

“SOUND WORDS,”

2 Tim. i. 13.

“LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY.”—COL. III, 16.

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SOUND WORDS.

SOME LESSONS FROM JOSHUA.

In the things that are written as "types for us, and for our admonition" (1 Cor. x, 11), in the journeyings of Israel, there are two water-floods, each expressive of death. They are the Red Sea and the River Jordan. But they differ as to their meaning and application, though both pointing to Christ.

At the Red Sea, we behold Moses and his Rod, the symbol of righteousness and judgment; at the Jordan, the Ark of the Covenant, and the priests carrying it down into the bed of the stream until all the people passed over. It is Christ Jesus gone down into death for us and staying its power. In the Red Sea, we have the righteousness of God and the justification of the sinner; at the Jordan, God bringing His own whom He has redeemed, into His own land. There is not a word of justifying here, for God need not justify His own work. He justifies the ungodly. In the one there is the type of what we are brought out of, in the other of what we are brought into. The Red Sea is found for us in *Romans*, the Jordan in *Ephesians*. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in *Christ*." He "hath quickened us together with Christ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." In *Romans*, man is seen as alive, proved guilty, and then crucified. It is God's righteousness. In *Ephesians*, both Jesus and we are seen as dead and in the grave—the bed of the Jordan—and God raising Him and seating Him in heavenly places, and us, too, in Him. It is God's mighty power, according to the great love wherewith He loved us.

While *Exodus* tells us of redemption, and *Numbers* of the wilderness, the book of *Joshua* is occupied specially with the land, going into it and taking possession; our establishment in heaven, now, by grace, and possession by His power. It is naturally divided into two parts: the first, (Chaps. i-xii.) entrance into the land and conquest of it; the second, (Chaps. xii-xxiv.) the distribu-

tion of the land as established in it. Ephes. vi, 11 18, gives us our conflict, of which the former part of Joshua is the type. Canaan is a type of heaven, not as the scene of glory and rest, when we die physically; but of the "heavenly places" in which we are already set, and which is the scene of our conflict, to maintain our ground as "partakers of the heavenly calling."

In Chapter i, we have a new leader, Joshua, one who accompanied Moses from Egypt, but taking his place distinctly on the ground that "Moses, my servant is dead," the one who is the symbol of the law. But the land was aside from the law, given by promise, according to the counsels of God concerning them. Moses and his rod are therefore forever laid by, as savoring of terror and wrath and judgment. For the heavenly places to us, are according as He hath chosen us in Christ, before the foundation of the world. But the same Christ that leads us into the land as the Captain of our salvation, is the One who went into the place of judgment under the law, and endured the wrath. We are through grace, dead to the law, and to that with which the law had to do, the flesh (the old nature), and the world. We are crucified and risen. "Moses, my servant is dead; now, *therefore*, arise." "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, for ye have died." (Coloss. iii.)

"All this people" were to go over with Joshua. And so we are *all* raised and seated in heavenly places now, in Christ Jesus, and this simply as believers who have now the Holy Spirit as a seal, and the earnest of the inheritance. The weakest, the most uninformed believer is as much there as the most intelligent.

But the land must be taken by conflict as a possession. "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given you," &c. Although He had held it for them for hundreds of years (Exod. iii. 8), they must, after they get into it, fight for it. So we put forth no effort to get in. To be saved is to be there. It is what is done. We have no other standing. But we are to do more than merely know intellectually what God has done with us. We are to walk in it all. Being sons, we are to be imitators of God, *as* dear children.

Alas! how few seem to get hold of the real meaning of all this. They walk as men, as of this world, as though this were home, and were to be improved and possessed by us. This would be, as though God had said to them in Egypt or the wilderness, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, shall be yours." This would never do. It was not what He had redeemed them for. The wondrous transactions of that night ever to be observed, and the Red Sea, the smiting of the rock for water, and the bread from heaven, and the rich glories of the Jordan, were all arguments against that. And now I ask you, fellow believer, whether the blood of sprinkling, the cross, the resurrection, and all things in which you are made partaker with Christ, do not involve this, that you are clean out of all that is of this world? We are citizens of heaven; our commonwealth is there. We are crucified to the world, and the world is crucified unto us. We must go over and stay there. "As I said unto Moses" brings us back to the purpose and word of God at the beginning; for us, it is found in "the good pleasure of His will." (Ephes. i. 5.)

And then what encouragement is given? "There shall not a man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life." Though our great enemy will fight to keep us from the ground, he is conquered already, for he met Christ and was overcome. The word is then "Be strong and of good courage." It is remarkable how often that word comes to Joshua. It was given by Moses in the original charge to him (Deut. xxxi. 23), then three times here by the Lord; in v. 6, in the precious expression of His grace, that He would be with him (to us, in 2 Tim. ii. 1); v. 7, in connection with the word that he was to observe (for us, in 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17); and in v. 9, because He commanded him, and having "thus saith the Lord," for being there, he should be strong (Gal. ii. 12). And this word has special emphasis in Ephes. vi. 10, where our conflict in heavenly places is shown. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." That is resurrection, called His mighty power (Ephes. i. 19, 20). There is no fighting as men, in the flesh, as having strength of our own, there is no ability of any kind. It is simply knowing that He has done all, and standing to that truth, that we are risen by His power.

In all this there must be a close following of the word. Day and night was he to meditate therein. It was never to depart out of his mouth. Our place is made known purely by the word of revelation (Ephes. iii. 3; i. 17). To man's reason it is utter foolishness, "the hidden wisdom which none of the princes of this world knew." We must turn neither to the right nor to the left. We are shut up to the whole word. O what a failure here, and a living in man's thoughts! Many in the "night" of their sorrows or of acknowledged darkness may turn to the word, but forget it in the "day" of their prosperity. We are never safe without the word. We know nothing of our place and calling without it.

Thus (v. 9.), "the Lord thy God be with thee," is the word of grace given. On no other terms could He go on with them. So Paul, the apostle of "the mystery," exhorts: "Those things that ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in me, do, and the God of peace shall be with you." We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which He hath ordained that we should walk in *them*."

Chap. iii. Before passing over Jordan, the people were to have three days in which to prepare. Mere human energy will not avail us to go in the Lord's way. Even this perfect number of days seems to speak of resurrection, and we need in that spirit to meditate deeply on these things of our place and conflict. Then, when they went over, the Ark of the Covenant must first pass over and they were to observe it "to know the way they must go," for they "had not passed this way heretofore." And then they were to sanctify themselves. "For their sake I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." (John xvii. 19.) Who, indeed, had passed through death to rise above its power, until Christ had led the way? It is a new way altogether and surely we but follow Him, who is the first fruits of the resurrection, in all things having the pre-eminence. Here, the title by which He went forth was "Lord of all the earth," as Christ in resurrection said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth." If not, how could He give us a place in heaven?

The people then remove *from their tents* to pass over Jordan. They were going into a place for a per-

manent habitation, and tent life and pilgrimage are over. So we are made to *sit*—fixed as to our standing—in heavenly places. It was harvest time in the land. So the full rich fruit of our place in heaven in the Risen One, is ours at once upon entrance. It is the exceeding riches of His grace. But the full power of death, and the full power of Christ must be displayed at the time, for in the type, the Jordan was highest at that time, overflowing its banks.

Verse 15. "And as they that bore the Ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bore the Ark were dipped in the brim of the water . . . that the waters which came down from above, stood and rose up upon an heap . . . and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the Salt Sea, failed and were cut off." The water-floods could not engulf the Ark of God, conqueror over everything. So death hath no dominion over Christ, He has destroyed the power of death for His people. Both death and judgment are passed for the believer. We have, in Christ, already died, the judgment has already passed on us in the cross. We are beyond them and their power and dread. "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" "Until all the people were passed clean over Jordan" the Ark stood before the heaped-up waters. When it removed, they swept on in their place. Thus only in Christ are we safe. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life." "He that hath not the Son of God shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on Him." How glorious the former! How solemn the latter!

Chap. iv, 4-9. It is as redeemed that we keep the memorial of the Lord's death. That is ever the one fundamental thing, the one grand event, wherein the whole matter of sin was entered into and settled, for those who by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, stand in Him, taken into favor in the Beloved. In all the precious results, God never acts upon any other fact, and He would have us ever keep that before the mind. In all our sins that we need to confess, as children of God, His forgiveness and cleansing are on the ground alone of what Christ has done. The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin, and He is faithful and

just to that work, to forgive. And never would the redeemed soul forget this. In the stones taken from out the midst of Jordan, there is a memorial of death and deliverance thereby. They were taken out from the place where the priests' feet stood firm, telling of the work of God in bringing them over. As they bore them on their shoulders, so we are always to be bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus. With these they built a memorial on the bank at Gilgal. This was of *resurrection*. The memorial in the bed of the river was of *death*. The same One who has gone down into the grave for us, has brought us up again by the power of His life into heavenly places, and there we keep in memory, death and resurrection, His for us, and ours in and with Him.

There were *twelve* stones, a stone for each tribe, and they were set up together. Israel might be torn asunder as tribes, in the future, but there stood the expression of God's mind towards them. They were one. Even so, we have been quickened *together* and raised up *together* in Christ. We are one body, and members of each other. However, through ignorance or unbelief, any of the children of God may fail to manifest this unity, still by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.

Chap. v. 9-15. A very important principle is here brought to our notice, that to enter into the place to which God has brought us in Christ Jesus, we must know *practically* what death to the flesh means. It is peculiar, that just here, as all the people had passed over in perfect triumph, and marched into the land, by the grace of God alone, that they must use the knife for circumcision. Now, what is this circumcision to us? It is entering into the power of the cross separating us practically from the flesh or old nature. The old nature will not do for God. It has nothing for Him. It was thoroughly tried for thousands of years, up to the cross. And what is the sentence passed upon it? It is condemned. We are brought into a place where only the new man is addressed and counted as living. "We are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. iii. 3). And so in Colos. ii, 11. "In

whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of (the sins of) the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ.

This was done at Gilgal (*rolling*), a place which received its name from the Lord rolling away the reproach of Egypt from them, entirely. Not only out of its bondage, but the reproach of it. It was to be no more remembered. Henceforth the land only, as though they were native to it, born in it. How perfect! The river had rolled back, shutting them *into* the Lord's land, as the Red Sea had shut them *out* of Egypt, and the circumcision was that which separated them individually from all in Egypt. They belonged to Jehovah. So Gilgal was the place to which they returned after each battle. To us, Gilgal is this, that having died, and our life being hid with Christ in God, we are to *mortify*, therefore, our members which are upon the earth, that is, treat them as dead. We are no longer to give them any place. We are entitled to know all as ended in the flesh. God will never look upon us as in the flesh. He cannot deny Himself and what He has done.

