step further. Suppose the sixth child to have followed the other five in their disobedience; and then that they have not even kept together, but have wandered off in pairs according to their various fancies—two to gather nuts in the wood, two to row on the river, and two to climb to the top of a steep hill. For a time they are too much absorbed with their newly-found pleasures



*Unity by the Way of the Bible.*

to think about the wrong they were doing. But presently an uneasy feeling comes into their minds that all is not as it should be. The thing that chiefly presents itself to them is, that they are all separated instead of being together, and various proposals are made, each couple trying to persuade the others to come with them in what they are doing; and when that fails, an endeavour being made to find some new pursuit in which all can agree to join. At last it occurs to one of them that the only thing likely to bring them and keep them together is a simple obedience to what their father had commanded them. This is the idea that has dimly formed itself in many a heart besides that of Mr. Spurgeon—unity by the way of the Bible. The child who sees this tries to persuade the others that the one thing for them all to do is to go back to their father's garden, and then the difficulty about all being together will be solved in the only possible way. They are not prepared for this, however, and now what is the one to do who sees the right way? Shall he stop where he is, or go back to the nut-wood with his brother, till all the rest shall be ready to say, "We must bring all we are doing to our father's word, and give up whatever is contrary to that"? Or shall he retrace his erring steps, and at once return home? Who can doubt that the latter is the only right course? But the others would stop him by arguing that he will only make another division. "There are three parties of us already," they say, "and now you are going to make a fourth, all by yourself; and you are the one that has been talking to us about unity." "That they all may be one," was the prayer of the Lord Jesus, and it is the will of God; for every prayer of the Son was in perfect harmony with the Father's will. But before He prayed thus, He had said, "I have given them Thy Word. . . . Thy Word is truth. . . . For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John xvii. 14, 17, 19). The unity must be according to the truth.

If we are making the unity our first object, we may devise many schemes by way of attaining to it, and even with some appearance of success; but we are not walking in truth, and nothing that we accomplish belongs to the prayer of the Lord Jesus. On the other hand, those who are really being separated by the truth, though that separation be from the ways of their brethren that are not walking according to the Word, as well as from the world itself, are in harmony with the

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whole mind of God, as expressed in the prayer of John xvii. Hence the same apostle, to whom it was given to record that prayer, wrote many years after to the elect lady: "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk after His commandments" (2 John 4-6).

**FAITH AND LOVE.**

## II.

**T**HESSE Thessalonians had been led away after dumb idols, which could do no good, neither was it in them to do evil; and it must have been a wonderful revelation to those who had bowed down to them when they heard of a living and true God who actually loved them. It is indeed wonderful to every child of man who realises his own weakness and wickedness. Nothing in him to beget love, yet even while he was dead in trespasses and sins, God loved him with a love great enough to give His own Son to deliver him from the wrath to come. And having in that costly way redeemed sinners to be His own, He loves them unto the end. The Father Himself brought Paul to the persuasion that nothing could separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Christ and His follower were so intimately united, that as long as one was loved the other must be also. It is not due to any failure of love that trials and difficulties are permitted, but to the wisdom which unites with love in ruling the destiny of each child of God. Human love is too often selfish, and does that which will gratify itself rather than that which will benefit its object. Difficulties sometimes work the highest good, develop the best character; then the Lord permits difficulties. Thus it had been with the Thessalonians. Even when they first received the Word, it was in much affliction; and Paul feared that the tempter might have taken advantage of their persecution to tempt them to doubt the love of God in permitting it. Was it really true that God was love, when He did not hinder such grievous affliction from coming to those who were risking everything for Him? Could He be Almighty, and yet not interfere on their behalf? Paul sent to learn how they were standing the test, and was strengthened, encouraged, and

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comforted in his own distresses by the good tidings of their faith and love (1 Thess. iii. 6). Then in writing to them he hastens to assure them that they were still beloved of God (1 Thess. i. 4). But the Thessalonians seem to have learned by happy, child-like experience what he had to teach the Hebrews by argument and figure, that whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and so they had not relinquished their trust in His love, upon which their steadfastness depended. They were beloved of God sufficiently for Him to desire their eternal perfection, even though it must be attained at the cost of pain to themselves; so He permitted hard lessons to be learned as well as sweets to be enjoyed by His children. But because He loved them, He was also watching; and the wrath of man could not go a hair's-breadth beyond what would work good to His children and praise to Himself.

And because He loved them, He comforted them in their trouble (2 Thess. ii. 16); so that the tribulation was worth having for the joy in the Holy Spirit that came with it. But they had not sounded the depths of that love, and the apostle prayed that they might be directed into it (2 Thess. iii. 5). The little they knew of it was as nothing to that which remained for them. Many things present themselves to draw aside the heart from a straight course in the love of God. So the apostle Jude exhorts: "Keep yourselves in the love of God." Not that anything, either life or death, can separate us from it; but it is possible to be drawn aside and occupied with other things, so that it ceases to be a comforting, constraining, or restraining power. These Thessalonians aimed at so walking as to please God, both because of His love to them and of theirs to Him. The latter is but the reflection of the former; consequently, our love increases in proportion to our apprehension of God's love. Both go to form, with faith, the breastplate of 1 Thess. v. 8. That He has loved us, ennobles us, and lifts us above the degradations of the world; while our love holds us back from that which would be a way of grief to Him whom we love.

Being directed into the love of God, and having His love shed abroad in their hearts, in reflection they were taught of God to love one another (1 Thess. iv. 9). "Whosoever loveth Him that begat loveth Him also that is begotten of Him" (1 Jno. v. 1). Not because they were lovable, but because they were children of God. To love them for natural beauties would be according to the flesh. To love them for spiritual

### *Faith and Love.*

graces is according to the Spirit. The double love of the children of God for one another is an imitation of His own. He loves each of His children because they all belong to Him; but in a special way He loves those who reflect His image. The spiritual child of God loves all his brethren for the Father's sake, but, in a more special sense, loves those who exhibit most of the Father's likeness. So as they increased in grace, in faith, in the love of God, the love of each one of them all toward one another abounded (2 Thess. i. 3). Perhaps all were not very lovable, but as they learned more of their own perverseness and His exceeding patience with them, it became easier to bear with one another and to show the love of God to them. Some they were exhorted to esteem exceeding highly in love for their work's sake. Devotedness to God must always draw out the love of all who love Him.

Their love was also to go out toward all men (1 Thess. iii. 12), even toward those who were persecuting them. They must look upon them with pity, and not with anger, remembering how long the Lord had borne with their own sinful ways when they were themselves in the same blindness, and who it was made them to differ. It may be difficult to do this when smarting under persecution, whether it comes in the form of that time or of the present; but fellowship with the heart of God can enable us so to act, for God so loved the *world* that He gave His only begotten Son.

Labour resulted from this threefold love (1 Thess. i. 3). Labour for God, embracing labour for His saints and for the world. For His saints, in bearing one another's burdens, instructing the ignorant, comforting those that sorrowed, supporting the weak, and continuing in prayer for all. For the world, in proclaiming the glad tidings; and by all kindness, self-denial, and godliness, commending to them the grace and God, and seeking to bring them to the God of all grace.

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD.—Oh, to be led, drawn, and sent by Him continually! and made to lie down too! None but Christ Himself can so fill our souls with the sweetness of His green pastures, as to make us lie down therein; yet how can there be growth unless we *chew the cud* there? The world is rapidly hastening on its course—drawing near its terrible end: but we are sheep, and our heavenly blessing is to be led and fed by the Lamb. What fulness there is in Jesus! He is the LAMB of God and the SON of God; yea, *all* fulness dwells in Him. S.

## SINGING OF HOME.

SING in the wilderness,  
Wandering alone ;  
Sing in the desert place,  
Sing, sing of Home.  
Whether on mountain side  
Or trackless desert wide,  
Still sing, whate'er betide,  
Sing of thy Home.

Sing in the vale of tears,  
Still sing of Home ;  
Sing through the length'ning years,  
Sing, sing of Home.  
Then on the heavenly shore,  
Wilderness wanderings o'er,  
Sing, sing for evermore,  
Safely at Home.

J. P.

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## A PRAYER.

LORD, having tasted of Thy love,  
And being one with Thee,  
Linked with my risen Head above  
Through all eternity ;  
Teach me to live a life apart  
From worldly joy or woe,  
Be thou, O Christ, King of my heart ;  
None other may I know.

Oh, Saviour Christ, the power is Thine—  
This power on me bestow,  
To imitate the life Divine  
Which Thou didst live below.  
Teach me to live my daily life  
In fellowship with Thee,  
That others, in the world's fierce strife,  
Thy life in me may see.

J. P.

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## VII.—THE HOPE.

“That blessed hope” (Titus ii. 13).

**THE HOPE GIVEN.**—Judas had gone out, and it was night. He went out into the deep and ever-deepening darkness. It was night inside as well as out, for Jesus was telling His loved ones that He was about to leave them, and they were sorrowing. How could it be otherwise? Then He, who is the Light, sends through the darkness this golden promise, bright as a star-gleam in the night, “I will come again, and receive you unto Myself” (John xiv. 3).

**THE PROMISE REPEATED.**—After His resurrection, for the last time He led His faithful ones out as far as Bethany. He lifted up His gracious hands and blessed them; and, while in the very act, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. With longing eyes they gazed up into the heavens, but they saw Him no more. Instead, two men in heavenly garb appeared, and said: “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? *This same* Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner.” Luke, in his gospel, adds: “They returned to Jerusalem with great joy.” (Compare Luke xxiv. 50-52 and Acts i. 9-12.)

Jesus had said, “I will come again.” The angels declare, “This same Jesus shall come.” So we learn three things: 1. The *certainty* of His return—“I *will* come again.” 2. The *manner*—personal—“I *will* come.” “This *same* Jesus”; as He was taken, so will He return. 3. The *object*—“To receive you (believers) to Myself.”

**A MISTAKE THE DISCIPLES MADE.**—The Lord told Peter by what death he (Peter) should glorify God. Peter seeing John near, wanted to know what should befall him. The Master never sought to gratify mere curiosity, and so replied: “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?” (John xxi. 18-25). Whereupon this saying went abroad amongst the brethren, that John would not die. This very misunderstanding proves two things. 1st. They saw the difference between the Lord’s coming and death. They said John would not die. 2nd. They believed Christ’s return might be, and indeed would be, in John’s lifetime. The only known event which must take place before He could return was Peter’s death, and that a death by violence. Doubtless Christ had a meaning in the remarkable words about John; and we suggest they were particularly suitable in view of the typical character in which

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John stood, as representing those who are alive and caught up when the Lord comes, as he was in figure in Rev. iv., at the sound of the trumpet and the voice.

ATTITUDE OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS.—The Epistle to the Thessalonians was written shortly after Paul's first visit to them, as recorded in Acts xvii. Yet in the first chapter, Paul can say it is well known of them that they turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and "*to wait for His Son from heaven.*" It seemed as if the first instinct of their renewed nature was to look up and wait for the One who had delivered them. Paul says to the Corinthians (1 Cor. i. 7), "Ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Hebrew Christians had suffered much for the truth's sake, sustained by the glorious hope; but, as time rolled on, they were in danger of letting go the confidence and rejoicing of the hope, so the Holy Spirit reminds them of the promise, "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Compare Heb. iii. 1-6 and Heb. x. 32-39).

THE MYSTERY OF THE HOPE.—"We shall not all sleep." "The sky, not the grave, is our goal." The trumpet shall sound. The voice of the archangel shall be heard. The sleeping saints shall be raised, glorified; the living saints changed and transformed, all in a moment.

"Oh, joy! oh, delight! should we go without dying,  
No sickness, no sadness, no dread and no crying;  
Caught up through the clouds with our Lord into glory,  
When Jesus receives His own."

THE COMFORT OF THE HOPE.—"The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be *with the Lord*. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. iv. 16-18).

EXHORTATIONS CONCERNING THE HOPE.—"*Looking* for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus ii. 13). "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the *patient waiting for Christ*" (2 Thess. iii. 5). "For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven, from whence also we *look for the Saviour*" (Phil. iii. 20). "To them that *look for Him* shall He appear" (Heb. ix. 28). "And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming" (1 John ii. 28).

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**SANCTIFYING POWER OF THE HOPE.**—"Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John iii. 2, 3).

**THE REWARD OF THE HOPE.**—Paul writes to Timothy—2nd Epistle, chapter iv., verse 8—"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." Shall we obtain this crown? The question is not, Do we know about the Lord's return? but, Do we love it? Do we long to see Him? If He came this day, should we be surprised? Would we rather He put off His return for a little while? In the early morning do we whisper, "He may be here to-day"? As the evening shadows lengthen, do we say, "It may be at midnight"? Is it true, as we sometimes sing,

"I can almost hear His footfall  
On the threshold of the door,  
And my heart, my heart is longing  
To be with Him evermore"?

**THE LAST PROMISE.**—In Rev. xxii. we get the last word of the risen Christ to His loved Church. Nearly 1900 years of silence have intervened, but the words are as sweet and fresh as ever. It is the thrice-repeated promise: "Behold, I come quickly." The first time He speaks to our obedience, adding, "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (ver. 7). The second, to our service: "Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every man according as his work shall be" (ver. 12). The third and last time He speaks to our hearts, our affections: "Surely I come quickly" (ver. 20).

**THEN THE CHURCH'S REPLY.**—May it ever be ours in truth—"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

**CHRIST ALONE.**—There is none other thing, or person, in heaven or in earth, that can fill and satisfy the soul of that man whom the Holy Ghost has emptied of self, than the Lord Jesus Christ HIMSELF. Religion won't do it. Association with Christians won't do it. The Bible won't do it. Obedience to precepts won't do it. Prayer, faith, repentance, and the most holy life, all say, "it is not in me," and with one voice bid us "go to Joseph," our one Lord Jesus Christ HIMSELF. Reader! What think you of Christ?



## OVERDRIVING THE FLOCK.

**W**E have the expression of the heart of a true shepherd in Jacob's memorable words to Esau, as they journeyed along in "the way of the wilderness." "I will lead on softly," said Jacob, "according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure" (Gen. xxxiii. 14). Esau had little thought for the young and tender ones of the flock: he would hurry on the weak and the strong at equal pace. But the true shepherd, whose they are, and at the cost of whose days and nights of toilsome service they have been won, views the flock with a different eye. He knows all about them, and what they are each able to endure. Their varied needs and their different degrees of strength have all been the subjects of his thoughts. When Esau proposes to "go before" as the leader of the way, Jacob claims the liberty to lead on his flock "softly," as he thinks they will be able to endure the toilsome desert journey. How sweetly does the heart of the true shepherd reveal itself in these tender and sympathetic words! There is no need for asking who the true shepherd of the flock is in a scene like this. His words and his deeds bewray him, as they did the true mother of the disputed child brought before Solomon in later days.

The Esaus can see no need for tarrying for the weaker ones. They do not see why the progress of the flock should be retarded because of them. Better to sacrifice a few than hinder all. But these are not the thoughts of the true shepherd among God's sheep and lambs. Nor are they the thoughts of Jesus, the pattern Shepherd. Concerning Him it is written, "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall *gently lead* (the word is the same as Jacob's word, "softly") those that give suck" (Isa. xl. 11, R.V.).