And now being in the land, they keep the passover at its true time, as we keep in memory the work on the cross, and Him who hung there for our sins, feeding upon Him as our substitute. But the proper food for them as through with the wilderness, was the old corn of the land. This is Christ risen in heaven, upon whom we feed, as being heavenly. The wilderness through, the manna ceases. That was the bread from heaven, when the desert produced nothing. It was connected with the forty years of their dreary rebellion, their "manners" in the wilderness, their unbelief. But now all this is changed. The Lord has been faithful and has brought them in according to His own thoughts. As circumcised and brought into His holy habitation, they may eat the fruit of the land forever. How fully instructive to us. Are we in heaven? It is only in and by Christ, the Risen Man in whom we stand, and we need Himself, as such, ministered to us all the time, living upon Him, nourished and built up in Him. We are in the wilderness also, but *it* has nothing for us. Our food as there, is Jesus Christ, who was down here walking through the whole scene a stranger. Yet we are not, in

our standing, here at all, nor of the world, though in it. As not of it, we live upon Him, learning that we are to walk as He also walked. Thus as sinners saved, we keep the Passover, purging out the old leaven, because we are unleavened; as having to walk in the world, we feed upon Him who was down here; and as being really risen in Him, we live by Him the Man in the glory—all Christ—for He is all, but according to our need.

And now, all preparations being finished, they are to take the walled cities, and the march through the land. Having first of all had to do with God, in the memorial stones and in self-crucifixion, and rejoicing in the remembrance of His grace in the feast of the Passover, and then having been refreshed with the fruit and the old corn of the land, the work is to be done. He prepared a table before them in the presence of their enemies. How needful this lesson, for our thoughts of fighting and of labor are to rush forward in self-assurance, and the will of the flesh. But, though the whole of Canaan was to be taken, it must be taken in God's own way, as His possession. And first His own claims and His own glory are to be recognized and met.

Then Joshua meets a man with a sword drawn in His hand, and learns that Jericho, its people and its king, are to be delivered into Israel's hands; and also what are the weapons of warfare to be used. Important this, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. Let us but have "the captain of the host of the Lord" before us, leading us to the conflict, and nothing can stand before us. But the presence of Jehovah as captain of the host, demanded here as in Exod. iii. holiness and reverence, and Joshua as Moses, is to take off His shoes. It is what becomes the presence of God; and so if He leads His people now to conflict, His holiness calls for us to be undefiled and to have those affections which become His own presence.

Are we to do anything out of His presence, just as He is? The conflict is real, with unseen and malignant enemies, Satan and his hosts. But greater is he that is with us, than all the power of the adversary. Yet in no way is His own nature to be compromised by levity or negligence. We serve Him acceptably with godly fear.

In Chapter vi, we have the taking of Jericho (a specimen of the power of the enemy), and we have, in this, the principle on which the whole land, with its cities walled up to heaven, is to be conquered. Alas! they did not follow this; but the Lord gives us in this incident, to know how easily the thing could be done, by His might, in simple faith and obedience. Surely it was altogether of the Lord. If Jericho be walled up to the heavens, He sits above the heavens; if it be "straitly shut up," He who opened a pathway through the Red Sea and the Jordan, can bring down its walls. It is He that "casteth down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringeth into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. x, 5. But what warriors and what weapons! Priests, with rams' horns! This is "the foolishness of God, which is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men. God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence." 1 Cor. i, 27-29. Christ crucified is to man, foolishness. But God could say to Joshua, "*I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor,*" through these means, despised of men.

In the rams' horns we have doubtless a reference to the death of Christ, as taken from the rams of the burnt and other offerings. Thus it pleased God, by the foolishness of the preaching—Christ crucified—to save. This is His only proclamation, though it be a savor of death unto some, an offense to the multitude.

The priests were they who were separated unto God as worshipers brought into the holy place, and having to do with His things. Thus we, as drawing near to God and being in His presence, knowing liberty in the Spirit, beholding the glory of the Lord, are more than conquerors.

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down." This tells the whole story. Everything was built upon God and His word. When the blast was made upon the rams'

horns, all the people were to shout with a great shout; not when the walls fell. Any one could do that. Unbelief could do it. So by faith alone we take our place already as conquerors in the heavenlies, knowing that our Leader *has* vanquished Satan, who had the power of death, and we are out of its power, really beyond death, walking as victors in newness of life. "*This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*"

Then there was patience to be exercised, too. One day at a time, the order came, to compass the city, and then back again to their camp. Their part was obedience, leaving results with God. And so is ours. The mind occupied with results, or laboring with reference to results, is sure to go astray. It always proves in the end that we thought we knew better than God (see Saul's case, 1 Sam. xv). "The trial of faith worketh patience." When God appoints, it is perfection. This we have in the *seven* times going around the city. Thus there are seven priests, seven days, and the seven times on the last day. Jericho does not stand for the world in which we are to evangelize, but over which we are individually conquerors. The world would call it nonsense for us to be talking of being in heaven while here, of having all our place and possession there; but we look to the cross and the resurrection, and the glory, and we say it is this or nothing. It is no longer this world for us. The world is crucified to us, and we to the world. Here it is not efforts of our own, but distinctly and only the realm of faith. All things fall before that.

And now, the walls down, every man is to go straight up, straight before him. No trouble to find one's place, when everything is according to God. And then, Jericho destroyed, a curse is pronounced upon him who would build it again. Are you building again that which you destroyed? Has the cross, the open grave, lost meaning to any of us? How we all need the word of warning, when so early, some were walking who were enemies of the cross of Christ, and the Galatians had turned aside from grace. "As ye have, therefore, received Christ Jesus, the Lord, so walk ye in Him: rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."

MY NEIGHBOR.

It is ever the way of man to want to be accredited for what he thinks himself to be. He would justify himself. And to do this, he would have the way of life to accommodate his convenience. He goes about to establish his own righteousness, not submitting himself unto the righteousness of God. For the blessed thing is, God has a righteousness to render unto man. (Job xxxiii, 26.)

Yes, "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord." How honoring to God, for man weighed is found wanting. "There is *none* righteous; there is *none* that seeketh after God; there is *none* that doeth good, no, *not one!* What a sweeping verdict! Who can gainsay it, when this "is written" as God's own summing up?

In Luke x, 25-37, we have man's valuation of himself rebuked, but oh, after the Divine way, by showing the riches of grace meeting the reality of the need.

A certain lawyer, doubtless filled with himself, and thinking to tempt Christ, said, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" What *should* he do? The law had promised life to as many as continued doing all its requirements. It was holy, just and good, asking nothing from man but what was right and equitable. It contained two tables, one in regard to God, the other in regard to man, and each must be loved up to the full standard, God with all the heart and soul and strength; man, our neighbor, as ourselves. How simple the announcement! But, how about obedience to it? The lawyer evidently had little conscience as to loving God, and, no doubt, thought that his untested feelings towards God would pass for obedience. Indeed, many are unconscious of the deep hatred towards God that is in them, while the very low estimate they form of what is due to Him is the very result and token of it.

Thus he passed to the second commandment. And here, willing to justify himself, said, "And who is my neighbor?" Strange question! If he has not yet known his neighbor, what, then, of his state? If he did, how little he was acting upon this command, by mocking Jesus. There is in the stupid state of man's conscience a thought that somehow he does obey this. What do

you say? If your neighbor's house were burning, or if he is spoken evil of, do you feel it as much as if it were yourself? Or, if he has lost his money, is it quite so bad to you as if you had lost yours? But suppose he were one in an inferior circle to yours, or your enemy, would you class him as your neighbor? Were he degraded to the lowest place, would it be the same to you as though you were there? Men make grades and nationalities, and caste, and by these avoid the force of such a law. Their neighbor is one of their own rank, of whom they can receive again. Thus they make void the law of God.

Man, indeed, needs the act of a neighbor, one to love him where he is, for he is lost, guilty, and ruined by sin. Such is his real condition, and, withal, he is "without strength." Will any one die for him, for death is what his condition and guilt incur. For a *good* man, some would even dare to die. But does any care enough for his fellow man to take him out of his place of wrath and sin, by taking his place? Alas, here man was powerless, and this was what the law could not do.

There was One only that sold all that He had, and gave to the poor, that gave up His place in glory, emptied Himself, and then gave up all that He had, as an obedient One, always pleasing the Father; and came to the cross to be forsaken of God, for the sake of man, who was His enemy. Was not that loving His neighbor as Himself?

So, when the question was asked, who is my neighbor, our Lord gave this striking story, of how a neighbor is to be traced and recognized. Here was a poor man, robbed, stripped, and left half dead. The Priest and the Levite were not the ones that acted as neighbors. They were not "journeying," but only "by chance" going that way. All the ritual and the service under the Law came in only "by the way," came where man was, to be sure, but they could only look on him. If he were able to present himself before God as a worshiper, they might use their office, but out in the gutter, bruised and broken and half dead, their offices could avail nothing. They loved not their neighbor as themselves, for they passed by on the other side.

One must be "journeying," to find the lost. Even

as the merchantman, in Matt. xiii, was *seeking* goodly pearls. It is the activity of love, prepared by having the "oil and wine" to meet the object of need. So Christ told the young man to sell all that he had, and give to the poor. The poor must be sought. Man's way is to let him be a beggar first, and then dole out a pittance, because of his continued coming, or to sound a trumpet before him—to be seen of men.

But this One that journeyed was a Samaritan, cast into the place of reproach, and esteemed an enemy by the Jew, for the Jews would have no dealings with the Samaritans. So Christ was the hated One, coming to do good to those that despitely treated him. But He "came this way," and "saw" us in the condition in which Satan had left us. And here we have a lovely series of actions, all on His part, none on his who fell among thieves. He saw, had compassion, went to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, set him on His own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him, being chargeable for his entire maintenance while there, and finally gave intimation of a speedy return by leaving two days' support, with the possibility of a little tarrying beyond it! How thoroughly the case is met, and with what thoughtfulness, even to the wants of the heart.

Ah! we see easily that this is none other than our heavenly Kinsman, or neighbor, who, "forasmuch as we were partakers of flesh and blood, likewise took part in the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were, all their life-time, subject to bondage. For verily, He took not up angels, but He took up the seed of Abraham."

Here was life and healing and joy first of all, in the oil and wine. And it is blessed to see, in the wine, that which maketh glad the heart of God and man. Man, in his thought of remedy goes no further than what he fancies will suit man, leaving God's joy out of the case. He would love his neighbor without loving God first; but this is the divine order and manner. Yes, I can know that in being met in grace in Christ, my salvation gives God delight, intensely satisfies everything in Him, giving me life before Him, according to His own perfect mind. Is not that something wonderful to begin with?

But in this perfect picture, there is something far richer than simply meeting us down in our own low place of misery. We are called upon not only to know that we have been so loved that He gave His Son for us, but we are invited to behold the *manner* of His love, that *we* should be called the *sons of God*, too. In this beautiful story it is told by the taking the man off from his own feet, and putting him in the place from which the helper had descended. He has a new position altogether. Instructive, indeed, is this, for man's thought is to be helped to stand on his own feet, to be made a better *man*, to have a new start, it may be, but to go on on his own ground, and to look back upon a life well spent. God's way is the New Man. "If any man be in Christ, it is a new creation." "In Christ," is the peculiar title given to our standing, and it is a reality, for as to ourselves, as sinners, we are dead, crucified. And the power of our walk is reckoning ourselves dead, indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; and thus sin shall not have dominion over us. He "sets us on his own beast." "I am crucified with Christ, yet, nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me. (Gal. ii, 20.)

There is a sweet suggestion of strangership in bringing him to an "inn." Where else could the Samaritan take him, in the land of the Jews? He himself was a stranger there, and a pilgrim, journeying. It was not home. And so he gives this object of his care a like character, and only a temporary home, sufficient for a pilgrim. The moment we are blessed by Him who had compassion on us, and set in his own place, lifted off of our own standing, and set on heavenly places, "set on His own beast," we take His relationship here, of strangership. We are no more of the world. And as such we are living on Him. It is His money keeps us while we are at the inn. *Are we at the inn?* Do we know only the content of "having food and covering," getting nothing from the world? The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Do we know we are, as such, then, shut up unto Him for everything?

But, then, there is a secret of the heart told us still

further. The man is *valued* by his neighbor, and so he is coming again. His care does not cease at the door of the inn, nor does he delegate the case to the keeper of the inn entirely. For how could he delegate the love that carried the oil and wine, and got off his beast, and bore this object of his love on it? No! He values the one he has helped, and he is coming again! And for the little while, he is to be kept by the one he has appointed (only two days—how little!).

Here the story ceases, but it might be asked, would not the heart of the man at the inn be looking forward with joyful anticipation to see the face of him who is so thoughtful of all his need, and is coming again? We are not told of his thoughts or feelings at all, but only his need, and how thoroughly it is met, as, in the fifteenth chapter, the prodigal son does not tell out his joy, but the father does his! O, these divine touches, giving us to understand that we have everything in God, all understood, all met, fully and according to His own heart! "Go, and do likewise." What a lesson in philanthropy! Nothing short of bringing man into the *new* creation; and nothing else than the preaching of the cross of Christ.

Blessed be His name! He came not to make us better sons of Adam, but to take us out of all this; not to cultivate something in us, but to pour in the oil and wine, and lift us into His own place, and keep us entirely for Himself, and thus to take us to Himself. "This is my Beloved. This is my Friend!"

THE GIFT OF GOD.

Notes from an address on John iv.

Here we have set forth very sweetly and richly, the glory of Christ's person; in fact, the gospel, according to John, is the setting forth of Christ as the Son of God, what He is Himself. In John, xx, 31, we read, "these things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through His name."

Just mark the kindness of God:—"Believing, ye might have life!" I would take it, if I were you. Now I am quite sure there are some people here to-night, that have the same troubles that I used to have. You try to

be good, you are trying to make yourselves better. Do you know what is the matter? You want life. He wants to give you life. I might stop here, to-night, I have said enough, when I tell you this. "These things are written, that ye might *have* life;" God really wants you to have it. Now, will you take it? It is in simply believing on Jesus, the Son of God; it is not that you get better. God knows that you are a poor, helpless, ruined thing. So, just take the name of His Son. He says He has put His own Son in my place. He has put Him on the cross, and now, He has gone up to heaven. Why? To express God's satisfaction, and delight in what He has done, and in Him. You cannot come before God in your own name, your title. What *will* do for God? Jesus the Christ, that will do, God says He is satisfied. The one thing God wants us to do, the whole time, is simply to rest on His Son. People sometimes say, I do not know whether I have the right kind of feeling. God does not say anything about feeling. It is believing on the right Person. Turn to 1 John v, 13, and read, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye might know that ye have eternal life." I have perfect rest there. I cannot help stopping there. God says you have got life there. To think of it being so simple! To think of it being so easy!

In this precious little story I have read this evening, the Son of God came down and talked to a poor sinful woman. He had an appointment to meet her, He must be there at that hour to meet her. How blessed this is, that God Himself has an appointment to meet just such people. There was no more wicked place in the world than Samaria. It had the lowest kind of idolatry. It was their purpose to keep God out. To call a man a Samaritan, was to put him where the Jews would not have anything to do with him. Just think, the Son of God has to come down and meet one of the lowest women of *Samaria*. In the chapter before, a *good* man came to talk to Him, a righteous man, and what does He say? "You must be born again." And now it was "that woman!" "He must needs go through Samaria." What must He go to Samaria for? Because that poor woman was there. You notice He speaks first.

Do you say, "I must go and pray to Him, in order to be saved?" Don't do it! Let *Him* speak to you. He will, He does speak to you. It says, "*we* pray you, in *Christ's* stead." That is, He is begging you to receive from Him, to be reconciled to God.

The great thing was to let her know who He was, and what He had for her. You have no doubt thought, that the great matter is what you are, whether you are good enough for Him. But is *He* good enough for you? You think that you have something to do. You do not know that you are beyond doing anything. No, you do not have anything to do. The trouble is, you do not know Him. Well, how will you ever know anything about God, if you do not let Him tell you?

The very first thing he asks her, is to give Him to drink. You think the natural heart has got something for God. You think you love God. You would do anything for God, that He would ask you. Well, He asked her to refresh Him—to give Him a drink. Did she do it?

Had this woman anything for Him? No. She says, "How is it thou being a Jew, askest drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" There, her religion was in the way of her refreshing Him, just as it always is. She showed her ugliness of heart at once. Why did He not go away? Because He was God. He had come on purpose to bless and refresh her, and *thus* be refreshed by her. It seems as though He asked her, that He might say to her, "if you have not anything for me, I have something for you." He asked her, and then what does He do? He begins to tell out Himself. He is so full, so rich, and so happy, that He cannot keep it Himself. He wants you to take it, and me. He came down to reveal Himself, just to show His love, to have somebody upon whom to shower His love. God does not have the sinner go and pray to Him for salvation. It is not the way in which He is acting now. What He wants is for us to know Him. He knows us; He knew that woman before He went there. He knew her all the time she was there. I do not suppose the women of Samaria would keep company with her. She came alone to the well. At noon was not their hour for going. She may have been too bad for them. Despised by wicked people, just fit

for Christ. And you must know that your badness is just the thing for Him.

Well, He must tell this woman who and what He was, so He says, "if thou knewest the gift of God." I tell you, beloved friends, it is a gift, or nothing. It is a gift, or you never have salvation. "If thou knewest the gift of God." He says God is a giver, not a receiver, and He Himself was both giver and gift. He would have given to her. There may be a poor heart here to-night, anxious to be saved. You have not seen God, as a giving God, Christ and salvation, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life, as gifts, only gifts. "This is eternal life, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

You see why it was that He talked to her. It was that she might *know Jesus Christ*, whom the Father had sent.

But she could not rise above her own state and circumstances. She could not yet take in His thoughts and His offer. "Sir, give me this water that I thirst not." But still He is there, and is patient, and she does not run away from Him. The trouble is with you, you will not let out your heart to Him to take in what He says. You get occupied with your state, and you can never really know it till you know it from Him. She says, "the well is deep." She thought of circumstances, and difficulties. How could this man give her water. She did not know how foolish she was, nor who it was that talked with her. It was a blessed thing that she still talked with Him, exposing her foolishness and her want.

The water that He would give her was another kind altogether, and she does not seem to apprehend it. Now Christ means to let her know her need, so He says, "go, call thy husband." It was time to probe her, and bring out what she was, to touch her conscience.

You need not be afraid to tell Christ who you are, He will not run away, and don't you run away when really exposed to the light. He comes to deal in grace with you, *as you are*; not with your estimate of yourself, not with sins covered, but just as you are. She had, at first doubted His power, to supply; the well was deep, what could He do? And she is keeping herself from the gift,

keeping at a distance thus. He will show her what she is, and that He knows *all*, and yet sits there talking to her. "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." I do not believe any body ever felt, from his own consciousness, that he was a sinner. He has to be exposed by God Himself, told it all out by Him, and in the presence of the grace that puts away guilt. Repentance is towards God.

But she is ready with her answer, "I have no husband." That was a lie, in meaning. Very well. He came to save liars, too. All must come out now, that she may know her want of Him, and what He has to give. "Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet." Ah, He is something more now. Let her eyes but open wider to see what He is, to know Him really, and all is done. But she is not fully broken yet. She has a refuge, certain theological questions. Living as she did and talking religion! Yes, but it told of lack of peace, and of the deepest question of worship. She had never been a worshiper, for she had not received a gift. No question was settled. No deep ploughing of conscience had taken place. But the husbandman is there now. And He is doing a work so thoroughly, giving a happy heart and a purged conscience, so that she can go back to her village and say, "Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did!" Why, she has gone crazy! Telling people to come and see a man that exposed her, and would expose them? He was not exposing her to the world, but to herself. I can bring out my sins when I have the same mind about them and myself, that God has, and see grace putting them and me away. But till then, I will hold on to them and my religion, in the bargain. So she is not quite done with herself yet. She had her religion and her sin, and her unhappiness, all; but she is no worshiper.

God as father, known in relationship, is seeking worshipers; not you seeking some one to worship. And that is the reason why He must *give*, why salvation is so clear and simple. If a man, not only when I am poor, but when I am his greatest enemy, gives me all he has, and dies for me that I may have it, and that no charge shall be brought against me, I must find there is something beyond my unworthiness, even his love, and *must*

be overwhelmed with thankfulness. It is all a gift, and so worship as a result. If you could do *anything* towards your salvation, you would lack that much of being a worshiper.