To lead on the flock softly or gently, then, is the perfection of a shepherd's work. To consider the weak and the feeble, and not only the robust and strong, is the Good Shepherd's way with His people, and will be found to characterise all who serve Him in shepherding and teaching His saints. They will lead on softly, and not overdrive the flock. There are few things that a true shepherd fears more than overdriving. As Jacob said, "If men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die." Yet, alas, how often this has been unheeded, and the flock been overdriven. Under the plea of zeal for the truth, God's people are often hurried over rough places, and asked to take action in matters that they very imperfectly

*Overdriving the Flock.*

understand. They are pressed forward in paths beyond the measure of their spiritual intelligence, and perchance of their faith and spiritual strength. This must always have evil results. We think there is a peculiar danger of this kind abroad among the saints at the present time. Many new, and it may be needed views of truth, have of late years been brought forth among the people of God, chiefly relating to the fellowship of saints, the order and government of the church, and kindred subjects. That they have their divinely-appointed place and measure of importance we heartily and cheerfully admit, and this we would ever seek to give them. Yea, more; the very fact that they have been so long, and by many still are, neglected truths, may well cause those who have been more fully entrusted as stewards of God's things toward His people, and as guardians of the faith once for all delivered to the saints, to see to it that these things are not allowed to be frittered away by those who esteem them lightly, but that they are expounded fully and clearly from the Word for the instruction and edification of the saints, line upon line, as they are able to receive them. Only thus may we hope for any measure of that oneness of mind and unity of action so frequently enjoined in the Scriptures (1 Cor. i. 19; Phil. ii. 2), and so necessary to the edifying and blessing of the saints. (See Psalm cxxxiii.) But, alongside of this, there is, we think, a desire on the part of some to hurry on the saints in these things with greater speed than some are able to endure, with the result that the weak and feeble are left behind, being unable to keep pace with the strong. The consequence of this overdriving is, that the flock is divided. Those who are able, go on; those who cannot, are left behind. But is this the way of the Lord? We do not believe it is. His own example as Shepherd and Leader is not so. He deals specially with the weak, and He has caused the words to be written for the obedience of those who now guide His flock through the wilderness: "Encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all" (1 Thess. v. 14, R.V.) Surely it would be infinitely better for those who see, or think they see, the truth on certain things, to patiently wait on those who receive new things more slowly, the meanwhile graciously and faithfully instructing them, and praying, as did the apostle, that the "eyes of the heart may be enlightened" (Eph. i. 18, R.V.), than, after they have initiated a few of the strong (or, it may be, the rash and heady, who receive with little care, and

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let go with less regret), to press them on in a course in which the others are unable to follow, thereby causing rupture and division among those who aforesaid were dwelling together in unity, and who might have been so preserved, but for the carnal zeal of such as, like Esau of old, would "overdrive the flock."

## FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.

### INTRODUCTION.

**W**HEN God was instructing Moses as to the earthly tabernacle that was to be set up in the wilderness, He showed him first of all a heavenly pattern. Again and again the reminder was given as to boards, and pillars, and curtains, and vessels, "Look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount" (Exodus xxv. 40, xxvi. 30, xxvii. 8, &c.). All this was strictly carried out, for "the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did they" (Exodus xxxix. 32). The tabernacle, therefore, when it was set up, was an exact copy of the heavenly original; and those who had never been taken up into the mount to see the Divine pattern might learn its character from the copy upon earth.

Speaking of the tabernacle and its vessels, in Hebrews ix. 23, the apostle calls them the "copies of things in the heavens." The Authorised Version reads "patterns" instead of "copies," and quite destroys the meaning; but the Revised Version gives the correct translation.

Now it is not only in regard to the tabernacle that God has acted in this way. Many examples of the same kind of thing can be found; but, perhaps, in nothing more than in the different relationships of the members of every household to one another has this principle been carried out. The relationships of husbands and wives, of parents and children, of masters and servants, are all founded upon a Divine model, and in our fulfilment of these relationships we need constantly to be reminded, as Moses was, to do everything according to the heavenly pattern. Thus it is that we read, "Husbands, love your wives, *even as Christ also loved the Church*" (Eph. v. 25); and "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; *knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven*" (Col. iv. 1).

If the copy is a faithful representation of the pattern, then it

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helps to a knowledge and understanding of what the pattern is. But this is not all. For just as our heart and conscience are exercised about imitating the pattern in our own relationships here, so shall we be made to experience the joy and the sweetness of the corresponding heavenly relationship.

In the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, we get fuller details as to the mutual responsibilities of the members of each family and household than in any other portion of Scripture; and we find everything put upon the ground of what we are to God in Christ. There is much that is alike in these two epistles, but there is a distinct line taken in each. Ephesians shows us as being all members of one mystical body, of which Christ is the head. Colossians rather presents each believer as being individually complete in Christ. But both alike lead us up to one point—that in everything we are to give God thanks by Jesus Christ. Thus in Eph. v. 20, we read: "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." And in Col. iii. 17: "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." Now it is just at this point that the instructions about our family conduct come in. This is the foundation of the whole matter. Each one of us is complete in Him in whom all the fulness of God dwells bodily, and we are all joined in one body, of which He is Head. This must control all our behaviour one to another; and in order that we may be continually reminded of this, God has ordained that every family shall be a copy taken from the pattern of the heavenly relationships.

One special feature of these family bonds is, that in each of them there must needs be the recognition of the Divine principle of government. There can be no government unless there are those who rule and those who submit. In the heavenly pattern, love is the source of both rule and submission alike, and unless the same be true of the earthly copy, both will surely break down. Rule has heavier responsibilities than obedience, and therefore involves greater self-denial. But self-denial is only another form of submission, and hence all the members of the household are exhorted together to submit themselves *one to another* in the fear of God (Eph. v. 21). This seems to be a matter that is commonly overlooked both in the family and in the assembly. The fitness for rule arises out of the power to bear and suffer. Those who have toiled

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as Jacob did, consumed by the drought by day and the frost by night, while sleep departed from his eyes, have manifested their title to guide the flock they have cared for at such cost.

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VIII.—REWARDS.

“A full reward” (2 John 8).

**A**LMOST the last message of the blessed Master to His followers runs like this:—“Behold, I come quickly; and *My reward* is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Rev. xxii. 12). May it be ours, then, not only that our eyes may gaze upon Him with delight, but that our hands may receive from Him a reward for service done here. The joy of receiving will only be exceeded by the joy that gives. The knowledge of His joy in giving again adds to the hallowed joy of receiving.

A gift is one thing—a reward is another. Eternal life is a gift, and therefore of the free grace of God. Without merit and without claim, the sinner receives that which God’s wondrous love bestows. “Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt” (Rom. iv. 4). Hence the reward the Master will grant, will be given for *work done*, not on the ground of grace, but of righteousness. Another has said, “Righteous reward for what grace implants.” When the nobleman, on his return from the far country, called for his servants that he might reward them, he said he wanted to know how much *each* had gained by *trading*. The faithful servants said, “Lord, *thy pound* hath gained.” When saints receive their rewards, surely they shall be conscious that whatever they have been enabled to do to please Him, has been done by the power of His indwelling Spirit.

The question has been asked, *When will the rewards be given?* Scripture clearly shows, at the coming of the Lord. The dear departed saints have not yet received their reward. Abel and Stephen, the first martyrs of Old and New Testament history, wait, with all who followed them, not having yet their reward. But they wait not in vain. They shall receive, with all who shall be counted worthy, at the coming of the Lord—the morning of the first resurrection. The Lord declared that those who care for the poor shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just (Luke xiv. 14). Paul tells the Corinthians to judge nothing before the time; and then he

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fixes the time, and declares the date, by adding the words, "Until the Lord come" (1 Cor. iv. 5).

*On what principle will the rewards be given?* Will it be for successful service? for brilliant preaching? eloquent teaching? great works of faith? If it were so, the little ones might well sigh, and say, "Not for us; not for us." But read the words and take fresh courage, for the most feeble need not despair: "Until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every (or each) man have praise of God" (1 Cor. iv. 5). He who knows the secrets of every heart will give the prize. In that day the surprise may be as great at those who obtain as at those who suffer loss. Great work, but the motive power—self. To such, the sad verdict,—Verily, you have had your reward. Others, who have hidden their good work with the garment of humility, shall in that day be rewarded openly (see Matt. vi. 1-6). Again, some have desired, have willed; but have lacked opportunity. The counsels of the heart made manifest, the praise shall be theirs, albeit they were unable to do that which love had planned. He who makes manifest, doth indeed discern, between the honest counsel, and the weak wish that excuses itself from all action most easily, on the report that there is a lion in the way.

*Of what will the reward consist?* For some there will be special crowns. We read of four named as the reward of faithful service—the crowns of righteousness, of life, of rejoicing, and of glory. Every saint will have righteousness, life, joy and glory, but only some the crowns thereof. Again, every believer will have the kingly and the victor's crown. All are made kings, and all the four-and-twenty elders (Rev. iv. 4) wore the golden crowns of victory. In this connection it is interesting to notice the last time we read of the elders with their crowns is, when they cast them at Jehovah's feet in adoration and praise (Rev. iv. 10). The crown of righteousness is given to those who love their Lord's appearing (2 Tim. iv. 8); the crown of life to those who endure temptation and remain steadfast (James i. 12; Rev. ii. 10); the crown of rejoicing to those who lead sinners to the Saviour (1 Thess. ii. 19); the crown of glory to those who care for, and tend, the lambs and sheep of God's flock (1 Peter v. 4).

Further, as we suffer rejection here for Christ's sake, so shall we enjoy our reign with Him by-and-by. Those who are most with Him in rejection will share most with Him in the

*Talks, Short and Simple, for Young Believers.*

glory of His reign. To the faithful disciples who continued with Him in His temptations, He appointed they should sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke xxii. 30). All who have part in the first resurrection shall live and reign with Christ during the thousand years (Rev. xx. 4). But there will be degrees of enjoyment of that reign. Some will be more intimately associated with the Lord in His reign than others. "If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. viii. 17). "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him" (2 Tim. ii. 12). "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev. iii. 21). The faithful servants in the parable of the talents (Matt. xxv.) were made rulers over many things; whilst in the parable of the pounds (Luke xix.) they were given rule over cities.

*A warning note.* "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. iii. 11). "Let no man beguile you of your reward" (Col. ii. 18). Saul spared the Amalekites, but the Amalekites did not spare him; for on Mount Gilboa a young man, an Amalekite, took his crown (2 Samuel i. 10). If we spare the flesh, the flesh will not spare us. How very solemn words are these, to which we do well to take heed: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. ix. 27). So wrote Paul about this very matter of reward. It is possible to be used much of God, and yet, by self-indulgence and self-pleasing, to lose the fruit of years of toil and loving service. If so, we had better give it up, do you say? Not so Paul. His care and strife was to keep his body, that is, his fleshly desires, under. Would we gain the prize? We must not only labour, but ever distrust self, be always on the watch-tower. Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. No confidence and no provision for the flesh (Phil. iii. 3, Rom. viii. 13); but, instead, rejoicing in and putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. May it be ours not only to bring forth *fruit—much fruit*—but fruit that may remain (John xv. 2, 8, 16).

*What about those who gain no reward?* "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. iii. 14, 15). How sad; and yet, as with anointed eye, we discern

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the true character of our work—wood, hay, stubble—we shall say “Amen” to the sentence that condemns. We shall rejoice to know it is gone for ever.

“ While over all the long, regretful past,  
The veil of wondrous grace Thy sovereign hand doth cast,  
Forgiven until now.”

Nevertheless may ours be the better part, that we so run that we may obtain (1 Cor. ix. 24). Like one of old, may it also be true of us: “This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. iii. 13, 14).

**PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.**



GENUINE conversion will very soon manifest itself to everybody. The world may not be able to understand the *cause*, but it quickly sees the *effect* of true conversion. It has a shrewd, far-seeing eye in regard to the practical side of Christianity; and when the world hears of Mr. So-and-so having been converted, it expects to see a mighty change in his life and conduct. We have never been able to see that the world was far wrong in so expecting. We think it has a very good right to expect such a change in a man who professes to have been created anew. Christianity is not mere sentiment; it is not a round of religious duty divorced from commonplace every-day life; it is rather the power that enters into every detail and relationship of life, illuminating them with the light of heaven. Its rays enter the kitchen and the workshop, and “shines” in the humble cot where Christ is known and loved. See the toiling mother amid her group of little children. Poverty may be her daily lot; the bare necessities of life her only luxury. Yet she seems contented and happy; yea, more, her lips are ever filled with praise. Do you ask the reason why? The answer is, she has Christ. And not only has she Christ, but she has learned (what some who have Him have yet to learn) in whatsoever state she is “therewith to be content” (Phil. iv. 11). She knows that the God who loves her, has ordered her lot; that He worketh all things after the counsel of His will; and that whatsoever He ordains for her to be, to do, or to suffer, must be the very best that love can send. She has learned to receive the daily round of family



*Practical Christianity.*

care and toil, as from a Father's hand ; to claim the promised strength according to her day, and to give Him thanks "always for all things" (Eph. v. 20). Others may fret who have less need, if they will; but she will "rejoice in the Lord." This is practical Christianity.

Look again at that busy merchant in his office. Before his conversion, he spent his strength late and early to gather gain, and hoard it up, for years that he may never see. But the Gospel has reached his heart. New life has been begotten in him, and the whole current of his life is changed. Not so much the sphere—for he is in the same business as he was before, there being nothing in it to hinder him as a Christian from abiding therein with God—but now he serves his God, instead of toiling for self and mammon.

His motives for busy toil are not now as the grovelling earthworm ; the new life-power has raised his affection to things above, and there his heart and treasure are. He holds the things of earth with a slack hand now, estimating them in the light of their transitory character, and the hope of the Lord's speedy return, and he practically uses what he possesses in the service of his God. His purse has been converted too,—that is, turned to God's account ; and the money that he formally used for his own pleasure, or hoarded for his own profit, he regards now as a stewardship committed to him by God, to be used under His direction and for His glory. People wonder as they see "the hard man" open his hand, and dispense his goods to the poor and the needy. This is practical Christianity. And the time would fail to tell the wonders that the grace of God has wrought. The "expulsive power of a new affection" has stripped the tawdry dress, unhooked the flashing chain, and caused the superfluous and unbecoming attire to be quietly laid aside, as by a spiritual instinct, without a word being said about them by any one. This is also practical Christianity. O that the power, the irresistible influence, of such a Christianity, were better known among us ! permeating every relationship of our lives, shining out from every crevice of our being. Then might we hope to see the sceptic's argument fall powerless from his lips, and to hear men ask, "What is the secret of such a Christianity?"

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THE faith that bears and suffers is greater than the faith that triumphs.

## THE UNCHANGING ONE:

A BRIEF MEDITATION.

“Thou remainest” (Heb. i. 11.)

**A**MID the ever-changing, ever-declining things of earth, how blessed for the heart to know, that Jesus changeth not. Friends and fellow-labourers pass away; long-loved brethren and fellow-pilgrims, whose company have brightened and cheered the desert pathway, leave us; but “Thou remainest.” Fellowships and helps to spiritual life decline, dry up, and fade away, like desert wells in time of drought; but “Thou”—the source, the spring of all—“remainest.” O my soul, why then shouldst thou repine? why mourn and lament o’er that which is gone, when so much remains? May it not be that He who loves thee, saw that too fondly thou wast clinging to these channels through which He had oftentimes ministered of His fulness to thee, and that thou wast unconsciously turning away from Himself to seek thy portion in the creature. Then it was that He put forth His hand, and withered up thy gourd, that He might draw thee closer to His side, to find in Him, Himself alone, more than all. It was thus with the prophet of old, when in the midst of spoiling and violence, strife and contention, a slackened law and wrong judgment, with blasted vines and empty stalls, he was able, with chastened joy, to sing: “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls. YET I WILL REJOICE IN THE LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation” (Hab. iii. 17, 18). The secret was, he had learned—not theoretically, but experimentally; not as a doctrine in the Book, but as a conscious blessed reality in his soul, yielding strength and gladness—that Jehovah, his God, was still the same—that “Thou remainest.” Thus may it be with thee, O my soul, and with all the pilgrim host, as they journey along the valley of Baca—the vale of weeping—toward the city where God’s own hand shall wipe all tears away. May we prove from day to day, amid the wreck, the ruin, and the decay of all earthly things, that “Thou remainest.”

And going fast, while most are gone—  
 Loved friends of early days—  
 The world grows stranger year by year;  
 I lose, but not replace.  
 ’Tis well! I’m cast the more on ONE—  
*Stars scarce are missed while shines the sun—*  
 And, Jesus, Thou art more to me  
 Than loved and loving friends could be.

## GODLINESS.

**I**T has been truly said "that the great concern of a Christian ought to be to live a godly life." To this we heartily say amen. But the question immediately rises, "What is a godly life?" To the minds of not a few, it is to be feared, that the terms "godly" and "godliness" are *not* too well defined. A man who can preach well and pray long and loud is often given the credit of being a godly man, although his life and ways may be sadly astray from the pattern and the image of *true* godliness as set forth in the Scriptures. There is "godliness" (1 Tim. 4-7), and there is "the form of godliness" (2 Tim. iii. 5). One is the genuine article, the other is only the outward husk, a hypocritical pretence of having what is not possessed, yet having an outward "form" of the reality.

True godliness is from God; it is begotten by His Word, and under His instruction. The grace of God that brings salvation to the sinner disciplines the saint unto the denying of ungodliness, and also teaches him how to "live soberly, righteously, and *godly*" (Titus ii. 12). To "live *godly* in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. iii. 12); to "serve God with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. xii. 28); to continue in "all holy living and *godliness*" (2 Peter iii. 11, R.V.). This is not a sentiment, or a certain frame of mind, or a round of religious duties, or activity in philanthropic and evangelistic work, but *obedience to the will of God* in all that He has spoken unto His people in, and subjection to, all the commandments that He has given, showing *how* His people ought to behave themselves individually and collectively in the "*Church* of the living God" (1 Tim. iii. 15), and in the *world* (2 Peter iii. 11). There is a spurious godliness current among many who profess to be Christ's disciples. It is characterised by high-sounding words and expressions, generally coupled with low boastings as to degrees of holiness attained and heights of spiritual experience reached. But it is to be observed that the greater number of those who make a boast of being in possession of these "higher experiences" are painfully unexercised about many of the plainer and more practical commandments of the Lord which concern their every-day life. Some have gone so far as to say that the Lord's commandments as to baptism and the Lord's Supper were only intended for the *carnal*, and that, so far as they are concerned, they may be entirely dispensed with. But the apostle who wrote to the church at Corinth thought not so. He commended them for "keeping the

*The Excelling Glories of Christ.*

ordinances" (1 Cor. xi. 2), and he himself was "baptised" (Acts ix. 18), and came together with his fellow-disciples to break bread on the first day of the week (see Acts xx. 7). He instructs us, moreover, how we may know a truly spiritual man. It is not by his words, or his confession of certain experiences, but by his acknowledgment of "*the commandments of the Lord*" (1 Cor. xiv. 37). Therefore we conclude that *true godliness* will ever be found in the path of obedience to the Word of God, and *only* there. By that Word we are commanded to test in ourselves and others all that professes thus to be; and if it will not stand the test, to reject it as false, no matter how high its pretensions, or how loud its praises, or in whomsoever it may be found.

**THE EXCELLING GLORIES OF CHRIST.**

"Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard Him, and observed Him" (Hosea xiv. 8).

"I HAVE heard Him, and observed Him,"

Seen His beauty rich and rare,  
Seen His majesty and glory,  
And His bliss beyond compare.

I have marked the angels bowing  
At His feet, a goodly throng;  
Listened to the choirs of heaven  
Praising Him with harp and song.

I have heard the voice that speaketh  
Sweetest music to mine ear,  
Words of power, and love, and mercy,  
Ah! none other half so dear.

I have known the secret purpose,  
Dwelling in that heart of love,  
To redeem His scattered members,  
Join them to Himself above.

"What have I to do with idols,"

When such visions fill mine eye?  
How be occupied with *shadows*,  
While the *substance* passes by?

Shine the moon's fair beams at noontide?  
Can the stars be seen by day?

Nay, beside excelling glories,  
Lesser beauties fade away.

R. H. M.

## FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.

### II.

#### HUSBANDS AND WIVES.

**T**HE relationship of husband and wife is the foundation of all the others. The whole character of the family and household depends upon this; and unless this be ordered according to the Divine instructions everything will go wrong. It is therefore of the utmost importance that, from the very beginning, the relationship, which is presently to develop into that of husband and wife, shall be modelled after the heavenly pattern. But, alas! how frequently this is overlooked. How little thought and how little prayer, are often given to companionships that quickly ripen into an engagement of marriage. We do not refer here to the terrible frequency of engagements between children of God and unbelievers. It does not follow, because two young people are both Christians, that therefore they are suited to be husband and wife, or that marriage between them could be "in the Lord." But if all godly consideration of such matters is put off, and the present gratification to be found in each other's society is indulged in without stint, they may presently find themselves deeply entangled before either has begun to ask the question, Is this of the Lord?

Let us consider well, therefore, what the pattern has to say to us about this matter of betrothal, or plighting of heart to heart, which goes before the actual marriage. It is well to be reminded at this point that the relationship of husband and wife differs completely in its very foundation from all others. It is here alone that mutual choice comes into action. Parents cannot choose their children; nor children their parents; and the same is true as to brothers and sisters. But a man may set his affections on a woman, and seek to win her; while she can just as freely yield her heart to him. It is the tie thus formed that God has ordained to be a closer one than all besides: for has He not declared that a man shall "leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh (Gen. ii. 24). Of all this, the heavenly original presents us with a wonderful picture. Christ set His heart upon the church, and came to earth to win her for Himself. To all who have heard His voice and have been drawn to Him, this is the time of espousals. What a wonderful work the winning of the Bride has been, and what a responsibility rests upon the affianced Bride duly to be preparing herself for the approaching marriage-day. As Paul laboured by frequent visits, by letters when away, and always by fervent prayers, to

*Begin at Home.*

perfect the Corinthian saints in all the will of God, he could say to them, "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. xi. 2). And what a precious fruit it will be of all the grace of our God, when the mighty shout goes up as the voice of many waters—"The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife *hath made herself ready.*"

Meanwhile He is making ready for us the bridal feast, and the many mansions of the Father's house, and all the glory that He has gone up to receive and will presently bestow upon us, shall be witnesses to the faithfulness of His heart during the time of betrothal. If all this were more pondered would it not make "keeping company" and "engagements" a more serious matter than they mostly are? And if the earlier stages were entered upon and carried through as before the Lord, surely there would be hope that the married life itself would more nearly approach the God-given pattern.

**BEGIN AT HOME.**

**T**HE world has a saying that "charity should begin at home." We do not know exactly what the world may mean by charity; but we do know that Divine love—that love which is shed abroad in the heart of every truly regenerated one by the Spirit, does begin to manifest itself at home. It begins to "testify" for Christ among those under the same roof. It seeks the conversion of those of its own kindred according to the flesh. It was thus with the demoniac of Gadara, whom the Lord delivered and brought to sit as a disciple at His feet. He was sent home to his friends to tell them how great things the Lord had done for him. "Home" was to be his first sphere of service; his "friends" were to be the first to hear from his lips, as well as to see by his life, that the Lord had done great things for him. After that, he might go forth and tell the story to others (Mark v. 15-20.) This is ever the way of the Lord, and it may be regarded as a pattern of all true service for Him. Gideon began at home; he threw down Baal's altar, demolished his grove, and set up Jehovah's altar in his father's house (Judges vi. 25). This was beginning at the right place, and we are convinced that this is where the Lord would have all His servants begin—at home, among their own kindred. If a man cannot testify for Christ there, he need

*Begin at Home.*

not trouble himself to attempt to do it elsewhere. If he cannot, from some cause or another, get a hearing from "his own," he need not expect to get it from those at a distance. If his testimony has no "power" among those around his own fireside, it will utterly fail among those without. Yet, alas! this is often forgotten. There are many would-be preachers, who are busy enough holding forth on the platform, and at the street corner, who never speak a word about Christ to those at home. They are actively engaged as rulers in the church, but alas for the rule of their own homes! The most cursory glance around will tell, that all is not as it should be there. The man who is perhaps most prominent in instructing others, is neglecting his own. His own wife and children never hear a word of instruction from his lips. There is no gathering together of the household for instruction in the Scriptures; not even family reading of the Word and prayer. The man is busily engaged looking after the vineyards of others; but his own is untilled. It may be he is "judging evil" with Jehu-like zeal among his brethren, but alas for the condition of his own house! It may be his excessive activity without, is to silence an accusing conscience, and to conceal the glaring neglect of his own home. But God will not be mocked with such hypocrisy. Sooner or later He will lay it bare. The day may reveal, that in this lay the root of many a sorrow and heart-burning; and that the lack of power and godliness in many assemblies of the saints was but the outcome of neglected closets and neglected homes. But thanks be unto God, there are homes in which God's name is honoured, and on which He commands His constant blessing. There is a savour of true godliness about them, which even a passing stranger may discern, and which those around them cannot fail to recognise. Harmony and peace have their dwelling there, and the God of Peace Himself abides with those who dwell therein. There is a wonderful testimony in such a home. It has a real voice for God. Its influence on others is inconceivable. But such a testimony cannot be brought into existence or sustained without some watchfulness and exercise of heart before God. Parents, and especially husbands and fathers, who run hither and thither and give little or no time to the temporal, moral, or spiritual care of their own homes, need never expect to see such a condition of things among their families. How could they if God's plainly revealed will concerning the care and godly ordering of their own homes is constantly neglected?

## Solomon's Wisdom ; or, Rule according to God.

**W**HEN Solomon came to the throne of Israel, the burden of his prayer to God was, that He might give him "an understanding heart" to judge His people, and to discern between good and bad. That this request was pleasing to the God of Israel, we may be assured by the answer given : "Behold, I have done according to thy words ; lo, I have given thee a *wise* and an *understanding* heart" (verse 12).

It was this that enabled Solomon to rule in the fear of the Lord, and to judge righteously among his people. It was not his "natural ability," as people would say, that enabled him to discern between good and evil, and to judge according to God. His natural wisdom, like our own, would have led him in the opposite direction. What enabled him to discriminate, and to rule according to God, was that wise and understanding heart given to him in answer to his prayer. How soon this was needed, we learn from the call that was made upon him by the two mothers who both claimed the living child (1 Kings iii. 16). It was according to the wisdom given to him by God that he answered them, and men owned it so. "And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged ; and they feared the king : for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to do judgment" (1 Kings iii. 28).

As it was in the kingdom of God among His earthly people of old, so surely it is now in His kingdom among His heavenly people (see Acts xxviii. 23 ; 2 Thess. ii. 12). Those whom He calls to discern, and to rule among His people and in His church, can only do so according to God's will, and for the blessing of His people, as they own their need of that wisdom and understanding which King Solomon sought and obtained from God of old. Need we wonder that under his righteous, yet benign rule, no bondman was left in his kingdom (1 Kings ix. 22), and no enemy appeared at his gates (1 Kings v. 4). There was a temple built to Jehovah's Name, whereunto His people came and worshipped Him. Jehovah had His portion, and His people dwelt in peace and prosperity. We do not look for such seasons in *the world* until He whose right it is to reign, shall sit upon His throne, judging righteously. But surely we may say that the character and the result of true rule *in the church* should be according to this principle. Those who rule there should first of all be of God's appointment ; not of the people's, nor of their own. Then they will need the "wise and understanding heart" ; and happy are they who know this need, and own it continually before



*Love's Debt.*

God. Who, like Solomon, come to their God confessing "I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in" (1 Kings iii. 7). This is the safe, the happy, and the honoured place, and to such God will give grace and wisdom to deal with every form of difficulty that may arise, according to His will, and for His people's blessing. How unceasingly God's saints should pray, that such rulers might be raised up among His people.

Troubles and dangers peculiar to the times in which our lot is cast are constantly raising their heads; difficulties and complications which utterly baffle human wisdom; and confusions, which if men attempt in their own wisdom to unravel, they will only render more confounded. All this reminds us that our resources are in God; that wisdom and understanding in things Divine must come from Him, and cannot be elsewhere found; that "the meek," and they only, "will He guide in judgment, and teach *His way*" (Ps. xxv. 9).

**LOVE'S DEBT.**

"How much owest thou unto my Lord?"

CHRIST made thy peace with a holy God,  
He paid thy debt in His own life's blood,  
And bore on the cross thy sin's great load :  
How much owest thou ?

He spent long years in a world of sin ;  
A homeless stranger He dwelt therein,  
That He for Himself thy soul might win :  
How much owest thou ?

His kingly glory He laid aside,  
His royal right was content to hide ;  
"Rejected by men," He lived and died :  
How much owest thou ?

The wealth of His love He gives to thee ;  
All thou canst need He will surely be,  
To-day, to-morrow, eternally :  
How much owest thou ?

A debt so great thou wilt ne'er repay ;  
But bring the best which thou hast, and lay  
That, even that, at His feet to-day :  
Thou owest Him all !

GLENVAR.

W. A. G.

## O U R   W A R F A R E .

“Contend earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3, R.V.).

**T**HIS exhortation, given by Jude in his brief epistle, has peculiar force for the times in which our lot is cast. The faith “once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3, R.V.) is being tampered with, and frittered away by various devices of the enemy. Not now by infidelity alone, but by many who profess to accept the Bible in some sense as a revelation from God, and who yet make light of some of its precepts and commands. If these should be aided in their work by true believers, and especially by those whom we regard as true servants of God, esteemed for their work’s sake, the position becomes all the more perplexing and difficult. In circumstances like these, the Lord’s saints and servants need to jealously watch, lest the love of ease, or of cherished friendships, should hinder them from heeding the responsibility laid upon them by God to “contend earnestly for the faith.” There have been seasons in the history of God’s servants in time past, when the nearest and most cherished friendships had to give place to faithfulness to the Lord, in contending for His truth and in vindicating God’s holy Name. It was in the day of a long-loved brother’s sin and failure, that Moses the man of God stood in the gate, demanding decisive action from all who were “on the Lord’s side,” and commanding the judgment of those who had so dishonoured God (Exod. xxxii. 26, 27). There can be no compromise in a day when Jehovah’s Name is dishonoured, even if a fondly-loved brother should be involved. But, along with this faithfulness, we need to narrowly watch the manner of our contention, and the weapons that we use. Alas! how often has pride found a shelter for itself under the plea of “contending for the truth”? How often has the offender been assailed in a haughty, unchristian spirit? the consequence being, that he has thereby been hardened in his error and driven beyond the possibility of recovery. At no time do we more need to be clothed with “humbleness of mind” than when we are called to withstand those who have erred from the way, or when we are entrusted with the responsible work of guarding our most holy faith against the assaults or seductions of adversaries. The Lord has written for our admonition that a man is “not crowned except he have contended *lawfully*” (2 Tim. ii. 5, R.V.), and this latter word will include, we judge, not only the scriptural *manner*, but the *spirit* and *motives* of our warfare. Thus may we be led, while seeking to contend for all that God has committed to our

*Rehoboam's Rule and its Results.*

trust, to take heed to our manner of spirit, and to the hidden motives of the heart, lest, in our zeal for the truth, we may neglect to maintain such an inward condition before God as will cause our service to be a sweet savour unto Him, and a channel of blessing to men. Only for such service will there be "a full reward."