Well, He has gone a little deeper into her heart, and finds she has been looking out for the Messiah. He has really got down to her want, and then He meets it at once. "*I that speak unto thee am He!*"

Now both are told out. She knows Him, and He has known her, all along. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. He has told her all her sin, but He is the Messiah, the gift of God, to meet the need. He is the One anointed to preach good tidings unto the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. He is the One through whom all the gracious words in the prophets are to be fulfilled, through whom she that had been spending her money for that which was not bread, and her labor for that which satisfied not, is called to delight in fatness. It is enough! He has loved her, and invited her trust, and she thinks of all that she ever did, as He does. She is one with Him. And so her word is, "come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did!"

And *He!* He has had meat to eat that thoroughly comforted Him, meat that they knew not of. O, what reports of the interview, from the two parties to it! *She*, discovered, and cleansed, and saved! *He*, refreshed and glad!

They had both received what they had asked for, in the end. *He* had asked for a drink, and though it was unheeded at first, He could tell out that she had furnished Him food. *She*, only thinking of her physical need for the future, had said, "give me this water that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." But she went away with a fountain of water "springing up to everlasting life." In token of this, she left her water-pot, and in the fruition of chapter vii, became a supply for others. And He could turn aside from what the disciples had provided, in the work of the Father, in saving the lost one, having had a feast.

Oh, it is a happy thing that in taking salvation fully and freely, I am making God and Christ happy!

THE GLORY-GIRDED SERVANT.

John xiii.

What a page is this that now lies before us, full of the richest grace of the blessed Lord; and at the same time, abounding with instruction, which the people of God in their wilderness journey, find and prove to be indispensable. Forever be adored the God of all grace, who not only has met our need as sinners, in the sacrifice of His Son; but, who also in the same Blessed One, is meeting the need of His beloved people, traversing a scene of defilement, and where temptation and trial abound. And what exquisite grace on the part of the Lord Jesus, to give us, in the act of washing His disciples' feet, a token of His unchanging love, when He would be away in the glory, and we left to testify of Him to the world; as well as a specimen of His ministries for us in the presence of God; as He said: "Because I live, ye shall live also." What a proof that He ever thinks of us, and cares for us, in all our path of trial through this world! He is now on high for us, the "glory-girded servant."

On the cross, the work that has effected our cleansing, was done forever; the sacrifice was offered "once" never to be repeated. And those to whom the blood is applied, are "perfected forever," according to its infinite value; the blood is never said to be applied again.

But the work of the blessed Lord, in the presence of God for us, will not cease till He has taken us to Himself. While any part of the Church is here in the place of testimony, His work will go on for them on high, "As the minister of the sanctuary and the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man." Heb. viii. If the Lord has sat down, forever, as touching His sacrificial work (Heb. x, 12), He has not ceased His ministries for us as our High Priest and as our Advocate, the One girded to keep us clean, and in holy communion with God His Father, and Himself. How this fact endears to our hearts the blessed Lord! How it bows the soul in the presence of such love, that is never wearied of serving, and leads us to adore Him who has by virtue of His mighty sacrifice, and the indwelling of the blessed Spirit of God, linked us with Himself, and charged Himself with all our affairs, and has pledged

His own word to bring us to Himself in the glory above!

What we have in this chapter is that which we have in view of the Lord's departure from the world to the Father. As the "Lord knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, and having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. * * * * Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hand, and that He was come from God and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash His disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded." John xiii. 1-5. By the words, "His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father" we learn that the Lord here contemplates His atoning work upon the cross as finished; as in John xvii.: "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do"; and that now He has His services in the presence of God for His people before Him, keeping them clean from the defilement of the world—living to keep them clean—loving them unto the end.

How marvelously blessed is all this! For who has not more or less realized his own weakness and failure. Yet to be able to turn to that love which is unchanging, and find in that heart what sustains ours even in the time of conscious failure, is what must bow the soul before Him who loved us, in holy worship.

Peter's ignorance is made the means of bringing out the efficacy of the two-fold work of Christ: His work upon the cross, and His work as the ascended One. First, "he that is washed (or bathed) needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." The cleansing "every whit" has reference to the cleansing by the blood from all sin; and he that is thus cleansed, needeth not to be so cleansed again, but in virtue of that cleansing stands before God in the full value of that blood that has rolled every sin belonging to the believer into the sea of God's forgetfulness. Nothing can possibly affect this cleansing; the believer is once cleansed, and cleansed forever. "He is accepted in the Beloved." This is divinely precious; imparting perfect peace to the heart.

and conscience of every one that reposes by faith upon the work of Christ. Faith appropriates to the soul and its deep need, all the intrinsic and eternal perfection of that "once offered" and eternally accepted sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. It stands in the presence of a Holy God in undisturbed peace, in the blessed consciousness of there being nothing against it; no spot within, no cloud above; no wrath in God's heart, no fear in it! And what is the secret of it all? It is clean every whit, according to God's own estimate of the precious blood of His dear Son.

"Clean every whit; thou saidst it, Lord;
 Shall one suspicion lurk?
 Thine, surely, is a faithful word,
 And Thine a finished work."

This cleansing was effected by the "blood of the cross," and as that blood was shed "once," so the application is "once for all." If otherwise, if it is to be applied again, the precious blood of God's Son is made to be no more than the blood of bulls and goats, which in itself would be blasphemy. But as the application is "once," those to whom it is applied are perfected forever, because of its eternal efficacy; they are clean every whit, according to the words of Christ.

In the second place, there is the washing of the feet, and that may take place continually. As in the case of the priests of old, they were washed once, when consecrated to the priesthood, and as touching their standing as priests, this was never repeated; but daily had they to wash their feet at the laver, before entering upon the services of the tabernacle. And so with the Christian; although clean every whit, as touching his standing and acceptance, he needs the application of the "water of the word" to keep him free from defilement, enabling him to go on in the service of the Lord in communion with Him. Hence the Lord's words to Peter, when he said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet:" "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." It is all important to notice that the Lord did not say, "Thou hast no part *in* me, or I in you," but "Thou hast no part *with* me." That is to say, there can be no communion with the Lord in the way of service, if this daily washing of the feet is neglected. It may be blessedly true that we are

cleansed by the blood, and that no charge can be laid against us, and at the same time know but very little of what it is to have part "with Christ." For this we need to know the blessed services of Christ above for us, opening our hearts to the cleansing application of the "word," and so retaining priestly energy in our souls, going on in communion with Christ—having part with Him.

Then, again, the blessed Lord not only gave us to understand that He was going away to exercise this holy, unwearied love on our behalf; but He would give us to see that He would have us with Himself in this service, as He said: "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

Now this is not merely an expression of humility; but rather the exercise of holy love that can never allow any evil. The blessed Lord exercises it above, and when any of His people fail, He applies the water of the word, by the Spirit, as shown in the act of washing the disciples' feet, and in this Scripture: "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Ephes. v. 25, 26. Communion is suspended when defilement is contracted, and restored when it is cleansed away. But the Lord would have us in fellowship with Himself in this work: "Washing one another's feet;" exercising the same holy, jealous love over each other; and this is no mean service to take part in. But is it merely humility? It is humility of the purest kind: but something more. It is the holy faithfulness of that love, which is in the fullest fellowship with Christ, about an erring brother—one defiled. And O, what a service to be engaged in! We need, indeed, to eat the "sin offering in the holy place." None but those who are spiritual—those in full communion with the Master—can restore an erring brother. Alas! how often we are unable to wash one another's feet! Instead of cleansing them, we often make them the more defiled by our spiritual incapacity to wash them. How often do we, by our own want of self-judgment, deprive ourselves of the privilege of "washing one another's feet." Do we pass over a brother's

or our own failure? That is neither love to ourselves nor him. That is neither washing his feet, nor opening up our own hearts and consciences to the application of that word that Christ uses to wash ours. But it is sorry work. His love cannot bear the thought of defilement resting upon the least of His people. His heart will not allow this distance from Himself, necessarily caused by the failure. He must use the rod to effect his purpose; this is often terrible work for the one upon whom it is laid. Holy love strikes the blow, and then heals up the wound. The same hand that plunges the sword of the spirit into the conscience, to make it sensible of the sin allowed, is that which applies the balm to the wound, when repentance is wrought, and confession is made. We may treat failure lightly, but He cannot. And why? Because He loves us, and because it cost His precious blood-shedding to put it away.

What then? Let us walk in the spirit of self-judgment, of prayer, and of watchfulness; allowing the word of our God to have full power with our own hearts and consciences; walking before Him who judges righteously; submitting to His gracious will; adoring Him for His constant love; abiding in communion with Him; having full part with Him; obeying His injunctions; and so be spiritually capacitated to wash each other's feet, the blessed result of the exercise of holy love.

E. A.

HEADSHIP AND LORDSHIP.

We would call the reader's attention to two very distinct lines of truth, flowing out of two distinct titles of our blessed Lord, namely, Headship and Lordship. He is Head of His body the church, and He is Lord of all, Lord of each. Now, when we think of Christ as Lord, we are reminded of our individual responsibility to Him, in the wide range of service to which He, in His sovereignty, has graciously called us. Our reference must be to Him in all things. All our actings, all our movements, all our arrangements, must be placed under the commanding influence of that weighty sentence (often, alas! lightly spoken and penned), "if *The Lord* will." And, moreover, no one has any right to thrust himself in

between the conscience of a servant, and the commandment of His Lord. All this is divinely true, and of the very highest importance. The Lordship of Christ is a truth the value of which cannot possibly be overestimated.

But we must bear in mind that Christ is *Head* as well as *Lord*. He is Head of a body, as well as Lord of individuals. These things must not be confounded. We are not to hold the truth of Christ's Lordship in such a way as to interfere with the truth of His Headship. If we merely think of Christ as Lord, and ourselves as individuals responsible to Him, then we shall ignore His Headship, and lose sight of our responsibility to every member of that body of which He is Head. We must jealously watch against this. We cannot look at ourselves as isolated, independent atoms; if we think of Christ as Head, then we must think of all His members, and this opens up a wide range of practical truth. We have holy duties to discharge to our fellow members, as well as to our Lord and Master; and we may rest assured that no one walking in communion with Christ can ever lose sight of the grand fact of his relationship to every member of His body. Such a one will ever remember that His walk and ways exert an influence upon christians living at the other side of the globe. This is a wondrous mystery; but it is divinely true. "If one member suffer, *all* the members suffer with it." (1 Cor. xii, 26). You cannot reduce the body of Christ to a matter of locality; the body is one, and we are called to maintain this, practically, in every possible way, and to bear a decided testimony against everything which tends to hinder the expression of the perfect unity of the body, whether it be false unity, or false individuality. The enemy is seeking to associate christians on a false ground, and gather them round a false centre; or, if he cannot do this, he will send them adrift upon the wide and tumultuous ocean of a desultory individualism. *We are thoroughly persuaded, before God, that the only safeguard against both these false and dangerous extremes is divinely wrought faith in the grand foundation-truth of the unity of the body of Christ.*

C. H. M.

(From "*Life and Times of Josiah.*")

"GOD IS LIGHT."