**REHOBAM'S RULE AND ITS RESULTS.**

**I**N sad contrast to the wise and beneficent rule of Solomon, is that of his son Rehoboam. Favoured as he was by the example and counsel (Prov. ii. 1-12) of his father, he seems not to have learned his need of Divine wisdom to guide him in the affairs of the kingdom. We find no recorded prayer to God for wisdom, nor any confession of need. He seems to have been a man of his own will. He neither sought counsel from God, nor would he receive it from the old men who had stood before his father (1 Kings xii. 8). This prepares us for hearing that his words and actions were of such a character as to rend the kingdom from his grasp. And so that kingdom, which, under the humble and wise-hearted father, had become one of peace and power, is soon, under the rule of his heady, self-willed son, shattered and divided.

Surely we may learn something from this. As there were complainers in the kingdom then, to whom the rule of a Solomon was hard and irksome (1 Kings xii. 3), so there are troublers and complainers in the assemblies of God's people now. There is no hope held out that at any period of the church's history these will cease. But there is a right way and a wrong way of dealing with them. Under Solomon's rule they were unable to let their voices be heard. They had no following, and made no headway in the kingdom. Why? Simply because they knew that God was with Solomon: that Divine wisdom directed him in the ordering of the kingdom, and that they had no appeal. But immediately Rehoboam comes to the throne, they organise themselves and come with their complaint to him; and he, instead of asking help and wisdom from God, acts rashly, and, with a high hand, according to the evil counsel given by those who were like himself destitute of Divine wisdom. We know that the sad result of this was a rebellion and division in Israel which was never healed. Thus, where wise, decisive rule according to God, would have gained the victory, pride, self-will, and rashness ruined all.

## THE HOUR ALONE WITH GOD.

“**I** HAVE made it a rule throughout the many years of my Christian life,” says an active, earnest Christian man of business, “to secure a quiet hour every day alone with God for prayer and the reading of the Scriptures; and I can testify to the blessing I have derived from this rule.”

There are few among the saints who will not acknowledge this arrangement to be a good one; but at the same time it is to be feared, that there are not so many of us who practise it. Want of time would be given as the principal excuse for its neglect. No doubt the time of many, especially of those who, in addition to domestic and business responsibilities, have definite service for the Lord in His Gospel and among His saints, is found to be all too short for the amount of work to be done; and yet, while body and mind will bear the strain, no true servant of God, whose heart is exercised unto the need of those around him, is willing to curtail his labours or reduce the circle of his service for the Lord. The tendency in all this is, to neglect *the hour alone with God*; until, by habitual neglect, we accustom ourselves to do without it. But we are persuaded that there is no reparation can be made for such a loss to the soul. It is like cutting off the staff of life, or depriving the labouring man of his daily bread. He may survive for a season, but it must eventually tell upon him. Hurried snatches will not do instead. Listening to addresses, or even the fellowship of saints, cannot compensate the loss of that *quiet hour with God*. It is indispensable to spiritual freshness, and to a daily walk with God. So the Christian merchant found it, and so, he says, he “secured” it. No doubt it took some watching and conflict to do it, for the enemy would certainly contest the ground—aye, every inch of it. Excuses of all kinds would be raised: engagements would be sure to crop up, friends to call, disturbances to occur, and anything or everything that would draw away from that season of being alone with God. Yet there, as nowhere else, the Christian finds the strength of his life to lie, because there, as nowhere else, his heart is searched before the Lord, and his inner life is strengthened and nourished. Therefore, beloved brethren, let us seek, like that Christian merchant, to “secure” our daily “hour alone with God.”

HAPPINESS.—“Happy is that people whose God is Jehovah.” Even in the midst of temptation and trial the Christian is a happy man. Not as the world would reckon of course, but happy, that is, blessed, in the truest, fullest sense of the term.

## THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

**A**MONGST the many precious promises given to the Philadelphian church, the most significant, perhaps, is contained in these words: "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. iii. 10). It is characteristic of all the promises given to the seven churches, that *in measure* they will be enjoyed by all the born-again ones; *in fulness*, by those who overcome. That is, while they have a special fitness to all who fulfil the conditions named, yet they belong to all the children of God.

So that, we may take it, all who belong to the election of grace in this period of Jehovah's dealing with His people, will be kept from this dread coming hour of darkness and trial.

At the same time, the deliverance will have a peculiar sweetness to those who, in this present time, keep the word of His patience.

We may measure the power of a promise over us, by the depth of our desire for its fulfilment. Has this promise ever exercised a constraining power over our lives? To answer, we ask again, How much joy has the assurance given us, that we shall be kept from (or out of, not in) the hour of temptation?

Those who have never given this dark time, yet coming, a moment's consideration, either through lack of knowledge or interest, can hardly claim to value much this promise, given by our Lord Himself from the throne to His people, emphasised indeed by solemn words: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

The words of Christ to one, become the Spirit's message to all.

Matt. xxiv. gives us further instruction and light as to this coming hour. Matt. xxiv. and Rev. vi. should be read together. Both refer to the same period. The one explains the other. In both Scriptures those who had kept the word of His patience are gone—caught up. Other witnesses are called forth. Witnesses who, indeed, witness to the same God and the same Christ; yet the manner of their testimony is in harmony with Jehovah's attitude toward the earth at that time. Both chapters tell of heaped-up horrors. Horrors that do but develop and extend, to culminate in the hour of *trial*—the great tribulation.

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be

*The Great Tribulation.*

shortened" (Matt. xxiv. 21, 22). The order of events in Matt. xxiv. corresponds with the record in Rev. vi. Thus—

Matt. xxiv.		Rev. vi.
False Christs.		White Horse.
Wars and rising of nation against nation.	}	Red Horse.
Famines.		Black Horse.
Pestilences.		Pale Horse.
Tribulation.		{ Patience till the number of the martyrs made up.
Judgment.		Judgment.

It is most important to get rid of the thought that a general war will proclaim the end; it will indeed but tell the beginning. The great tribulation will be born of bloody war—a fit offspring indeed. Of wars, it is said: "These are the beginning of sorrows."

An unholy peace rather than the fury of battle will characterise the great tribulation. True, its last great scene shall be a battlefield; battle without war! Antichrist shall gather his vast armies. Each king shall head his own, till they, the enemies of our God, are gathered like a footstool. Then, just then, shall the Lord appear, and crush, once and for ever, those who raised their puny arms against Him. Then, like once before,

"The might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,  
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord."

As if to rivet our attention to this coming time of woe, our Lord drew public attention to it, in what was, perhaps, His most pathetic utterance in the days of His flesh. We get it in Luke xxiii.

They were leading Him from Pilate's hall to Calvary.

One called Simon helps to bear the cross. Him they compel. Was He unwilling? How the holy angels would have rejoiced in such high honour! And soldiers, fierce priests, proud scribes—a rude mob—make up the picture. No, not quite. Behind, on the outskirts of the crowd some weeping women. Suddenly that slowly-moving procession stops. The chief prisoner, He in the midst, turns and speaks. What does He say? Think what He might have said. One word, and ten thousand times ten thousand shining ones would have winged their glad way and delivered Him. He speaks not to

### *The Great Tribulation.*

angels nor of vengeance. He might have pleaded for mercy, reminding them of some of His many acts of love.

He speaks not to priest or soldier, nor asks for mercy.

He turns to the weeping women, and their need is more to Him than His own.

Speaking to them, His prophetic eye looks down the course of years, and in their weeping sorrow He beholds the beginning of the more bitter sorrows of the great tribulation.

The groans and anguish of that period were in the Saviour's thoughts as He journeyed on to Golgotha.

Now the green tree, then it should be the dry. These long days of grace despised, rejected, slighted, do but the more prepare the scene for judgment.

When the hour of trial comes the iniquity of the Amorite will be full (Gen. xv. 16). The green tree has given place to the dry.

Yet, mark the words, rather than weep for Him they might weep for those whose lot should be cast in coming days. Days in which it would be said, "Blessed are the barren." What days are these? Days that never yet have been, nor shall be again. Days of great tribulation. Days in which the agony shall compel the prayer: "Mountains fall on us! hills cover us!" Of these days the Saviour said again, "These be the days of vengeance; woe unto them with child. There shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people" (Luke xxi. 21-24). Days which had indeed a partial fulfilment in the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus, but days which yet await their uttermost and final fulfilment. History repeats itself. Napoleon the First, and his times, for instance, shadow forth the Antichrist. Coming events cast their shadows before them. The fulfilment is not yet.

In Rev. vii., two companies are named: first, the sealed, preserved, like Israel's host in Egypt, through the tribulation. Second, the multitude John saw before the throne who died in it.

As John gazes on this white-robed throng, he is asked to tell who they are, and whence they came. The saved of the past and present, as typified in the four-and-twenty elders and four living creatures, he can understand, redeemed out of every kindred and tongue; but who are these, and whence came they? The answer comes, "These are they who came out of the great tribulation" (Rev. vii. 14, R.V.). The definite article, "the," which is placed both before the adjective "great" and

*Under His Shadow.*

the noun "tribulation" (see Rotherham or Newberry), and might be translated, "out of the tribulation, the great one."

What a triumph of grace! The darkest hour of earth shall yet yield rich trophies to add fresh lustre to the Saviour's name. Hallelujah!

While we have looked at some New Testament scriptures which tell of this dark hour of tribulation coming on the earth, we must not forget that the Old Testament scriptures record many a prophecy as to this very time. We have only space now to name some of them. Jeremiah xxx. gives a graphic description of the terrible times, and the prophet asks, "Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces turned into paleness?" Then the answer, "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble" (v. 6 and 7).

Ezekiel calls it "the cloudy and dark day" (Ez. xxxiv. 12).

Daniel certifies, "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time Thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book" (Dan. xii. 1).

Next month we trust, with God's help, to gather some precious lessons from what is unfolded to us of this coming time of grief, "The hour which shall come to try them that dwell on the earth."

**UNDER HIS SHADOW.**

Under His shadow—I dwell to-day,  
 Under His shadow—content to stay,  
 Under His shadow—my soul's abode,  
 Under His shadow—shut in with God.  
 Under His shadow—no foe alarms,  
 Under His shadow—no danger harms;  
 Under His shadow—there all is peace,  
 Under His shadow—earth's turmoils cease.  
 Under His shadow—such perfect rest,  
 Under His shadow—divinely blest,  
 Under His shadow—sweet hidden life,  
 Under His shadow—how free from strife.  
 Under His shadow—I ask no more,  
 Under His shadow—till time is o'er;  
 Under His shadow—when earth is past,  
 Then face to face with my God at last!

GLENVAR.

W. A. G.



## THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

### SECOND PAPER.

**D**ARK indeed are the days of trouble, such as never have been or shall be. Nevertheless even then shall the Lord have His faithful ones. There have been times of apostasy and declension often, yet never has Jehovah been without His witnesses. So the blackest hour of apostasy shall have its true ones. Their lights shall shine the brighter because of the midnight darkness.

In Ahab days, Jehovah had His seven hundred who bowed not the knee to Baal.

In Shushan, Mordecai refused to own Haman.

On Dura's plain there were three who refused to worship the image of gold that Nebuchadnezzar set up.

So in the awful hour of Satan's greatest apparent power and triumph shall there be those who will stand for their God. It is the time of Satan's greatest energy, because he knows his hour is short, hence the bitterness of his wrath.

Yet that wrath and mad hatred shall manifest the love, endurance, faith, of vast numbers, as nothing else could do.

Every one tried (Dan. xii. 10). Not one of God's elected ones shall be found wanting. Each a martyr, each a God-made hero. Some, like James, shall be swept away at once with the sword—(we hear their cry, Rev. vi. 10). Some, like Peter, shall at last be put to cruel death. Others, like John, shall be preserved through it, to be saved by the personal appearing of the Lord Jesus, coming with His saints to the earth.

Blessed to be delivered from this hour, and yet no little honour to be a true servant, when every faithful act will be costly.

Then no one will be half hearted. It will be one side or the other. Nothing between. No neutral tints! Laodiceans will not be known. All must make a choice in these last days. The mark of the beast will bring the second death. Refuse it, and death of the body, or at least cruel persecution, will be your portion.

The principles of evil, which, when developed, bring forth this dark hour, exist now. The mystery of iniquity works already. The spirit of the heroes then, is needed now.

Their power must be ours. We fight the same battle. Let us learn their secret that we may share their courage. What is there special about them?

*First—They are men and women of prayer.*

### *The Great Tribulation.*

It is remarkable with what tender pity our Lord ever speaks of those whose lot is cast in these dire times.

He gives many details in Matthew xxiv., and stops to say: "Woe unto them that are with child . . . in those days."

How does He instruct His faithful ones to protect themselves? What resource have they? Prayer. Unbelief may ask, Only prayer? Faith says, Prayer, always prayer.

*Pray ye* (verse 20). What about this prayer? Earth's thoughts and heaven's differ greatly.

The proud scoffer, seeing the terrible suffering of God's tried ones, cries, "Where is the Lord thy God?" (Micah vii. 10).

Be it understood that Micah vii. is a tribulation experience. In harmony with our Lord's word, "Pray ye," the true-hearted one here cries out, "*My God will hear me.*" Prayer is his refuge, or rather Jehovah, whom he finds by prayer.

If, however, Micah vii. portrays earth's contempt for the saint's prayers, Rev. viii. tells out heaven's fellowship therewith.

Note the scene in that chapter opens in heaven at an eventful moment.

The seven angels with the seven trumpets are ready to sound. Already they have been restrained, held back while the elect are sealed. There is silence in heaven for the space of half an hour. It is the silence of expectancy. Everything is ready, when lo! another interruption. What is it? An angel at the golden altar! What is it that he offers there?

"And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand" (Rev. viii. 4).

So it comes to pass that that which earth despises, heaven receives.

That which is thought little of on earth, and done in corners, is made much of in heaven, and made to ascend from that golden altar before the very throne of God. O the dignity of prayer, did we but know it! The power of prayer, could we but believe it!

The thunders, voices, and lightnings that follow (verse 5), could they be understood, would proclaim themselves the earnest that those prayers shall be answered, and that God will avenge His own elect, who cry day and night unto Him, speedily (Luke xviii. 7).

*Second—They are men of courage.* For we read, "But the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits" (Dan. xi. 32).

### *The Great Tribulation.*

The moment the Church is caught up, sorrowful days for the world will begin.

The presence of the Church is the guarantee that the day of grace still lasts out.

One has said that the world may not like to see us now, but that they will indeed be sorry when we are gone.

The beginning of those days are sad, but the darkness thickens! Out of the wars and tumults will arise the revived Roman Empire, presently to assume its ten-kingdom form with Antichrist at its head.

Out of the apostasy which marks those early days (2 Thess. ii. 3) will come forth that fierce spirit of infidelity that shall crush all that is left of Christendom.

Then the first half of the seven years' treaty between Antichrist and the Jewish people having run its course, that wicked one will break the treaty made for selfish ends, and turn his hatred against those who are still true for God.

Then will commence the awful days of tribulation which are to last "until a time and times and the dividing of times" (Dan. vii. 25), or "forty and two months" (Rev. xiii. 5); unless, indeed, "such days are shortened" (Matt. xxiv. 22) by the appearing of the "Deliverer in Zion" (Rom. xi. 26).

That which proclaims that the great tribulation has set in, is the setting up of "the abomination of desolation in the holy place" (Matt. xxiv. 15).

"They shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate" (Dan. xi. 31).

The man of sin "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. ii. 4).

Days like these will call for courage!

He that endures to the end, the same shall be saved (Matt. xxiv. 13).

So we read—"But the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits."

Nevertheless, the sword, the flame, the prison, on the one hand, and flattery and deceit on the other, shall thin their ranks (Dan. xi. 33-35).

Many will remain faithful, and such will receive help from on high. Yet, in addition to the foes without, many of themselves, yea, of those who took the lead amongst them, shall fall.

### *The Experienced Pilot.*

To whom shall they look? Trust ye not in a friend, is the watchword. (Compare Micah vii. 5, and Matt. x. 21, 22, 36).

Nevertheless, they that know their God, not looking around, but up and through the dark cloud of tribulation, *they shall be strong.*

*Third—They are men of patience.* Patience which is born of faith.

Hence the Spirit, speaking of these tribulation saints, doth say—"Here is the patience and the faith of the saints" (Rev. xiii. 10); and again, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. xiv. 12).

Oh, noble men and women! Individual saints in Scripture history have shone out like stars for faith and grace; but what dispensation, save the tribulation, brings forth a company of saints whose united testimony so calls forth praise?

The fiercer fire brings forth the purer metal!

The instruction given to those saints is, "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke xxi. 19).

Theirs must be the policy of non-resistance, "for he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword" (Rev. xii. 10).

There is a better way: "Flee to the mountains" (Matt. xxiv. 6). The woman must fly into the wilderness, where she shall be "nourished for a time, and times, and half a time" (Rev. xii. 13, 14).

Patience shall have her perfect work, and those who know their God shall cry: "I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me" (Micah vii. 7). So shall the oft-repeated prayer, "Look down" (Isa. lxiii. 15), "Come down" (Isa. lxiv. 1), give place to the joyous shout: "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him" (Isaiah xxv. 9).

### THE EXPERIENCED PILOT.

**W**E were sailing the other day on one of the steamboats that ply on the Firth of Clyde. It was a pleasant day, and the boat seemed to glide along smoothly on the deep, calm sea. As we neared the Isle of Arran we noticed that the sea became rather "rough," and, just as our attention was called to this, an aged, weather-beaten sailor stepped up to the "wheel" and exchanged places with the younger man who had been "steering" the vessel. We took

### *The Experienced Pilot.*

in the situation in a moment : we were nearing the coast, which is in some parts a dangerous one, it required much greater skill to steer the vessel amid rocks and reefs and ruffled seas, than it did out in the deep, open Firth, and consequently the more experienced pilot—whom I afterwards learned had taken that vessel through many a stormy sea—took his place at the wheel and guided us safely into the harbour. The recognition *of the experienced pilot on board that vessel, had its lessons* for us who marked the little incident that day, and as the principle is one of universal application in God's things we pass it on to our fellow-saints. There are times when experienced pilotage in things spiritual is needed, as well as in navigation. There are "dangerous" rocks and reefs in the course of God's children, and God's assemblies also, where the greatest care and the utmost caution are needed. It is well to recognise the need of wise and experienced guidance at such seasons, and to leave room for its exercise among the saints, and in the things of God. Of course it will be said, We have God's Word and God's Spirit. True, we have, and to these the individual saint, as well as the assembly, must ever seek for guidance and direction in their heavenward course. But we have more. We have men of grace and wisdom raised up and fitted by God. Men, like those who were with David of old, who had "understanding of the times"; men of experience in the things of God, who have passed through many a storm; men of God, fitted to guide the saints and to pilot the assembly through its times of danger safely. It is only at such seasons that we know the value of such men, and fully esteem their service. Highly favoured is that assembly that has such men in its midst, and happy that assembly that values them so as to leave room for them to exercise the wisdom that God has endowed them with. But this is not always done. Sometimes the least experienced and most heady and ignorant, press themselves into the place and presume to guide in times of danger, with the result that wreckage and disaster follow. We cannot but think that many of the sorrows of the present hour are the direct result of uncalled, unqualified, and unproved men who have neither grace, wisdom, nor experience in God's things pressing themselves forward with eager haste to the "wheel" of church affairs, the while refusing to listen to those to whom God has given the wisdom and the grace, through years of experience, to be the "guides" of His people in dangerous and difficult days.

## SUBJECTION AND INSUBJECTION.

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and *submit* to them”  
(Heb. xiii. 17, R.V.).

“To whom we gave place by subjection, *NO*, not for an hour” (Gal. ii. 5).

**W**HEREVER God has raised up and set in the assemblies of His people godly rulers, it is the duty of the saints to own and obey them. It will be no great difficulty for even the youngest of the flock to “know” such. Their shepherd hearts, and constant, arduous toil in feeding and tending the flock, mark them out. They are known, loved, and esteemed for their work’s sake. They have us “in their hearts to die and live” with us. The memory of their faithful words of warning, and loving words of counsel, endear them to the hearts of those among whom they toil. “Overseers” or “guides” of such a character, will find little difficulty in getting the saints to obey them. All the spiritual will know and own them, as those who are “over them *in the Lord.*” There will be no need for enforcing their claims to be obeyed. Obedience will rise spontaneously from the hearts of the saints who are the subjects of their prayers and toils. Happy and highly-favoured is that assembly, and those saints, who have the shepherd care and counsel of such guides. Full well may they “esteem” them, especially in times when wise and heaven-sent men are so much needed, to feed and tend God’s scattered sheep.

But there has always been, and still is, in God’s order of things, the open door for men who have neither the Divine call nor the qualifications, to press themselves into prominence, and attempt to establish themselves in a position that they are in nowise fitted to fill. Perhaps in no circle is this more frequently done, than among those who “guide” and “oversee” the saints. The manner in which this work of “oversight” has often been spoken of, by some who teach and preach, has made it something to be “caught at” by ambitious men, craving after authority over their fellows, but altogether destitute of the moral and spiritual qualifications necessary for such a self-denying service. Need it be wondered if the saints resent their attempts to rule as with an iron rod, and that there are constant turmoils, tumults, and divisions in the churches where these self-appointed men are found. The saints cannot obey such rulers. They have no claim on their obedience any more than others who have been appointed by the voice of man. It was concerning such that the apostle said, “To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour” (Gal. ii. 5).

But there is a danger of true men who *have* the ability and

### *Subjection and Insubjection.*

the qualifications for rule among God's people, assuming to themselves powers that the Scriptures do not sanction, and using an authority over the consciences of their brethren that God has not given them.

There is an instance of this recorded in connection with Peter's conduct at Antioch, as described in Gal. ii. There was a tendency in Peter to assume lordship over the consciences of his brethren, and to "compel" them to do certain things that God had not commanded, and in this he had the support of James and the elders of the church which was in Jerusalem. This was indeed a strong combination; yet it was not according to the mind of God. It was rule, but not according to His will. There was unanimity of judgment, too, but it was not the judgment of the Lord. Peter had been acting as a legislator, instead of an administrator. He had been making laws regarding the fellowship of God's people, and imposing them, that were not commanded by God. When Paul came to Antioch and saw the perilous position in which these freshly-made laws had placed "the truth," he withstood Peter to the face with the question, "Why *compellest* thou?" (Gal. ii. 14).

These words reveal the character of Peter's error. He was assuming lordship over the consciences of his brethren, and "*compelling*" them in matters on which God had given no such commandment, and for the truth's sake he had to be withstood by Paul, the younger man, because he was blameworthy; and the sequel shows that this "insubjection" of Paul, to Peter with James and the whole church at Jerusalem, was according to the mind of God. Thus we learn that subjection is not always right. It never is, when God's truth is being set aside, or when human laws are imposed on the consciences of the saints. Insubjection in such cases is absolutely needful, inasmuch as obedience to laws of human device must always hinder obedience to the higher claims of the word of the Lord, and domination in spiritual things must always be resisted. On the other hand, it becomes those who have influence over their fellow-saints to see that they do not use it in such a manner as to subject the consciences of saints to human authority.

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"OH, there is nothing like it on earth, and may we not say in heaven either—nothing like the two or three gathered unto Him in obedience to His Word!"—  
J. B. M.

## FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.

### III.

#### HUSBANDS AND WIVES.

“**W**IVES, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, *as unto the Lord.*” So runs the Word in Eph. v. 22, while in Col. iii. 18, we have the slight variation, “*as it is fit in the Lord.*” Whenever we get the expression “*in the Lord,*” there is reference to something more than the fact that the persons spoken of are in Christ, as redeemed, saved sinners. The thought is always present of Divine rule; of a body fitly framed together, with all the members in subjection to the authority of the Head; while the relationship of the members one to another is all regulated by their common subjection to the Head. The Lord Jesus is the source of all authority, and whatever subjection we are called upon to yield to one another is, in reality, subjection to Himself. Hence we get the commandment in the two forms. “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord,” tells that the wife, in obeying her husband, is called upon first of all to obey the Lord. The slightly altered expression in Colossians, “as it is fit in the Lord,” shows that husband and wife both being in subjection to Christ as Lord, their behaviour to one another must be according to the rule that He has laid down.

It has pleased Him to make the man to be the head of the woman (1 Cor. xi. 3). In the beginning God created the man first, and then formed the woman *for* the man, and not only so, but He formed her from the man. In all this the woman is a type of the Church, made from and for the Heavenly Bridegroom, who is also her Head. The Spirit calls attention to all these points (see 1 Cor. xi. 8-12), with the comment that on this account the woman should wear the token of authority on her head, because of the angels. We may compare this with Eph. iii. 10, where we read that God, who created all things by Christ Jesus, so ordered them that His manifold wisdom might be made known to the principalities and powers in heavenly places by means of the Church. By means of the relationship between the woman and the man, in all its wonderful setting forth of the mysterious and eternal bond between the Church and Christ, angels are to learn God's manifold wisdom. Therefore, not only is the Church to submit herself gladly to Christ, but each believing woman is, with equal willingness, to submit herself to her own husband, as to the Lord, and recognising the fitness of so doing, because they are both in the Lord.



### *Family Relationships.*

If this is not the true motive of her obedience, it will be sure to fail. It is true that, apart from this, it may be comparatively easy for the wife to yield subjection, as long as the husband gives her an unflinching, unselfish love, cherishing her as his own flesh. But God does not intend that our obedience to Himself, in any particular, shall be dependent upon the way in which someone else behaves to us; and He cannot allow the wrongdoing of others towards us as an excuse for our own shortcomings. Hence the wife is not commanded to obey her husband because of his love to her, but "as to the Lord" and "as it is fit in the Lord." It is just the same on the other side. The husband is not to love his wife because of her obedience to him, but "as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it."

The clamour that is raised in the present day about "woman's rights" and "woman's equality" is part of the unavowed infidelity that, on all sides, is setting aside Divine wisdom and Divine authority, and setting up human wisdom in their stead. It was the first woman who was seduced by the same temptation. "Ye shall be as God" (see Gen. iii. 5, R.V.) was as much as to say that God should not be the head of the man, nor the man the head of the woman, but that there should be equality all round. Satan seems to have thoroughly understood that in upsetting the true relationship of the woman to the man, he would sever both from their allegiance to God. Hence he is never weary of seeking to undermine the Divine principle which must guide the whole matter. Perhaps it is only a few who ask to break down socially and politically every thing that recognises the woman's place of subjection. But how many, even among believers, treat the whole question of a wife's obedience to her husband as subject for a joke, and how many wives laughingly avow that, if they did promise to obey, they never had the least intention of carrying out their promise. Even where this is only said in jest, and the wife is not consciously purposing to refuse subjection to her husband, it shows how little the power of the words, "as unto the Lord," has entered into her heart. If her subjection to her husband is to be on the ground of what she is to the Lord, and if, by it, she is to help to show to angels God's manifold wisdom, she will no more laughingly pretend that she does not intend to obey her husband than she would say the same thing about the Lord Himself.

I HAD rather do the will of God than work miracles.—*Luther.*

## HOW WE SHOULD ACT WHEN WE ARE MISREPRESENTED.

**T**HERE are few things that try the patience of God's servants like being misrepresented. It is easier to bear the open opposition of the world, than to be misunderstood and misrepresented by those whom we love, and desire to serve. Yet such has been the case with many of God's true servants. Their service has been misunderstood, and the basest motives attributed to them, while they were with singleness of heart, in obedience to their Lord's command, seeking only the honour of His name and the welfare of His people.

It was so with David in the day that he went to the valley of Eliab. He went, in obedience to his father's command, as the bearer of his message. When he reached the place, and found the armies of Israel discomfited by the uncircumcised Philistine host, his heart was stirred within him for the honour of his God, and he began to ask some pointed questions, and to call persons and things by their true names in the presence of his brethren. His words of truth aroused the anger of Eliab, his eldest brother, who, we may infer, had no friendly eye for David since the day that God made choice of him as king of Israel, and caused him to be anointed in the midst of all his brethren. The smouldering envy in his heart burst forth that day, as he heard his younger brother speak of "the armies of the living God" being defied by an "uncircumcised Philistine," and he hurled the taunt at him in the presence of them all—"I know thy pride, and the haughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle" (1 Sam. xvii. 28). But there was not a vestige of truth in this withering charge. The "pride" was Eliab's, not David's. He entirely misunderstood and misrepresented his brother's mission. David had come from the desert, where, alone with God, he had slain the lion and the bear—a deed of which it seems Eliab had heard nothing. Had "pride" and "haughtiness of heart" been found in David, as Eliab said, he would have proclaimed his bravery from Dan to Beersheba. Certainly Eliab would have done so, if he had any such deed to tell of; and judging according to his own standard, he condemned his brother. Severe judgments of this kind generally indicate the condition of the soul. They are the unmistakable symptoms of the presence of that very thing in ourselves that we blame in others. It is instructive to note how David treated this wicked misrepresentation: "And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause? And *he turned from him*"

*Mutual Submission.*

(v. 29). This is the best way to treat misrepresentation, especially in cases where we know that envy and jealousy are ruling in the one who makes them. It is no easy matter for us to be silent in the presence of such misrepresentation coming from the lips of a brother. There is a strong temptation to retaliate, or, at least, to vindicate ourselves and establish our innocence. But the Lord's way is to be silent, to submit to the stigma, assured that the Lord has permitted it for some wise purpose, and that sooner or later He will vindicate the cause of the misrepresented one. Over and over again has this been proved by those who, in such circumstances, have given themselves to prayer and waiting upon God, instead of seeking to clear themselves of the false charges brought against them. The saint who is misrepresented may be assured that his cause rests safely in the hands of his God, and that He will deal with those who have done wickedly. Though aimed at him for the purpose of doing him an injury, it is a sin against God, and as such God will deal with it. How often, at such seasons, do we miss the blessing by recrimination or self-vindication, instead of leaving ourselves and our characters in the hands of a faithful God!

**MUTUAL SUBMISSION**

“Subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ” (Eph. v. 21, R.V.).

“Yea, all of you be subject one to another” (1 Peter v. 5).