There is nothing more dangerous than to use the word when it has not touched my conscience. I put myself into Satan's hands if I go beyond what I have from God, what is in possession of my soul, and use it in ministry or privately. There is nothing more dangerous than the handling of the word apart from the guidance of the Spirit. To talk with saints on the things of God beyond what I hold in communion is most pernicious. There would be a great deal not said, that is said, were we watchful as to this, and the word not so used in an unclean manner. I know of nothing that more separates from God than truth spoken out of communion with God; there is uncommon danger in it.

THE VOICE IN THE TWILIGHT.

I was sitting alone in the twilight,
 With spirit troubled and vexed,
 With thoughts that were morbid and gloomy
 And faith that was sorely perplexed.

Some homely work I was doing,
 For the child of my love and care;
 Some stitches half wearily setting,
 In the endless need of repair.

But my thoughts were about the "building,"
 The work one day to be tried,
 And that only the gold and the silver
 And the precious stones should abide.

Then remembering my own poor efforts,
 The wretched work I had done;
 And even when trying most truly,
 The meager success I had won;

"It is nothing but 'wood, hay and stubble,'"
 I said: "It will all be burned;
 The useless fruit of the talents,
 One day to be returned.

"And I have so longed to serve Him,
 And sometimes I know I have tried;
 But I'm sure when He sees such building,
 He will never let it abide."

Just then, as I turned the garment,
 That no rent should be left behind ;
 My eye caught an odd little bungle
 Of mending and patchwork combined.

My heart grew suddenly tender,
 And something blinded my eyes
 With one of those sweet intuitions,
 Which sometimes make us so wise.

“ Dear child ! she wanted to help me ”
 (I knew 'twas the best she could do) ;
 But Oh ! what a patch she had made it—
 The grey mismatching the blue.

And yet, can you understand me ?
 With a tender smile and a tear,
 And a half-compassionate yearning,
 I felt her grow more dear.

Then a voice seemed to break the silence ;
 'Twas the voice of my Lord to me,—
 “ Art thou tenderer for the little child
 Than I am tender for thee ? ”

And straightway I knew His meaning,
 So full of compassion and love ;
 And my faith came back to the refuge,
 Like the glad returning dove.

So I thought, when the Master-builder
 Cometh our service to view,
 To see what rents must be mended,
 And what must be made all anew,

Perhaps, as He looks at the labor,
 My work He will bring to the light,
 And seeing the marring and bungling,
 And how far it all is from right,

He may feel as I felt for my darling,
 And will say as I said for her,—
 “ Dear child, she wanted to help me,
 And love for me was the spur. ”

And for the real love that was in it,
 He will value this poor work of mine,
 And because it was unto *Him*, only,
 Will crown it with plaudit divine !

And then in the deepening twilight,
 I seemed to be clasping a Hand ;
 And to feel a great love constraining,
 Stronger than any command.

SOME LESSONS FROM JOSHUA.

Chap. vii. "Put on the *whole armor* of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil," is the word to us, after the ringing message, "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." It will not do to leave off one piece of that armor, or our weakness is betrayed, and our defeat sure. In this chapter we are introduced, at once, to the cause of their not being able to "stand against" the city of Ai. "The children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing." There was distrust of the Lord's providing, and direct disobedience, for He had told them to keep from the accursed thing (vi., 18).

In v. 3 we see self-confidence, the result of their late triumph, which they seem to have attributed to themselves. Thus defiled, and going in the pride of their heart, instead of self-emptiness, the consequence was natural; they fled before the men of Ai, and then their hearts melted and became as water." So early! Alas, it is always so!

The "shield of faith" once down, how easily a defiled conscience follows, "the breast plate of righteousness" falls, and simple dependence and emptiness which comes with "all prayer." The "girdle of truth" is loosened, in the hiding of the wedge and garment, and we are totally unable to quench the fiery darts of the wicked. It was a Babylonish garment that was coveted, telling of apostasy at the very beginning; Babylon standing for the world with which alliance is made, and the very perfection of apostasy, while Egypt is the world out of which we were taken, in which we were in bondage. Thus we find how early a departure from the faith once delivered to the saints, took place. The not continuing in His goodness (Rom. xi., 22,) must result in being cut off, as Babylon became the ruin of Israel, in the end. The wiles of Satan are most clearly seen in having any thing to do with Babylon. The garments of Babylon and the golden treasures of this world are sure to be found with him, his effort being to get us from our first estate, the enjoyment of our heavenly standing.

And now again the word is, "sanctify yourselves." It is a more bitter thing not to be right before the Lord,

than to flee before the enemy. Everything must start from Him.

“So Joshua rose early in the morning.” Blessed diligence of a heart earnest for the Lord’s honor! He was “instant in season and out of season.” How instructive for us, in a day of looseness in regard to God’s thoughts, as though energy in doing outwardly could atone for indifference in regard to that which defiles. He rose early when attacking Jericho, going forward to victory, and he rose just as early to search out the accursed thing, jealous for God’s holiness. A defiled people cannot be used of God for His work. He has an account to settle with themselves first, for “holiness becometh His house forever.” “Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end.”

From verses 22–29, how emphatically we learn, “*our* God is a consuming fire.” No tenderness is to spare, where holiness is concerned. All that by which he sinned, himself and all his, are to be put away forever in judgment. So when God had established His assembly in Jerusalem, and Ananias and Sapphira are found to have defiled the house, it is no time for parley. “Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?” The gold and silver had their power over them, as with Achan, but judgment did not linger.

In the great heap of stones raised over Achan unto this day, God would give us a memorial of the way in which His rights must be looked after. It is refreshing to see that all Israel united in stoning with stones and burning them with fire. They thus “approved themselves to be clear.” Let *every one* that nameth the name of the Lord, depart from iniquity. Come ye out and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty (2 Cor. vi., 17, 18.)

Chapter viii, begins with the word from God, “fear not; neither be thou dismayed.” Success follows purging. But it costs something to get out of the path of blessing, especially where pride and self-confidence have been in exercise. “Though I be nothing,” takes time and bitter pains to be learned. For a little city that human

judgment said could be taken by three thousand, easily, six hundred thousand must go. They must lay an ambush, and feign to flee. And then by the command of God, Joshua stretches out his spear, and the ambush arise, God working by His Spirit, producing activity in those whom He had broken, and thus leading to victory. It was altogether of Him, and God's word held to, did all.

We have, thus far, these two great principles;—that the power of God is with His people; and, that He will have holiness maintained where He is; as seen in the taking of Jericho, and the discipline before Ai. These being thus established, although the land is not conquered altogether, Joshua treats it as Jehovah's, taking formal possession of the whole land. This is seen in two ways: *first*, in the command to take down the dead body of the king of Ai. This was in accordance with Deut. xxi., 22, 23, that the "land be not defiled, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance." This was saying, the land was so entirely Israel's that it ought not to be defiled. We, having once entered into our real position, may consider every thing as ours. Nothing accursed or defiling can have place in the heavenly scene.

The *second* act (vv. 30-35) of taking possession of the land by Joshua is building an altar. This was upon the ground that the land was Jehovah's, and the altar is to "Jehovah, God of Israel," thus beautifully expressing Joshua's faith, and that of Israel, and their bowing to the word of God. It was there as a witness, a bond between them and Jehovah who had given them the land, they owning all the consequences in blessings or curses. The enjoyment of the land was placed under the responsibility of the people to obey Jehovah, to "confirm all the words of this law to do them."

The altar was built "of whole (unhewn) stones over which no man had lift up any iron." To have been hewn by tool of man, would have been to "pollute" it. (See Ex. xx., 25). Our own *work* in connection with worship is a pollution. We enter into the holiest alone by the blood of Jesus. (Heb. x., 20). This altar was for burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, not for sin-offerings; a worship pre-supposing a righteous people in communion with the Lord, yet placed under the curse if they

should break the law. It was, in truth, you may worship if you can.

According to Deut. xxvii., they "plastered the stones with plaster," and wrote upon them the words of the law; and then dividing into two companies, half stood upon Mount Gerizim to bless, and half upon Mount Ebal to curse. And then as the curses were read with a loud voice by the Levites, and rang over the heads of the multitude, twelve times, the deep and fearful tones were met by the swelling "Amen" of the thousands upon Ebal. But the blessings of Gerizim are entirely omitted. Here the record is silent, and its silence is deeply significant. No blessing could be earned by obedience from poor, fallen man! "As many as are of the works of the law are under the *curse*:" Gal. iii., 10; "for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." There is no possibility of escape. Many speak of being under the law *as a rule of life*. Well, then, you are under the curse, and you take your stand on Ebal to have "all these curses" pronounced upon you, upon disobedience. There is no other principle of law, no other being under it, than on this ground, blessing if you obey, curses if you disobey. Can any one say that he obeys every jot and tittle of the law? No, the constant complaint is of finding a law in our members not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be. What a pitiful condition for one to be in.

But the question is asked, why is the law in the word of God, then, if not for us? This is answered in Gal. iii., 19: "It was added *for the sake of transgressions till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made.*" Has He come? Then, if the law only came in "by the way" *till He came*, how can any one take it out of its time, and away from the people to whom it was given, by making it to be in force upon us, as a system or rule of life now? *All we have now is by faith in Jesus Christ*, on that principle alone. God tried man on the ground of his own obedience, for centuries, and what came of it? Only a curse. Now He takes us up on the principle of faith. "The obedience of faith," not to law; that is, linked in a living

way to a Person, Christ Himself who is our life, is what He is giving the gospel for, now. (Rom. xvi., 25, 26). Paul and other converted Jews were under the law, before Christ came; so he says, "the law *was our school-master*" (not *is yours*) up to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." *But after faith is come we are no longer under a school-master.* School was out, we might say, and the school-master dismissed, then. Mark the contrast between "before faith came" (v. 23), and "after that faith is come," even for them (v. 25). But then he turns to us and says "ye are all children of God by *faith in Christ Jesus.*" Have we been put to school under the school-master, from whom *they* were freed? The law came demanding, grace comes giving. Under the law, God came seeking fruit, and found none. In the gospel He is spreading a feast.