**M**UTUAL submission of the saints, one to another, is clearly shown to be the will of God in the two Scriptures quoted above, as also the motives from which it should spring. It is not here a question of subjection to rule, either in the world or in the church—this is taught elsewhere in the Scriptures—but the mutual and loving subjection of all the saints to each other, according to the pattern shown by the Lord Jesus. Although Teacher and Lord, He ever acted according to this principle amongst His disciples, ministering to them and ministered to by them: washing their feet with His own hands at one time (John xiii. 4); having His own feet bathed in the tears of one who loved him much, at another (Luke vii. 37). Providing breakfast for His hungry, weary disciples in the morning (John xxi. 9); supping with them in their own homes at even (Luke xxiv. 30). Here was reciprocated love; communion in service; giving and

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receiving. This is the principle upon which the mutual subjection of the saints is to proceed. It is to be according to the Divine pattern, "in the fear of Christ;" not the cringing submission of the serf to his lord on the one hand, nor the assumption of the authority of the ruler or superior on the other. There is here the element of mutuality; the recognition of a common obligation; submission not on one side but on both. And if by any means this should fail on one side, it does not in any way alter the principle, or relieve the other from the responsibility of yielding obedience to it. It will no doubt be more difficult to submit to one who is of an overbearing spirit, than to one of humble mind, or to esteem "as better than ourselves" one whose assumptions to superior worth may be painful to the spiritual mind. Nevertheless, this is the command; and there is no exception, no reserve coupled on to it. In this lies its worth. There would be no difficulty in yielding subjection to those whom we love in the Lord, and regard with feelings of respect and admiration. But to esteem and willingly submit to one of another spirit is not in the way of nature. It does not come naturally to us. It needs God's grace and Christ's love in the heart to enable us to do it. In other words, it is one of the many forms of that all-wise discipline which our Father and God has designed to keep us constantly in dependence on Himself; ever feeling our insufficiency to fulfil, and ever hanging in our weakness on His might to enable us to perform. If this Divine principle of mutual subjection of the saints one to another in the fear of Christ, were more recognised among us; if its claim to be obeyed as one of God's commandments for His people of these times were enforced more frequently in the ministry of God's servants, and in the assemblies of His saints; if it were held in due esteem as one of God's supreme statutes, and every divergency from it, and failure to give it effect in our individual lives, regarded as sin, and dealt with as such between the soul and God, there would be less desire for drawing hard-and-fast lines between those having authority in the church and those who are to be their subjects.

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"DEAR Rutherford said—'Crosses were wings to heaven.' Thus while we sink we soar, and nearest to the throne will be the footstool of humility. I suppose as a rule to serve the Lord 'with much humility of mind' it must be 'with many tears.'"  
—J. B. M.

## AN ASSEMBLY OF GOSPELLERS.

**T**HE saints of Philippi seem to have been pre-eminently active in their Gospel labours, and warm in their sympathies with the apostle and his fellow-labourers, as those who heralded forth the Gospel among men.

It is a great thing for the Spirit of God to inspire the apostle to write concerning them, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you . . . for your fellowship in the Gospel from the *first* day until now" (Phil. i. 3-5). There are few assemblies of saints concerning whom such a commendation could be truly given. The apostle's letters to other churches were largely occupied in correcting errors, in restoring from evil ways, and in recovering them from a low spiritual condition. But here he is able to let his heart flow forth in earnest thanksgiving to God for a church which had gone on steadily and perseveringly in spite of all opposition, "striving together for *the faith* of the Gospel" (v. 27), and "holding forth the Word of Life" (chap. ii. 16).

They had their enemies without (chap. i. 28), and their troubles within as well (chap. iv. 2), but these were not allowed to damp their zeal, or wither up their fellowship in the Gospel which had been entrusted to them to spread among others. May the lesson have its due weight upon us, dear fellow-saints. A Gospel church—a hive of hearty, happy, active Gospellers, "all at it, and always at it," spreading abroad the good news, standing shoulder to shoulder, pulling together—is a blessed sight. It does not, however, come into being by miracle, nor is it sustained apart from individual effort. The measure of an assembly's zeal in Gospel labours will be great or small, according to the measure of importance in which God's Gospel and the responsibility of spreading it are held in estimation by the individual saints who compose it. The question for each of us is: In what estimation do I hold the Gospel, and how am I fulfilling my stewardship in spreading it abroad?

## FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.

### IV.

#### HUSBANDS AND WIVES.

**I**N the book of Proverbs the Spirit of God seems to take special delight in dwelling upon the excellencies of a good wife. At the same time reference is made to the faults against which wives should particularly be on their guard.

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One of these is a contentious spirit. "The contentions of a wife are a continual dropping" (Prov. xix. 13). We all know that the constant falling of single drops of water will, in time, wear away a stone. This, then, is the natural weapon to which the woman, as the weaker vessel, resorts. She cannot force her will upon her husband, perhaps; but she can keep on with little contentions, till she wearies him out and gets her own way. Ah, that is the whole mischief. She is contending for her own way, and that is not the subjection which the Word of God teaches, even though there may be no deliberate resistance.

And let it never be forgotten that even if the object aimed at be a right one, this will not justify a wrong way of seeking to attain to it. When husbands obey not the Word, it is not by constant contention that the wife is to influence him for good. Quite the opposite; for it is written: "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the Word, they also may without the Word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear" (1 Peter iii: 1, 2).

We were calling one Lord's-day afternoon to invite a man and woman to a Gospel meeting. The woman, though very ignorant, was a believer; but the man was unsaved. When we went in we found the wife alone and in tears, and a little inquiry as to the cause of her trouble brought the following explanation. "When my husband went to put his boots on, after dinner," she said, "there was a bit of leather sticking out at the side of one of them, and he got out his knife and cut it off. I told him he ought to be ashamed to break the Sabbath in that way; but he didn't heed me. Then, of course, he had left a white place on the boot, and he must get the blacking-brush to black it over. So I told him of that too; and then he lost all patience, and jumped up and said, 'Oh, you're at it again, are you?' and he put on his hat and went out; and oh! I know he's gone to the public house." It was just another illustration of Solomon's words: "It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman (margin—'a woman of contentions'), in a wide house" (Prov. xxi. 9). If we are seeking the glory of God, we shall be content to seek it in His way, and the continual dropping of a contentious tongue is the opposite to His way.

The Church's highest glory will be that she shall be the means of bringing added glory to her Lord; and in this again

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the heavenly pattern shows us what God would have the wife to be to her husband. "A virtuous woman is as a crown to her husband," we read in Prov. xii. 4; and she is well satisfied that it should be so. It is very instructive to notice the three references to the husband in the fuller description of the virtuous woman in Prov. xxxi. The whole passage opens as follows: "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil (R. V., 'and he shall have no lack of gain'). She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life" (vs. 10-12). Away from home he may have opposition to contend with, and troubles of every kind; but with such a helpmeet there is always one in whom he can confide, and none can measure the power for help and good that this will be to him. The next word about the husband is in verse 23: "Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land." The wife does not herself take a prominent place before the eyes of men; and few may guess what share she has had in enabling her husband to occupy the position he is in; but the testimony here is one as to the results of the wife's influence and help. Then, in verse 28, we read, "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her." And this is better to her than all public applause. She does not ask to be crowned herself, for her joy is to be a crown to her husband.

All this is far from fitting in with present-day notions. On all sides women are thrusting themselves, or are being thrust by others, into places of prominence and authority. The unseen, beneficent influence described in Prov. xxxi. is held as of less and less account, while the woman is to be crowned, and the public are called upon to applaud her. But then she ceases to be a copy of the heavenly pattern, for, indeed, that pattern had been altogether lost sight of. The heart of the Lord Jesus yearns for the day when He shall present His Church to Himself, a glorious Church, holy and without blemish (see Eph. v. 27). It is the special privilege of each believing wife, so to fulfil the teaching of Scripture that she may be a continual token to Him of the joy that He is waiting for. Will not the remembrance of this make it doubly sweet to each wife to submit herself to her own husband, as unto the Lord?

## THE COMING MAN.

“He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” (John i. 11).

**T**HESSE brief words tell out the mission of the Christ of God and its results. His part—“He came”: man’s part—“Received Him not.” Thank God, there are many blessed exceptions; yet concerning His testimony as well as His person, the record of man’s rejection remains true (John iii. 31-33).

Who can tell out the meaning of these words, “He came”? What thought can reach up to those ineffable heights of glory in which He, who was ever the brightness of the Father’s glory, dwelt? What tongue can tell the depths of humiliation to which He stooped when made a curse for us? Eternity only will unfold the meaning of the words, “He came.”

But side by side with this great compassion and mighty love rises up, in sharp contrast, the selfish, cold, criminal indifference revealed in the words, “Received Him not.” It is the story of His life. No room for Him in the inn; He was born in a manger. A little later, when the tidings of His birth reached the royal city, we only read that the king was troubled and all Jerusalem with him (Matt. ii. 3). Ere He finished His utterance, the first time He expounded the Scriptures in the synagogue of His native town, the hearers rose up with mad hate to cast Him out and even murder Him. Only because His hour was not yet come was it that not earlier did they crucify the Lord of Life and Glory.

He came to His own (things or possessions), and His own (people) received Him not. The heavenly stranger presented Himself to Israel *first*, but they would have none of Him. Not only did they reject His person and His ministry, but later on they refused the testimony of the Holy Spirit unto Him as the risen and glorified Saviour.

The lines of that dispensation seem to merge in the earlier history of the church; the one getting fainter and fainter, the other standing out bolder and clearer, till the one is lost altogether, while the other remains distinct and clear.

In the same way in other days the glory lingered over the loved city (Ez. ix., x., xi.).

In Acts iii. Peter, speaking to the men of Israel, implores them to repent, so that (see Revised Version, ver. 19) the times of refreshing, called later on “times of restoration of all things,” might come—come by the immediate personal return of the rejected Man. Had Israel, as such, repented, then at once Christ would have returned and set up His kingdom.



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Peter closes the offer with the words, "Unto you FIRST God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you." If they still reject Him, the offer must pass on to others. Acts vii. records the murder of Stephen, a man full of the Holy Spirit, but not before he has brought the solemn charge, "Ye do always resist the Holy Spirit" (v. 51). As they stone him, he gazes into the opened heavens and sees Jesus standing on the right hand of God; he kneels down and prays for his murderers. That prayer is answered by the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, who took the leading part in the cruel scene. Upon his conversion we read, "And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God" (Acts ix. 20). This is the first time we read that Christ was so preached. The title, "Son of God," ever connects Him with the Church, for on the confession of Him as such He said, "I will build My Church." Not only so, but to Paul especially was committed the unfolding of the glorious mystery of the Church of God (Rom. xvi. 25, Eph. iii. 3).

The murder of Stephen seems to mark the parting of the ways. So it came to pass that the rejection of Christ involved the rejection of the kingdom. Glories for Christ were postponed, but not lost, by Israel's unbelief; and this very postponement afforded opportunity for the bestowal of greater glories upon the Rejected Man, and for the manifestation in a more wondrous way of the grace of God; for during this present interval the Holy Spirit is gathering out of the nations a people for Jehovah's name (Acts xv. 14). Eliezer-like, He seeks and brings across the desert a bride for the heavenly Isaac.

Nevertheless, the rejection of the Man and the kingdom has far-reaching consequences, consequences which are more than hinted at in the solemn words of the Saviour, "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive (John v. 43). Those who will not believe the truth accept the lie (2 Thess. ii. 10-12). The rejection of God's Man prepares the way for the man of sin. Those who will not have the kingdom from above willingly become subjects of the kingdom which ascends out of the bottomless pit (Rev. xvii. 8). It must be so. Because man is what he is, able to discern between good and evil, the rejection of the good becomes the acceptance of the evil. The rejection of the Christ involves in principle the acceptance of the antichrist. John wrote, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye *have heard* that antichrist shall

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come" (1 John ii. 18). Paul, writing concerning the man of sin to those who had not been long converted, reminds them how he had told them these things while he was yet with them (2 Thess. ii. 5). Why are these early believers so fully instructed about the antichrist, seeing that he would not appear on this scene till many generations after they had passed away, and would only remain here for so short a time? Antichrist is but the personification of self-will; only the full-blown development of the evil principle which works whenever we reject the Christ. The mystery of lawlessness is working now; then it will be seen personified and headed up in a man. The Spirit of God draws aside the curtain, so that, as we see the revolting picture of what shall be *then*, we may be taught to judge what is now. If we know that the fruit is poisonous, we shall surely dread the seed.

Antichrist is in everything the opposite of that Blessed One, who is God's Christ. Christ came in His Father's name; Antichrist will come in his own (John v. 43). Christ came to do His Father's will (Psalm xl. 8); Antichrist will come to do his own will (Daniel xi. 36). Christ came from above (John iii. 31); Antichrist will come from below (Rev. xvii. 8). Christ humbled Himself (Phil. ii. 8); Antichrist will exalt himself (2 Thess. ii. 4). God anointed Christ with the Holy Spirit (Acts x. 38); Antichrist will be empowered by Satan (Rev. xiii. 2). God exalts Christ (Phil. ii. 9); He will cast Antichrist into the lake of fire (Rev. xix. 20). The contrasts might be greatly added to, as for instance in their moral actings, Christ ever spoke the truth; Antichrist corrupts (Dan. viii. 24, R.V.) and flatters (Dan. xi. 21-24). His signs are lying wonders, exercised for evil (compare 2 Thess. ii. 9 with Rev. xiii. 12-15), and carried out by Satanic power. How different, then, from our Lord's ministry as epitomised in Isaiah lxi. 1, 2. Some may find it profitable to continue this line of thought; but it must suffice now to call attention to these great contrasts, so that we may in some measure estimate the blessing of those who, having received the Christ, escape the Antichrist, and the dire judgment of those who, having rejected the God Man, are left to be the dupes and servants of the man of sin.

But not only this; may we also be taught to hate those evil principles of self-will and lawlessness which may, and also do too often, find a place in a believer's heart, and yet which, when developed by Satanic energy, will give birth to that awful monster, the man of sin.

*(To be continued, if the Lord will.)*

## THE FEASTS OF THE LORD.

XV.

(Continued from Page 16.)

**W**E must not leave our consideration of the Day of Atonement without noticing its connection with that very remarkable institution, the Year of Jubilee. Every fiftieth year, from the time the children of Israel entered the land of Canaan, was to be a year of special gladness and rejoicing. In that year every man who had been driven, through poverty, to part with his inheritance was to have it restored to him. Or if, in still greater straits, he had sold himself to be a slave, the Year of Jubilee was to give him back his liberty. Divided families would thus be re-united, and all restored to their own possessions.

Now, in Lev. xxv., where God's instructions about the Jubilee are given, we read at verse 9—"Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the Day of Atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land." This Jubilee Year, then, did not commence at the time when their years usually began. It was on the tenth day of the seventh month, the Day of Atonement, that the trumpet was to proclaim throughout the land that the Jubilee had commenced. But see what this brings us to. Long before, at the first institution of the Passover, God had changed the seventh month of the year into the first. But now the Jubilee Year commences at the seventh month, and so carries things back to their original order, reminding us of "the times of restitution of all things," spoken of by Peter (Acts iii. 21).

The Jubilee Year, like all the later feasts, has a double fulfilment. To the Church it represents the time when, the bride being adorned for her husband, God shall tabernacle with His people, and shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, so that there shall be no more death, or crying, or pain; for the former things shall have passed away (see Rev. xxi. 3, 4). This will follow immediately after the Judgment-seat of Christ. The Jubilee trumpet shall utter its sound on the Day of Atonement. As regards Israel, the Jubilee figure shall have its fulfilment when Zion's mourners shall be comforted; when God, even their God, shall give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. This comfort follows immediately upon God's day of vengeance upon His enemies (see Isaiah lxi. 2, 3, &c.). We have learned already that when Israel see the Lord Jesus

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standing on the Mount of Olives, as their Deliverer, they will turn to Him with true brokenness of heart, and their deep and real mourning over their past rejection of Him will fulfil the type of the Day of Atonement. In like manner, God's quickly following comfort, with the building of the old wastes and the raising up of the former desolations, shall be to them their blessed Jubilee; and the type shall have its complete accomplishment in their case, as well as in ours.

And now we come to the last of the feasts, the Feast of Tabernacles. Following, as it does, immediately after the Day of Atonement, its teaching is very much akin to that of the Year of Jubilee, for both of them carry on our thoughts to the time of perfected blessing and gladness which God has in store for His people. But, while the Jubilee presents that time to us chiefly from the point of view of the blessings therein enjoyed by the saints, the Feast of Tabernacles, like all the other feasts, rather dwells on what that time will be to the Lord, as the bringing of all His wondrous purposes of grace to a complete fulfilment. Special emphasis is given to this point by the manner in which the instructions regarding the Feast of Tabernacles are given. A reference to Lev. xxiii. will show that there is a remarkable break in these instructions. Beginning at verse 34, we read—"The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles unto the Lord. On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein." It is at this point that the break referred to occurs, for the next verse goes on to sum up the contents of the whole chapter, by saying—"These are the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord, a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, every thing upon his day." This feast is called the Feast of Tabernacles, and yet the whole subject is apparently brought to a conclusion without any mention of that from which the feast gets its name. It is well to notice, too, the special word used to show the character of the eighth day of the feast. In verse 36 we read of this day that it is a "solemn assembly"; but this is a very imperfect translation. The margin says "day of restraint," while the margin of the

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Revised Version gives it as "closing festival." The Hebrew word is taken from a word signifying to shut up, or bring to a close; and the prominent thought of this eighth day of the feast is that all the purposes of God, shadowed forth in the opening feast of the year, and steadily wrought out from month to month, have now been perfectly accomplished. At the commencement of the whole subject, in connection with the words, "feasts of the Lord" and "holy convocations," we learned that the purpose of God was the gathering together of a people for Himself, that He might dwell in their midst; and now, with the mention of this last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, we have the same expressions repeated. All this helps to show that this feast has brought us to the point where God's purpose is accomplished, His wondrous toil of love ended, so that henceforth He will rest in His love, while through all eternity He inhabits the praises of His people.

There is, however, another matter yet to be touched upon, for verse 39 goes on to tell us that on this same fifteenth day of the seventh month, the people were to take boughs of goodly trees and make themselves booths, in which they were to dwell throughout the feast. But no mention of this is made till the other feature of this feast has been so fully dwelt upon that it would even have appeared as if the whole subject had been concluded. We have something of the same sort in connection with the law of the Peace-offering. The name of this offering is connected with the fact that, in distinction from all the other offerings, this one is partaken of in part by the offerer himself, who is thus brought into a wonderful fellowship with Jehovah, for he shares in the same portion. Yet, while this is so, we find no mention of this characteristic feature of the Peace-offering in the whole of Lev. iii., where the commandment relating thereto is first given. That chapter is entirely occupied with showing how the Lord's portion is to be presented to Him; and it is not till after the Sin and Trespass offerings have been fully dealt with that the subject of the Peace-offering is taken up again in chapter vii., where we learn what the offerer's part in it is to be. It is in this way that the Spirit of God teaches us that the glory of God, the fulfilling of His purposes, must ever be the first object before us, while our blessing and happiness will come to us as the result of God's will concerning us being done.

## GOSPEL ZEAL.

**I**T is sometimes brought as an argument against those who have been separated by the truth of God from the unscriptural systems of man's devising, and gathered unto the name of the Lord Jesus alone, that they have very little zeal in spreading the Gospel among their fellow-men, as compared with others who are perhaps *unconnected* so far as church fellowship is concerned. We do not for a moment admit this charge to be true concerning *all* who are thus gathered to the name of the Lord. There are individuals and assemblies well known to *us*, who are unceasing in their efforts to spread the Gospel's message. They may not be found making a flourish of trumpets about their evangelistic work, but they *do* it nevertheless, and the Lord blesses them to the conversion of souls abundantly and constantly. At the same time we must sorrowfully admit that the charge is not untrue regarding others. But then obedience to the will of God concerning separation from sectarianism and gathering in His appointed way has nothing whatever to do with this condition of things, wherever it exists. Obedience to the will of God never damped the zeal of any of God's children, or reduced their labours for Christ in spreading His Gospel. We must seek the cause in another quarter. The fault does not lie with the truth, nor in the position of those who have obeyed it. Those who say so betray their ignorance, and most commonly make the charge to quiet their own consciences for disobeying the Lord's commandment to come out and be separate. But a Scriptural *position* will not of itself ensure a *spiritual* condition, and our service for God is largely governed by the condition of our hearts before God. If we have become cold-hearted by worldliness and living at a distance from Christ, we soon become selfish and careless of the souls of others. This was what toned down the saints of early times, concerning whom Paul wrote—"All seek *their own*, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. ii. 21). The apostle does not lay the blame of this condition upon the way that they gathered, or upon the *truth* that they held fast. Nor does he ask them to give up either in order to be raised to a higher spiritual level. If saints become worldly and indifferent to the claims of the spread of the Gospel among men, what is specially needed is the word of truth spoken in the power of the Spirit, that will convict and bring them to repentance concerning their low condition, in order that they may be restored to communion with God and compassion for the perishing. No doubt undue occupation with

*"I was Driven to it."*

truth in a merely intellectual way or in an argumentative spirit will soon wither up the soul, be it the truth of separation or any other. But the fault of this does not lie at the door of God's truth, but in the manner in which it is held and used. Let us value and hold fast all God's truth, and along with that make it our study to so live and walk with God, that we may commend it to those around us.

**"I WAS DRIVEN TO IT."**

**I**N perusing the life of the shepherd king, David, most of us have been saddened as we have read the words, "And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines" (1 Sam. xxvii. 1). These words are particularly disappointing, because they follow one of David's acts of heroism, in connection with which God in a singular and especial way had given him a token of His care and protection. Saul had brought three thousand chosen men against David, and had tracked him down to the wilderness of Ziph. If David had been afraid at this point, we could have better understood it. But no; fear seemed to have left him, and instead of running away he went with Abishai into the very camp of Saul, and sought for the man who was seeking his life. If God be for us, who can be against us? Why should he be afraid? He did not reckon upon Jehovah in vain, for "a deep sleep from the Lord" fell upon that host of three thousand armed men. The tables were turned, and Saul was at David's mercy. Saul had reason to be afraid now, not David; but David used his opportunity so wisely that when Saul woke up and learned what had taken place, he blessed instead of cursing, confessed instead of accusing, and asked for mercy from David instead of passing sentence upon him. Good overcame evil, and great was the victory. How unexpected, then, is the fall that follows—a fall which nothing but the agonised scenes round burning Ziklag can arrest. These things were written for our learning (Rom. xv. 4). If we can trace the secret of this sad fall, we may be forewarned when like temptation assails us. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. We may take it that there is no such thing as a sudden fall. It may, and often does, appear sudden; but secret sin goes before open fall, heart failure before walk failure. God is let go before Satan

*"I was Driven to it."*

lays hold, the Spirit is grieved before the flesh triumphs. So it must have been with David. And we judge that the evil at work is betrayed at the point where David said to Saul that if the children of men had poisoned Saul's mind against him, they should be cursed, "for they have driven me out *this day* from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go, serve other gods" (1 Sam. xxvi. 19). Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Had David never allowed the thought of fleeing from the Lord's inheritance, but judged it as sin, he would not have given voice to it on *that day*. David, on whom the anointing oil had been poured! David, to whom gracious promises had been given and wondrous deliverances granted! Should such an one as he flee? And on *this day*, instead of speaking of being driven out, should he not have seen in every circumstance, including Saul's own prophecy, a token of God's good hand upon him? Alas! instead of this, we only read, "And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul." Sin excused is sin allowed, and sin allowed becomes sin committed. It would appear that David had reasoned with himself, If, indeed, I leave the place where God would have me to be, the fault and responsibility are with Saul, whose wicked conduct drives me to it. It will be his fault, not mine. Such were his thoughts. To them he gives utterance in the words quoted. Such thoughts, however natural and, from a human standpoint, excusable, were born of unbelief and not of faith. Having once allowed them, doubtless they returned with fresh power in a moment of reaction after the great victory; and then David was unable to resist them, and so fell. How often we are apt to think, and even say, when a real or fancied wrong is done to us, "If they drive me from the meeting, it will be their fault." Or, when asked why some service for the Master has been neglected, we tell out our grievous complaint, and add, with an air of self-complacency, "It was their fault; they drove me to it." Yes; even positive sin is sometimes condoned by this plausible excuse. "My wife's bad temper and untidy habits have driven me to the drink again." But bad conduct in others should drive us closer to the wounded side, not further from it. The real secret of the failure is unbelief. Unbelief ever departs from the living God (Heb. iii. 12, 13). Faith, true faith, finds in these very trials blessed opportunities for trusting God, and therefore for triumphing in Him.



## THE FEASTS OF THE LORD.

### XVI.

**B**EFORE tracing the fulfilment of this closing feast, first, in connection with the Church, and next, in its bearing upon Israel, let us take notice of a remark in verse 39 that it was to be kept after the fruit of the land had been gathered in. Referring to the same subject in Deut. xvi. 13, we are reminded there that the harvest was two-fold in character. "Thou shalt observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine." A comparison with other scriptures will abundantly satisfy us as to the spiritual meaning of these two great divisions of the harvest. Wherever we turn we find that the fruit of the cornfields represents the people of God. The Lord Jesus compares Himself to a corn of wheat; and the wondrous results of His death, in the salvation of many sinners, to the much fruit brought forth through the falling into the ground and dying of that one grain of corn (John xii. 24). Again, in the second parable of Matt. xiii., the children of the kingdom are represented by the good seed. On the other hand, in the day of His vengeance the Lord is set before us as treading the wine-press, and staining all His raiment with its blood (Is. lxiii. 3). But if we turn to the 14th chapter of the Revelation, we find the two great harvests of the corn and the wine set side by side, and the meaning of each left beyond doubt. First, the Son of Man Himself reaps the corn harvest; and second, a symbolic angel reaps the clusters of the vine of the earth, and casts them into the great wine-press of the wrath of God.

It is very plain, then, that the reaping of the corn and wine represents the gathering together of the saints for blessing and of the ungodly for judgment; and the Feast of Tabernacles, falling, as it did, after both harvests were ended, must have its fulfilment after God has brought His redeemed ones to the place of blessing and has judged the Christ-rejectors. Our study of the earlier feasts shows that this will certainly be the case; and we may now proceed to inquire as to the meaning of the special features of this feast in their two-fold application.

Speaking generally, it is easy to see that we have before us a closing scene of unmingled joy and gladness. But the number of days during which the feast was to be kept shows that the joy is an everlasting joy. In rather a remarkable way this feast is spoken of as a seven-day feast, and yet is said to have an eighth day, which is the greatest of all. "The

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fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord. . . . On the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you (Lev. xxiii. 34-36). We are accustomed to say, and quite truly, that the number seven typifies perfection, and eight resurrection. But just because the eighth day is a new first day, and so represents resurrection, it is also a figure of that which is eternal. All God's new things are eternal. Christ rose from the dead to die no more, and the soul that is born again lives for ever. So while the seven days of the feast declare it to be perfect as to its character, the eighth day shows that as to its duration it is eternal.

The mention of this eighth day of the feast brings to mind that wonderful incident recorded in the 7th chapter of John's Gospel. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of His belly shall flow rivers of living water" (verses 37, 38). When God first ordained these feasts, He loved to dwell upon them as something peculiarly His own. We have before taken notice of the repeated expression, "the Feasts of the Lord," in Lev. xxiii. But if we turn to the 2nd verse of John vii., we read, "Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand." No longer the Lord's, but the Jews' feast. As they had turned the house of God into a house of merchandise, so they had robbed these feasts of their Divine significance and made them to be mere outward ceremonials. This last day of the feast should have beautifully shadowed forth the time when the desire of every heart would be perfectly satisfied in the Lord Himself, while He would be resting in the accomplishment of all the purposes of His grace. But the Jews, who could see nothing beyond the outward observance, missed all this. They were restless, unsatisfied, longing for deliverance to appear, but little knowing what their real need was. Perhaps we may be able faintly to picture the thoughts that filled the bosom of the Lord as He surveyed that scene. He Himself could look, with no dim vision, far on to the day of which that eighth day of the feast was the type. He could think of the eternal purpose of the Father's heart, and of the mighty joy of the time when it should all be fulfilled. But what about the teeming multitude around Him, who had come from far and near to take part in a ceremonial that, after all, was to them nothing but a name.

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Why were they there so blind, so dark, so unsatisfied? Because they were refusing Him through whom all God's purposes were to have their accomplishment. Therefore it was that He stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto ME, and drink."

We see in this feast our eternal rest in the glory with the Lord. But what about the booths in which the people were to dwell? These booths were to be made of branches of trees. The commandment in Lev. xxiii. only mentions by name palm trees and willows of the brook, though it speaks of other sorts as goodly trees and thick trees (verse 40). But in Nehemiah viii. we find further mention of olive trees and myrtle trees as included in the Divine commandment (verse 15). The word pine trees is a mistranslation, the Revised Version making it wild olive trees, while literally it is trees of oil. We have, then, the olive, the palm, and the myrtle tree all combined to form these tabernacles, while they were doubtless interwoven with the willows of the brook. The olive speaks of the fulness of spiritual power, the palm of triumphant victory, and the myrtle of joy and gladness; but why should the willow be there? Shall there be any sorrows, any tears, to mar the bliss of that blessed feast? Surely not. But the remembrance of the past will always be with us; not now to cause one pang, but to enhance the joy of the present, and to make our hearts overflow continually with grateful praise and adoring worship.

And even while we are yet here, it is the will of our Father that we should keep this feast, and anticipate the joys of the many mansions in His house. "Let not your heart be troubled," said the Lord Jesus, when He was about to tell them of those many mansions: "ye believe in God, believe also in Me." By the Spirit's power He would have us already sing the song of victory, out of hearts filled with His own joy and peace. And if the sorrows of the way are still present with us, He bids us interweave them with the palm branches, and say, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. viii. 37).

As regards Israel, the Feast of Tabernacles points on to the time of their millennial blessings. The features are the same in both cases, but the fulfilment with them is on earth instead of in heaven. It might seem at first sight as though the type failed in their case, because millennial blessings are for a thousand years only and not for eternity. But possibly this

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may be another reason why the feast is spoken of as of seven days' duration, while afterwards the eighth day is referred to as the greatest of all. The seven days would complete the earthly scene, and then would come the new heavens and new earth of the eighth day. Between these would be Satan's last attempt to deceive the nations and to gather them together against God; his final overthrow; and the great white throne, with its solemn and final judgment of all that had had no part in the first resurrection. In Zech. xiv. 16-19 we learn that the Feast of Tabernacles will be kept during the millennium, and that God will punish the nations who refuse to go up to Jerusalem to keep it. And this seems to correspond with those solemn events that will follow immediately on the close of the millennium.

We have now come to the close of this remarkable series of feasts, but we are still only in the seventh month of the year. What about the remaining five months or more? A reference once more to the diagram will give the answer. There it will be seen that the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles is shown as merging into the beginning of a large circle marked with the words, "To everlasting." This is just what the type appears to convey. The remaining portion of the year was really an undefined period. We have already pointed out that the Jewish year, which was reckoned by lunar months of about  $29\frac{1}{2}$  days each, consisted sometimes of 12 months and sometimes of 13, as it required about  $12\frac{1}{3}$  of such months to make a true solar year, and about every third year an additional month had, therefore, to be added. It is for this reason that the remaining portion of the year after the Feast of Tabernacles was of undefined length, and, just because it was so, it fitly represented the eternity into which the last great day of the Feast of Tabernacles ushers us.