If we as Gentiles were incorporated into Judaism, then we should be under the law with them. But both they and we have been taken out of our former bondage, — theirs, to the law and its curse; and ours, to Satan and sin, — and delivered completely by the *cross of Christ.* So that the Jewish believer was redeemed from the curse of the law, and from that condition of being under it, to the place of sons; and we who were not under it, even, are made sons by faith; and now to go to the law, is to turn *again* to the bondage that we were under, which was idolatry. So thoroughly is this seen to be evil that the apostle tells the Galatians that he is afraid of them, that he has labored in vain. It denied the whole matter of the gospel. And mark, this is not a sinner seeking justification by the law, but a saint putting himself under it as a rule of life. Our rule of life is Christ. We are "in Him," and "He is our life." We are to "walk as He walked." We are to be "imitators of God as dear children." That surely allows no looseness, no Antinomianism, no "I am saved, therefore I may sin as I list," for I make Christ a minister of sin, thus. How *can* ye that are *dead to sin*, live any longer therein?

There never was but One who obeyed the law, and all the things written in it, and He could stand on Gerizim, and rightfully respond "Amen" to all the blessings. But He gave up all His right to these blessings of riches

and honor and long life, as the righteous man down here, and became "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Phil. ii., 8. He took all the curses of Ebal on Him, and on the cross, as a sin-offering for us, gave His "Amen!" And He has silenced forever all those threatenings and curses, for us.

But has God given us only the blessings of Gerizim (Deut. xxviii.) in answer to all that Christ did? Did they speak of "eternal life?" Did they propose to make "sons of God?" Is "fellowship with the Father and the Son" among them? Is "boldness to enter into the holiest" hinted at? Is heavenly glory revealed among them? Is being one with Christ, as He is in the Father, and the Father in Him? Is "membership of the body of Christ" there, or being the temples of the Holy Ghost? Then are we not under the law, for obedience to it, brought in none of the heavenly, and we are created entirely for the heavenly. Heaven, and not, earth, is our blessing; earth, and not heaven, was the blessing under the law. The fruit of the Spirit,—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,—what had the law to do with such? It could produce none of them, and never attempted it. We are out of the realm in which it reigns, our life, instead of being down here, is hid with Christ in God. "I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *your reasonable service*; and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God." Rom. xii., 1, 2.

Chap. ix. The effect of this victory and of these blessings, is to stir up the rest of the Canaanites, and they form a league to fight against Joshua and Israel. And then we find Joshua meeting this confederacy with a confederacy. He made an alliance with the Gibeonites, not asking counsel of Jehovah, and thus was ensnared by the wiles of the adversary. There was not here simple dependence on Jehovah and His word for each thing and movement. In view of such things we are called upon to take the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, and to pray with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.

It is entire dependence and waiting upon the word of God. As Joshua was weakened by sin before, so now it is by artifice, and in a gross way, too. Israel judged by their provisions (v. 14,) alas! It is with such worn-out things, traditions and boast of age, that Satan would keep us from the word of the beginning. With them it was that they should make no covenant with any, but should drive out *all* the inhabitants. May the Lord make *us* vigilant and simple to maintain the character of *our* calling, clear from all alliances, for what fellowship hath light with darkness?

Chap. x. This peace with the Gibeonites brought fresh attacks upon Israel. But Jehovah says to Joshua, "Fear them not, for I have delivered them into thy hand." Joshua goes up from Gilgal and returns to Gilgal, a conqueror, the sun and moon standing still. "All things are yours, the world, or life, or death." 1 Cor. iii. 22.

Chap. xi. Hazor, *the capital*, Joshua burns, and it only. That which is the seat of strength in the world is utterly judged. It might have been used as the centre and capital for Israel, but God will have His own. God's centre is the New Man, the Lord Jesus, not the old man rebuilt or altered to suit us.

Chap. xii. The principles of conquest, and the hindrances that unbelief and unfaithfulness present to it, having been brought out, in previous chapters, the real conquest stays, although in a certain sense the land was theirs. So in the time of Paul, all the mind of God was given, he completing the word of God, by adding the revelation of the church, and heavenly places as our own; and all the heresies and hindrances of legality and ritualism and carelessness and worldliness, are brought out. But at his death, apostasy, instead of steadfastness in the faith and walk, was apparent. There remained much land to be possessed. How many earthly things still remain unsubdued among the children of God! How little they enjoy the things freely given of God! The Holy Ghost here as the earnest of our inheritance, if led by the Spirit, we should intelligently enjoy nothing but that, heavenly things wholly.

Chap. xiv., 6-15, gives us a bright page in the midst of

so much that is sad, of one who "wholly followed Jehovah God of Israel," Caleb, the son of Jephunneh. He had been tested through the whole of their wilderness murmurings and failures, and in the day of rebellion had stood with Joshua against all Israel, and for the word of Jehovah. "If Jehovah delight in us He will bring us in," he had said. And though stoning was the proposed answer, he, with Stephen in spirit, looked up and saw the glory of the Lord, and endured as seeing Him. Having laid hold, by faith, of the land, of which he had an earnest in the clusters of Eshcol, he counted everything but loss for the excellency of that knowledge, all through the way stayed up by the sure word; and, we may say, his conversation was in heaven, the conflict there for him was already decided, Satan being under his feet. The wilderness had been to him one long lesson of death for thirty-eight years, in sweeping off all the men of that generation. His purpose was to know (in type) Christ and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, for the prize of the calling from above. And now, presenting himself as alive from the dead, he would lay hold upon the promise fully, according to the word, not even seeming to come short of it. And not one word failed of all that God had said concerning him and his children, and it was for him to enter into the joy of the Lord. As the secret of the Lord had been with him, through all the scene of trial, now whatsoever he asked was given him, even according to his faith. He had even anticipated the important principle on which possession was taken, for forty-five years before his feet had trod the very ground. It was his, by all titles, and Joshua blessed him, rejoicing together with him as a sharer of the sufferings and the glory. Wonderfully blessed and animating is all this, of this specimen of God's own workmanship, having wrought him for this self-same thing. With purpose of heart he had cleaved unto the Lord, in His full name including all the counsels and ways and acts concerning His people, *Jehovah God of Israel*. To take all these as He revealed Himself, and follow on to know Him, was his privilege and blessing, and it is ours in the fuller unfolding of the wondrous name, "*God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*."

As Caleb had honored the Lord, he was honored. His strength was as his day, he ran and was not weary, he walked and was not faint, and his strength at four-score and five was as at forty years, "for war both to go out and come in." Boldness well became him, who thus knew the might of Jehovah. So he asks for the mountain where of old they said the giants whom they feared, the Anakim, dwelt. And we learn (Chap. xv., 14,) that "he drove thence the three sons of Anak." Thus he had been kept by the power of God, through faith, for the inheritance which was reserved, and now an abundant entrance is ministered unto him. Precious, and much needed are such examples! He himself had known, in his own life, all the wonderful history of Israel, from the bondage and groaning in the iron furnace of Egypt, to the establishment in the land, according to the covenant of Exod. vi., 6-8. His own eyes had seen the wonders in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red Sea, and he had sung the song of "salvation" when their enemy was swallowed up there. He had seen all the tender patience of Jehovah in "suffering their manners in the wilderness," had known their thorough history and helplessness, and God's proving too, and had set to his seal that God was true. Oh, the triumphs of faith kept leaning only on the word of God which cannot fail!

Chapters xv., xvi., xvii., give the apportioning of the land by lot, and the slackness of each tribe in driving out the inhabitants. An unfailing God and failing man, is the sense of the record here as elsewhere. And so their foes and the foes of God remained to be a snare, and as thorns in their sides, and this sad, though now-familiar anomaly was presented, of God's ground occupied by that which is contrary to Him. What do we see to-day of the effect of "philosophy and vain deceit," of "observing days, and months and times and years," of the "traditions of men" of the "rudiments of the world," which are abominations to Him, and fast lead on to the hour when He will spue Christendom out of His mouth! (Rev. iii., 16).

Chapter xviii., 1-10. But amidst all unfaithfulness and inability to reach, to the full, up to His thoughts, He abideth faithful. The land was subdued before them, therefore they can worship. The whole congregation

assembled at Shiloh (*peace*) and set up the tabernacle there. God's centre is established, He dwelling in the midst of His own. There was but one place for worship then, and there is but one place now. We are brought into the holiest, and whatever be our failures we are "by the one offering perfected forever" as worshipers. And besides, "all the children of God" are there; we are all one, *one body, around One Person*. The tabernacle is the type of Christ, in His person and work, and they could gather nowhere else; so when we are gathered in His name, there He is. Blessed assurance! It is instructive to see that in Ephesians, where our membership of the body is given, such clearness is given to the simple sovereign grace of God in doing all, and to the matter of *peace*, as made by Christ alone, by His blood, He Himself being our peace. We worship Him for what *He* has done, and for what *He* is, not making mention of our own doing. Grace is all.

Joshua's rebuke as to their slackness to *possess* the land that was *subdued*, is followed by three from each tribe going through the land, to describe it. This was much more easy than taking it up actually and fully. And here we may profitably see ourselves portrayed, for though God hath revealed unto us, even the hidden things, and the prayer of Ephes. i. and iii., and Colos. i., is that we may have the spirit of revelation in the knowledge of Him, to know all these things; that we may comprehend with all saints what is breadth, length, depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, that we might be filled with all the fulness of God; and that we might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that we might *walk worthy of the Lord* unto all pleasing, being *fruitful in every good work*, and increasing in the knowledge of God, how little do we live in the power of these things. Let us not only walk through all and be able to describe, but enter upon all, in the energy of the Spirit, who delights to take of these things of Christ and show them unto us.

Israel never really occupied the whole of the land which God gave them, even in the day of Solomon-glory. From such an "example," surely we may receive "admonition" to follow on, that we may apprehend that for which we are apprehended of Christ Jesus.

THE TWO NATURES; OR, WHY DOES THE BELIEVER SIN?

There are many Christians who, after having seen that their sins have been forgiven them, are very much troubled to find the workings of sin within, old lusts and desires constantly rising up, which they find they cannot get rid of. "I thought," say they, "that after I was converted I should not sin any more, and that I should have nothing but joy all the way along."

Perhaps, coming down one morning, something puts them out, and they lose their temper. Satan immediately comes and whispers, "How can you be converted, and have such a temper as that; are you sure you ever have been converted, have you not been deceiving yourself all the time?" Thus the poor souls are thrown, perhaps, into more trouble than when first awakened to their state as lost sinners before God. Now, all this arises from not seeing that the believer has two natures; the one born of the flesh, which is sinful and corrupt, and the other born of God, which is holy.

When we were born into the world we were born in sin (Psalm li., 5), born with a corrupt, fallen nature, at enmity with God, and not subject to the law of God (Eph. iv., 22; Romans viii., 7). This is true of every one born into the world, although they may be amiable, kind, gracious, or benevolent, and have all other so-called good qualities.

This old nature is not capable of improvement, for it says in Romans viii. 7, "It is not subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can be*, so then, they that are in the flesh (children of the first Adam) cannot please God." The Lord, knowing how utterly bad the old nature was, said to Nicodemus, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, *ye must be born again*" (have a new nature). It is evident that if the old nature could be improved there would be no necessity for a new one. As soon as a person believes in Christ and receives him as his Saviour, he is born again, gets a new life and a nature he never had before, as in John i., 12, 13. "But as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will

of man, but of God." It is looking at a Christian as having this new nature when it says, in 1 John iii, 9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him : and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." The flesh, the old nature, is not born of God, "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh." John iii, 6.

This old nature which we have as children of Adam, is called, in many places in Scripture, SIN. When it speaks of SINS, it means the fruit which this evil nature produces—actual offenses committed, for instance, in Matthew vii., 17—"Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." The tree is the evil nature, the SIN; the fruit which it produces, the SINS. If all the fruit were stripped off a tree, the tree itself would still remain, and would probably bear more fruit. So it is with us. If our sins were forgiven up to this day, we have still an evil nature capable of committing many more. It is important to see the two distinguished in Scripture. SIN, the old nature, and SINS, the fruit of that nature, actual offenses committed. You will see SIN and SINS contrasted in 1 John i., 8, 9—"If we say that we have no SIN (evil nature) we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our SINS, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

Now, what has become of this old nature before God, for it would not do to have an evil nature in heaven?

Christ on the cross not only bore our sins, but was also made SIN. (2 Cor. v., 21). In Rom. viii, 3, it says, "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned *sin in the flesh*." So that for the believer, sin in the flesh, root and branch, has been condemned on the cross. The only way to put an end to a nature, is by death. We cannot speak of a nature being forgiven. Suppose it were sin for a man to breathe, the only way to stop him breathing would be to kill him, and thus there would be an end of him. It would be useless to say, "You must not breathe," because it is his nature to do so. So it is with us. We have a nature which is born in sin, and does nothing else; for every thought of the old nature is sin (Gen. vi., 5). It

is that which troubles the man in Rom. vii., which is the experience of a soul who has been born again, as verse 22, shows. (An unconverted man does not "delight in the law of God after the inward man.") He wishes to keep God's law and finds he cannot do so, because the law not only says, "Thou shalt not steal"—an unconverted man might keep that part of it—but it also says, "Thou shalt not lust (covet);" you must not have an evil desire in your heart. But a person may say—I cannot help having evil desires. That is just the point; we cannot help sinning by nature, and that is why every one is lost if unconverted. The next thing he learns in ver. 18, is that in him, that is, in his flesh, dwells no good thing; and in ver. 20, he finds out that if he did that he would not, it is no more he that did it, but sin that dwelt in him. In ver. 23, this sin that dwells in him is too strong for him, and makes him do what he does not wish to do, and brings him into captivity, which causes him to cry out, ver. 24, not who shall forgive me my sins, but "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" that is, from myself; that which I inherit as a child of Adam. How he is delivered is found in Rom. vi., where the question of SIN is spoken of. The word SINS is not found in the chapter, because it treats of the Nature-SIN.

Now, as before said, the only way to put an end to a nature is by death; but if we were actually dead we should be out of the world altogether. Christ on the cross took our place, became our substitute in grace, and was "made SIN." And in Rom. vi., 6, we read—"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of SIN (not SINS) might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." So, by faith, we see that not only our sins are put away, but our sin, our old man, is crucified with Christ. Christ, our substitute, died, and what is true of our substitute is true of us, and so God counts it just the same as though we had died; as in ver. 8 it says, "If ye be *dead with Christ.*" In Col. iii., 3, it is still more forcible, for it says "*Ye are dead.*" Thus there is an end of the old nature for ever in God's sight. We are not called upon to feel dead, but to believe that in God's sight we are so. The following incident I heard, will, I think, illustrate this truth.

In the late Franco-German war, all the Germans in England were called upon to serve in the German army. A person seeing his German friend walking about the streets of London, asked him how it was he had not gone to the war? "O," he replied, "because I am dead." "You are dead!" was the answer; "explain yourself." "Well," he said, "I did not want to go to the war, and I found a young man who offered to go as my substitute; he went instead of me, he took my place, and was killed. Now that was counted just the same as though I had been killed, and so I am considered a dead man, and they can never take me to be a soldier any more." Now, you see the man himself was not actually dead, but he was counted so by the government, although he was really alive. So with us. Christ, our substitute, died, and that is the same as though we had died, in God's sight. What a comfort to know that our old man has been condemned, and that there is an end of it for ever before God. In Romans vi, 10, it says, "In that He (Christ) died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." The Lord rose again the third day, free from sin and sins. He stands risen, having passed through judgment and death, for us who believe, in full, perfect acceptance and favor with God; and we stand in Him "holy, unblamable and unreprouvable" in God's sight, "accepted in the Beloved" (Col. i., 21, 22; Eph, i., 6). What a wondrous place to be brought into! What a salvation, worthy of God Himself, that we who were once enemies, and by nature the children of wrath, should not only be saved from sin and sins, but be brought to God, into a place of infinite acceptance and favor in His beloved Son.

How blessed to gaze up into the glory, and to see, by faith, that Blessed One there, who once was made sin for us on the cross, and to be able to say, "*As He is so am I* in this world" (1 John iv., 17). I have His place as man before God. What a place of acceptance He is in! Does God the Father love Him? Hear His words: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" "Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth" (Math. iii., 17; Isaiah xlii., 1); and to think that we are loved as He is loved (John xvii., 26), "Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved me."

“ So dear, so very dear to God,”
 More dear I cannot be ;
 The love wherewith He loves His Son,
 Such is His love to me.”

What a lovely picture the Lord has given us in the xv. chapter of Luke, of a sinner brought to God in Christ. Look at the son, who was once in the far country in his rags, now brought into the father's house, seated at his table, clothed in the best robe, and feeding on the fatted calf. Not only is the joy of the son full, but the father's heart is made glad to have him there. Hear the father's voice saying, “ It is meet that *we* should make merry, and be glad ; for this my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found.”

How blessed to see that we are thus brought to God in Christ, made “ the righteousness of God in Him ” (2 Cor. v., 21); “ accepted in the Beloved ” (Eph. i., 6); sons of the Father, able to stand in the unclouded light of His presence without a spot, and loved as Christ is loved, sharing the same glory as Himself (John xvii., 22); not only fulness of joy on our part, which truly it is, but to know that God our Father finds joy in having us, His dear children, before Him, who “ once were far off, but now made nigh ” in Christ (Eph. ii., 13).

“ Behold, what manner of love the father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God ! therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not ” (1 John iii., 1). It is indeed boundless love !

But if this is our place in Christ, we are left in this world to manifest Christ, and to walk as He walked, “ that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world ; holding forth the word of life ” (Phil. ii., 15, 16), till the Lord comes, “ who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body,” when we shall have done for ever with sin, the world, the flesh, and the devil, and every thing that interrupts our joy and communion here, and to be for ever with and like the Lord.

“ When sin no more obstructs the sight,
 And flesh and sense deceive no more .
 When we shall see the Prince of light,

And all His works of grace explore ;
 What heights and depths of love divine,
 Will then through endless ages shine !”

But although we are in Christ before God, we still have the old nature in us, and whenever it desires to act we are to reckon ourselves to be dead to it. We should not be told to reckon ourselves to be dead, if we were actually so, for indeed we shall bear about this old nature in us as long as we are in this world, and unless we constantly reckon ourselves to be dead to it, it will be sure to act.

But should we fail to reckon ourselves to be dead, or, in other words, if we sin, what are we to do? We are to go to God our Father, as a child, and confess our sin, and we have the word in 1 John i., 9, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” We ought not to think of sinning, as Christians, but if we do sin, our standing in Christ remains unchanged, but our communion and joy are interrupted, but when confession is made we are, through grace, restored again through the advocacy of Christ. It is not a question of sin put away before God, that was settled at the cross, but a Father forgiving a child, and communion being restored. “Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Thess. i., 11, 12.

F. K.

NO ROOM!

Luke ii., 7-14.

What a remarkable picture we have here. “And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.”

No room for Jesus! Oh, what pain it brings to the heart to think of it! What, no room in the inn? No. The caravansery proper is filled with men hurrying to and fro, occupied with the exciting business of life. There is no room for the lonely travelers.

What matters if they take a place in the stable or the portion set apart for the beasts of the travelers? It is the carpenter's family, and the birth only of a carpenter's child. What profound relief it gives to the soul to follow down a little lower in the page, and there see that while men, the great, the renowned, yea, the world itself, has no room, no heart, for the heavenly child, angels take their place in wondering admiration.

“Cold on His cradle the dew drops are falling,
Low lies His head with the beasts of the stall,
Angels adore Him in slumber reclining,
Maker and Monarch and Saviour of all.”

Had they not, in cherubic form gazed upon the mystic ark? Now they gaze upon the living Person which the ark represented. And see, too, how they call attention, not of Jewish doctor or Gentile philosopher; no, but the humble shepherds of the plains of Bethlehem. “The glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid.” The glory shines not on the great of this world. “I thank Thee, O Father, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent.”

“Behold, I bring good tidings.” The sign is given—the babe in the manger wrapped in swaddling clothes. Then, “suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men.”

What words, how pregnant with meaning! Were its fulness expressed, the world itself could not contain the books that must be written!

Was there no room for Jesus then? It is the same story now; fallen nature has no heart for the things of God. Was Christ rejected in the flesh, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing trespasses? So Christ in the glory, exalted to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins, meets with the same treatment. Rejected as a king, rejected as the Saviour.

How eager is human nature to bestow honor on the great ones of earth! Let some grand prince visit our shores, and no pains or expense are spared to receive him and his royal retinue. Cities vie with each other to bestow honor upon men of like passions with themselves, whose transient glory and

greatness are less than nothing compared with the eternal glory and blessedness of Him for whom the world finds no room. The Creator of all things down here on an errand of mercy, yet rejected! "He was in the world, the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." None ought to be so universally received; none was so universally rejected. The business, the vanities and pleasures of life, so pre-occupy the hearts of the children of men that they have neither time nor room for the One who ought to have the first place. They want neither the Person nor the joyous feast that His love offers. They would begin to make excuses. Some things good in themselves prove a curse instead of a blessing, if they go to estrange the heart from God.