In this way we have seen the eternal counsels of God being wrought out in the changing scenes of this world's history, till they reach their final accomplishment after time has ended. God grant that the contemplation of them may lead every heart to join, with fuller understanding and deeper, humbler adoration, in the language of the apostle: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love (Eph. i. 3, 4).

## Pray in Private before you Prophecy in Public.

**L**AST month we remarked that secret sin goes before outward fall. Now, we would remind our readers and ourselves that the reverse is also true. We must get power with God in secret before we can manifest that power before others. Those who get victory over themselves shall lead others in the fight. Those who wrestle in believing prayer in the closet shall be owned in the day of battle.

David, who killed the lion and the bear in the wilderness, afterwards slew Goliath before all Israel. A like lesson can be learnt from Elijah the Tishbite. In his days, Israel seemed given over to iniquity. Ahab sinned more and more. No one seemed able to raise a testimony for God. The altars of Jehovah were cast down, Baal was worshipped, and no one seemed to care. But the Lord knew His own, and could count upon His hidden ones (1 Kings xix. 18). He knew of the service of Obadiah, who hid the prophets in a cave; but as far as public testimony went, the Devil seemed to have all his own way. When suddenly, without a word of warning or introduction, Elijah the Tishbite (perhaps, the stranger) appears upon the scene, and boldly tells the wicked Ahab of his sin, face to face, and proclaims the judgment, "There shall be no rain." All that is known of Elijah is that he came from the rugged country of Gilead, the other side of Jordan. All? No, not all. Years after the Spirit reveals what went before; draws aside the curtain, that we may learn the secret struggle before the public testimony. Away in his far off home, his soul was grieved over the sins of his people and the dishonour done to Jehovah's name. James tells us that he, Elijah, 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 by the space of three years and six months (James v. 17). He went to the court of heaven before he visited the court of Samaria. And he, who dwelt in the presence of the King of Kings, had no need to tremble before an earthly monarch. How deeply did he grieve over the national dishonour done to Jehovah's name. He would rather his country should suffer than sin. He does not love his country less, but more, because he pleads for something that shall open the nation's eyes, and bring it back to God. He prays earnestly, and faith grasps the answer, and so, with unflinching step, he leaves his mountain home, finds the wicked king, and, with the dignity of faith, proclaims his solemn and unwelcome message. So it came to pass that, when none of the royal city or priestly tribe did testify for their God, the

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uncouth, unknown man of the country became God's messenger, the honoured instrument to keep alight the testimony for his God, that had almost gone out in the prevailing darkness.

The histories of Joseph in prison, Moses in Midian, John in the desert till the days of his showing to Israel (Luke i. 80), Paul in Arabia (Gal. i. 17), and even our blessed Lord Himself in Nazareth, may be finger posts to point out the same lesson, hard for the flesh to learn, that "this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" (Matt. xvii. 21).

## THE COMING MAN.

### II.

**R**EVELATION v. tells out the joy of heaven as the Lamb is descried claiming the book, the title-deeds to earth's dominion. But that book cannot at once be opened. It is sealed with seven seals, which must be broken ere those title-deeds may be unrolled. And before the loud voices shall proclaim that the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, judgment after judgment must overturn and overturn, and so prepare for Him whose right it is (Rev. xi. 15, and Ezek. xxi. 25-27). The opening of each seal is the signal for some fresh judgment; and all these judgments lead up to the overthrow of the prince of this world and the enthronement of God's Christ. The manifestation of the man of sin follows the opening of the first seal. We read, "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown (victor's crown) was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Rev. vi. 2). "The mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth (hinders) will let (hinder), until he be taken out of the way: and then shall that Wicked (one) be revealed" (2 Thess. ii. 7, 8). The man will be ready for the hour. But it is not to be supposed that at once, and at first, he is seen in the fulness of his power and of his unblushing hostility against the Most High. The vision granted to John suggests progress. The rider goes forth conquering and to conquer. Success greets him; for a crown is given him: a victor's crown, not the diadem which proclaims regal power. The white horse bespeaks his military power; but universal authority is not yet his, for a bow, and not a sword, is the weapon in his hand.

To this agree the many prophecies of Daniel, which one and all point to a vile person (chap. xi. 21), a man of the people,

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gradually winning his way upward and upward, until he shall at last be seen at the giddy height, as the mighty head of the great Roman empire. In this connection a passage in Rev. xvii. is most interesting. The seven heads of the beast (verse 3), which must not be confounded with the ten horns, have a two-fold interpretation. 1st, As regards the woman: they tell of the seven hills on which she sits, the seven hills of Rome (verses 9 and 18). 2nd, As regards the beast: they speak of the various forms of government which have existed, or shall exist, in the Roman empire. We are told that of these seven five have passed away, but one is (that is, at the time John saw the vision), while the other, the seventh, had not come (verse 10). When, however, the seventh should come, it would last but a short time, and give place to the eighth, which is but a modification of the seventh. Thus we are enabled to trace three distinct stages in the progress of Antichrist. 1st, As an adventurer climbing into power. 2nd, As a monarch in the revived Roman empire. 3rd, As the acknowledged head of the whole empire, and as such receiving the homage of its ten kings.

We will now pass on to another scene. Rev. xii. tells how Satan, when cast out of heaven, comes down to earth to concentrate his wicked efforts there, full of wrath, for he knows that his time is short (verse 12). Chapter xiii. opens, "And I stood upon the sand of the sea"; but this sentence belongs to chapter xii., and should read, "And he (that is, the dragon) stood upon the sand of the sea" (see R.V.). Then the seer saw arise out of those surging waves the ten-horned beast. Satan's hate against God leads him ever to strike at man, His creature. To ally man with himself in his rebellion is, therefore, his object. *Now*, that hate is shown as he calls up the ten-kingdomed Roman empire out of the heaving masses of democracy; for the waters are peoples and multitudes (Rev. xvii. 15); a kingdom that is born of man's rebellion, the outcome and offspring of his lawlessness, the monument of his rejection, yea, of his defiance of the God of heaven.

The ten horns of the beast are crowned with the diadem crown; for now has come the hour when they receive power as kings with the beast (Rev. xiii. 1, R.V.; Rev. xvii. 12, 13). It is the Roman empire in its last and eighth stage, headed up in the Antichrist, who has now reached the summit of his ambition as the world ruler. Now the moment has come when he breaks his treaty with the Jews (Dan. ix. 27). He exalts

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himself, and others flatter him: "Who is like unto the beast?" they say; "Who is able to make war with him?" (Rev. xiii. 4). He opens his mouth in blasphemy against God, His name, His tabernacle, and those that dwell in heaven. Not content with causing the sacrifice and oblation to cease (Dan. ix. 27, and xi. 31), he will, in his daring blasphemy, sit in the temple of God and proclaim himself to be God (2 Thess. ii. 4). It is not strange that he who thus dares to defy Jehovah shall also blaspheme the dwellers in heaven, the caught-up ones. As the young men in Elisha's day poured ridicule upon the rapture of Elijah by calling upon Elisha to "Go up, go up," like his master (2 Kings ii. 23-25), so will this monster and his followers ridicule and blaspheme the rapture of the saints, and seek to kill with hate and scorn the testimony of the godly, which shall remain as their true memorial.

Antichrist is Satan's masterpiece. The outcome of satanic energy, his kingdom is seen to ascend out of the bottomless pit (Rev. xvii. 8). To him doth the dragon give his seat, his power and authority. The man and the kingdom are of Satan. He shall continue three-and-a-half years in the fulness of his power; just as our Lord's active ministry lasted a similar period.

Let us pause a moment and consider. The first result of the Lamb's interference (shall we say?) with this world's government is the bringing out of the Antichrist. The first effort of Satan when, with all hate and rage, he comes down in person to the earth to wage war with heaven, is to endow that same Antichrist with power and grant him his kingdom (Matt. iv. 8, 9). Satan can but work out God's will. God makes the wrath of man, and of Satan too, to praise Him (Ps. lxxvi. 10). In the fierce storm the angry billows of the sea dash themselves in vain against the rock-bound coast. They cannot go an inch beyond the bounds that sovereign power has marked out for them. Their very fury tells out the power of Him who holds them back. So with man's passions. Satan stirs them up and urges them on, till it seems as if none could restrain them; and yet they do but carry out God's sovereign counsels. The wicked hands which crucified the Saviour only fulfilled God's purposes. Jew and Gentile, gathered there by satanic power, could but do whatsoever God's hand and counsel determined before to be done (Acts ii. 23, and iv. 27, 28). Antichrist shall be the unconscious instrument to carry out God's counsel. 1st, He shall help the Jews back to their own land. 2nd, His ambitious and tyrannical rule shall be the scourge of the



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nations. 3rd, His treachery to the Jews shall manifest the true-hearted ones, and be God's judgment on the false. 4th, He shall make easy that ancient promise, "I will make thine enemies thy footstool" (Ps. cx. 1), as he in person, with his ten confederate kings and the chief of his followers, gathers around Jerusalem, to be crushed and trodden in the dust by the appearance of the true Warrior on the white horse, of whom the Antichrist is but an impious imitation.

To return to the history of this man of sin, there is to be a further development. The satanic system would not be complete without religion, nor that religion without a priest. The political power is headed up in the first beast, who, Darius-like, claims all worship (Dan. vi.). The religious system is headed up in the second beast, the false prophet, who causes all to worship the first beast. Such are the trinity of hell, who, in daring and awful blasphemy, caricature the Father, Son and Spirit. The dragon designs, the Antichrist acts, and the false prophet inspires or leads men on in the awful delusion.

The false prophet seeks not his own glory, but that men may worship the first beast. Twice we are told that he performs his wonders in the presence or sight of the first beast (see Rev. xiii. 12, 14, R.V.), so anxious is he that all the honour may redound to the first beast. This reminds us of the words, "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of (from) Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me" (John xvi. 13, 14). He is the best servant whose love and enthusiasm for his Master swallows up all thought of self. This second beast cometh up out of the earth, and is of the earth, earthy. Earth's best in wisdom, science, learning. He would fain appear as a benefactor; but it is slime for mortar: for though he has two horns, as a lamb, he nevertheless speaks as a dragon. Priest-like, he carries his cruel tyranny into the social circle, and forbids intercourse with any but those who have the mark of the beast. Of this also, we may say, coming events cast their shadows before them. Alas for the days when dragon, beast and prophet rule. How long, O Lord, how long? In the vision, Daniel beheld the wicked one make war against the saints. He changes the times and seasons, the seasons being the eternal witness to God's truth (Ps. xix.). He wears out the saints. He seems to prevail, *until* the time comes for the saints to possess the kingdom (Daniel vii. 21-28).

*Our First Prayer Meeting.*

For a season, and for a season only, does wickedness triumph. Its day shall be short, its judgment swift. "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him. . . . These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse" (Rev. xix. 19-21). "Hallelujah; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!"

**OUR FIRST PRAYER MEETING.**

**W**E had no hall to meet in, and there was no assembly of Christians in the village where we lived. Ten of us, all young apprentice lads, had been converted through the faithful preaching of an evangelist; but he had gone, and we were left alone. It was no easy matter to bear the scorn of the villagers, and more especially the wrath of the religious people. Sermons were preached against us, and in several cases our employers were advised to put a stop to our "preaching and praying," as they called it. But all this only helped to drive us to God and to keep us standing together shoulder to shoulder. We met early on the Lord's-day mornings by a river-side, and had a season of prayer together. This was our first prayer meeting. It was there that some of us first opened our lips in audible prayer; and on looking back to that hallowed spot I can trace there the source of the bright and happy testimony that many of those dear young Christians were enabled to bear to the Lord's name. Those quiet hours by the river's side will never be forgotten; their hallowed memories linger still. Dear young saints, if you have no other place to which you can go to pour out your hearts to God in prayer, go forth to some such spot. The Master Himself sought the solitude of the mountain side. Wheresoever it may be, the Lord will meet you there; and you will prove in your soul's experience the blessedness of that "sweet hour of prayer."

I HAVE a great need of Christ; but I have a great Christ for my need.

EVERY lock of sorrow has a key of promise to fit it.—*Macduff.*

## FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.

### V.

“**H**USBANDS, love your wives.” One of England’s most celebrated poets has written words about the time when a “young man’s fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.” But oh! how different this is from the Divine pattern that we are told to consider when we desire to know how a husband should love his wife. “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.” There is no place for lightness here, no mere gratification of whim and fancy. He gave Himself. The true character of a husband’s love is summed up in these words. What are all other gifts beside this one? This one includes all others, and without it all the rest would lose their worth. Then, by way of illustration, the apostle adds: “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church” (Eph. v. 28, 29). There is no difficulty about the similitude used here. We all know what it is to take care of our own bodies, to nourish and cherish them, to rest them when wearied, to shield them from danger and hurt, and to care for them when injured. It is one of the world’s stock jokes that all the man’s attentions are paid during courtship, and that they gradually drop off after marriage. We fear that even among God’s children there is often a large measure of truth in this. Some husbands seem to look upon it as a natural thing that their wives should wait on them, hand and foot, without receiving any thoughtful attention in return. Perhaps the husband works hard all day, and he imagines that for that reason nothing should be expected of him when he gets home at night except that he should take his ease. But we have known cases where the wife’s toil has been quite as constant in the house as the husband’s out of it; and where she has quite as much needed to be cheered and comforted by him, as he did to be ministered to by her. And God would have men learn a lesson from the very care they bestow upon their weary bodies, as to how they should cherish their wives.

The corresponding passage in Col. iii. reads, “Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them” (ver. 19). It is very noticeable how warnings of this sort are given in every case to the stronger party, and the one to whom authority is committed. In the same way we read, “Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath” (Eph. vi. 4); while masters are

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bidden to forbear threatenings (ver. 9). If the woman's temptation is to try and gain her end by continual small contentions, the man's danger is that he should meet this by bitterness and anger. Paul prayed for the Colossian believers that they might be strengthened with all might, according to the power of God's glory, unto all patience. It is the special privilege of power to exercise patience, and just because the man is the stronger of the two he is called upon to copy the Divine pattern in this respect.

Another view of the husband's responsibility is brought out in 1 Peter iii. 7, where he is commanded to dwell with his wife, *according to knowledge*, giving honour to her as unto the weaker vessel. According to knowledge seems to be put in contrast to mere sentiment, emotion, or natural affection. The husband is called upon to consider the character of the mysterious bond between his wife and himself, as set forth in the heavenly pattern; to acquaint himself fully with that pattern, and then to dwell with his wife according to the Divine knowledge thus imparted to him. The dependence that arises from her being the weaker vessel is her special claim to honour. As the believer honours Christ by relying upon Him implicitly, while He, in return, delights to put honour upon those whose weakness teaches them to lean upon Him, so does the wife honour the husband by her willing dependence and subjection, while her trust claims, and should ever receive, the fullest honour from him. Then, too, there is not only to be knowledge as to that in which God has made them to differ, each supplying the other's lack, but also as to that in which they are both alike. They are "heirs together of the grace of life." Here there is absolute equality, perfect likeness. Both are brought nigh by the same precious faith, through the same precious blood; both have access into the holiest with boldness: and unless all these things are recognised, and practically acted upon, the prayers of both will be hindered.

#### LOVE NEVER FAILETH.

1 COR. xiii. 8.

"I LOVE my God, but with no love of mine,  
 For I have none to give;  
 I love the Lord, but all the love is Thine;  
 For by Thy love I live.  
 I am as nothing, and rejoice to be  
 Emptied and lost, and swallowed up in Thee."—*Guyon.*