Unconverted reader, how is it? Have you a place for Christ? Do you want Him? He seeks you with open hand and loving heart, wants to fill you with joy but you will not receive Him. A few received Him in His ministrations of love, but the mass reject Him. A Mary Magdalene falls at His feet, the dying thief, an outcast of the world, unfit for earth, casts himself in his need and helplessness on the Lord and begs with his dying breath for only one thing, a portion with Christ, while the proud and haughty reject Him. But a still more painful aspect of this sad picture forces itself upon the soul's attention.

The church that boasts of connection with the world-rejected Christ, pretends to be His humble followers and representatives on earth, unwittingly, if not wilfully join with the world in excluding Him. What parade is being made throughout Christendom, at this, time, in reality ministering to the pride of the eye and the lusts of the flesh, instead of the needs of the soul or the honor of Christ.

Do not the elegant houses, the intellectual display of the ministry, all the external agencies for carrying out the Master's work, ostensibly to fit the world for Christ, all tend to fill the heart to the exclusion of Christ? Is it works He needs? Nay, He wants the heart, and works only that flow from the heart as its living fruit. "I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, &c. Nevertheless I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love." How much like the Jew standing as the proud

champion of Judaism and the temple, while he rejected One greater, even the living God, who had withdrawn from its empty walls. So Christians grasp with fond embrace the mere professional form, while they reject the blessed Person who is the life and Head of the church, which is His body.

Hear the voice of the heart-broken One as He addresses His unfaithful and faithless bride. "Behold I stand at the door and knock, if *any* man will open unto me." Oh what patience, what love! He begs, He entreats, where He should be the acknowledged Head. How the Saviour waits. Were it not for that patient waiting how the judgment of God would avenge this wrong done unto His Son.

But, beloved reader, one thought while this truth fills the heart with sadness. The time will come, when Christ will have room, if not in grace, He will in judgment. And only the mercy and long-suffering of God prevent the yet unfulfilled part of Christ's work. (Isaiah lxi., 1, 2.)

"For the Father judgeth no man but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man." John v., 22, 23, 27. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." Phil. iii., 9-11. How profoundly solemn the thought that He, the Son of Man rejected in grace, is to be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels. "In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." And solemn thought for the church, who calls herself God's faithful witness, if she will have her portion with the world, she must be judged with the world. To her the spirit says, "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee."

No room for Christ! Dear reader, God will make room in judgment, not only for the Son to come forth with all His glory and power, but the faithful whose hearts have been occupied with Him, who have kept

the word of His patience, shall come forth with Him, for the heavens shall open, and the armies which are in heaven shall follow upon white horses clothed in fine linen, white and clean (see Rev. xix, 11-14). O that we may truly be found waiting and saying in true heartedness "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly!" G. O. A.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

This epistle introduces us to the glories surrounding, and attaching to, the Lord Jesus, now accepted in the heavens. When the Lord Jesus was here, as we learn in Matt. iii., the heavens opened to get a sight of Him. There was one object then on earth worthy the attention of the heavens. He returned; and the heavens contained an object they had never known before—a glorified man. And now it is the office of this epistle to shew us the heavens as the place of this glorified man, and it is for us to look up and see Him there. Let us therefore sit still and *consider Him*. When the Holy Ghost comes and shews us the distant heavens, He shows us that our interests are consulted there. Our representative is seated in the very highest place, and seated there in that very character; He occupies heaven as the purger of our sins. Human nature, in His person, is seated above angelic nature. The purger of our sins, and very man, is at the right hand of the Majesty on high. In chap. ii, verse 10, the Holy Ghost shews us the perfection of the One whom God has given to be the Captain of our salvation. Verse 11, we see further our interest in this glorified man; He is not ashamed to call us brethren. Verse 17 unfolds to us another glory. We see Him as our High Priest, waiting on us with reconciliation for sins, and succor for sorrows. Then I am exhorted to consider Him as faithful—faithful to God for my sake; as such let me consider Him for my comfort. See Him in contrast with Moses. The first house, or dispensation, with Moses at its head, was just a servant to serve a coming Christ. When the Son, as head over His own house, is introduced, the servant retires. Then we are seen as part and parcel of the house over which He presides, and He is faithful to us. Will the house over which he is set be faithful to Him?—faithful, not only in

being subject to his headship, but in keeping near Him? If I am lying on his bosom, *then* I am faithful. Let us cling to Him day by day, till the wilderness journey is over.

In Israel's journey through the wilderness, we have a lively picture of the journey the believer is now taking from the blood to the glory. We are warned, not lest the blood should not be on the lintel, but lest we break down by the way, as thousands did in the wilderness. When he speaks of rest, it is the rest of the kingdom, not the rest of the conscience. Chapter iv still pursues the subject. The Christ of chap. iii., 14, is the rest of chap. iv. The exhortation is to a people brought up out of Egypt, with the glorious Canaan before them. Unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them—the Gospel, not of the *blood* of Christ, but of the *glory* of Christ. It took one form in the ear of the Israelites; it takes another form to us; but to them, as to us, *rest* was preached. Then he beautifully falls back on the Sabbath-rest of the Creator. The blessed Creator provided Himself a rest after creation. He promised Himself a rest in Canaan after bringing His people through the wilderness. Adam disturbed his creation rest; Israel disturbed his Canaan rest. Is He therefore disappointed in His rest? No. He has found it in Christ. The secret of the whole book is, God, retreating into Christ, when man had in every way failed Him. Christ has wrought out that rest; He holds it now; and it remains *in Him*, both for God and for His saints; no longer a fallible thing, depending on Adam or Israel, but a *perfect* and *everlasting* rest. In this epistle, not only do we see glories attaching to Christ, but glories attaching to *ourselves*: these same last days that have Christ on high in the midst of glories, have set the poor believing sinner down here in the midst of glories. Is it no glory to have a purged conscience? to have a right to be in God's presence without a feeling of shame? No glory to call God, Father? No glory to have Christ as our forerunner in heavenly places? No glory to enter into the holiest without a quiver of conscience? No glory to be introduced into the secrets of God? Not only to be able to lift up our head and say, "Who shall condemn?" but to lift up our heart and say, "Who shall separate us from

the love of Christ?" "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." If we can believe that we are bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh—part of Christ's fulness—will any one say there is no glory in that? So that this epistle unfolds to us most precious thoughts. It tells me to look up into the opened heavens and see Christ adorning the throne, and to look down and see the poor sinner shining on the footstool. The world sees nothing of it: *we* only see it in the glass of the word, *by faith*; yet I am bold to say I do not wait for the kingdom to know what glory is. I look up, and see the Lamb in acquired glories: I look down, and see the saint in gifted glories.

Now the moral application begins. "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest through the blood of Jesus." That is my title; and founded on this title is the exhortation, "*let us draw near.*" You are exhorted to enjoy our title. To enjoy is to obey. We owe it to God to enjoy what He has given us, and what He has made us. How narrow our hearts are! how slow to take in and enjoy these glories! We often look at ourselves in the glass of circumstances, or in the glass of relationships; but oh, how unwilling we are to look at ourselves in the glass of the word! How seldom we say, exultingly, in the secret of our hearts, I am a child of God—I am a co-heir with Christ. Believing in Him, I rejoice with joy unspeakable and *full of glory*. That is the way to begin obedience. Here it is exactly that. "Let us draw near with a true heart in *full assurance of faith.*" We should look on ourselves as the priesthood of God. Priests of old were washed when put into office; then every day their feet were washed before they went in to serve. The pavement of God's presence was never stained by the foot of a priest. He went in, in a character worthy of the place. Are we occupying God's presence, all day long, as those who are *worthy to be there*? We ought to know that we are before God *now* faultless and without spot. We cannot put ourselves, in the *flesh*, too low, or in *Christ*, too high. We find it much easier to degrade ourselves in the flesh, than to magnify ourselves in Christ. This last is what the Spirit is doing here. Now He tells me, having got into the holiest, what to do there. He would

have me know that I am there as an heir of a promised glory, and I am to be kept there till the glory shines out. We want a great deal more to exhort one another to know our dignity in Christ than to know our degradation in ourselves. It is very right to know ourselves poor worthless creatures; confession is right; but to gird up our minds in the apprehension of our dignity as sons of God is far more acceptable than to be ever in the depths. "Let us hold fast the profession of our hope *without wavering.*" When I know that the day *was*, when all was over between God and me; and now the day *is come*, when all is over between the world and me; that is practical Christianity. The apostle reminds the Hebrews of the day when they took *joyfully* the *spoiling of their goods.* Why was this? Their eye was on a *better inheritance.* Let me grasp the richer thing, and the poorer may pass away, for ought I care. We can account for victory over the world just as easily as we can account for access to God. This is the very knot this epistle ties; it puts us inside the veil, outside the camp. The grace and the blood of Christ work exactly contrary to the lie of the serpent. The lie of the serpent made Adam a stranger in God's presence, and at home in this polluted world—outside the veil, inside the camp; whereas Christ restores us to citizenship in God's presence, and strangership in the world; and verse 35th of this tenth chapter is the one verse in this epistle that knits the two things together. Hold fast your confidence, and it will be the secret of strength to you. Where do we see victory over the world? In those who are happiest in Christ. Show me a soul that has boldness and joy in God's presence, and I will show you one who has victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. So true is it that the joy of the Lord is strength.

"*Rejoice evermore.*" "*In every thing give thanks,* for this is the will of God in Christ concerning you." "*Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do.*"—*Abridged from J. G. B.*

Our love to God, is but God's love shed abroad in our hearts.

ON THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY GHOST.

The great confusion in the minds of sincere Christians as to the personal presence of the Holy Ghost, leads me to address to you a few words with the purpose of bringing forward what Scripture teaches on the subject; so much the rather, that the presence of the Holy Ghost is what essentially characterizes Christianity, individually and collectively.

The foundation of the salvation of any is the cross of Christ, fruit of the Father's love, but the living actuality of it, is the presence of the Holy Ghost, in virtue of the work and glorifying of Jesus. He leads us to look to the Father as children, and to the blessed Lord as the object of faith. But it is His presence which characterizes our state. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His," and this is not, as often urged, a Christian state of soul; it is what produces it. The passage goes on: "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness." It is the Christian state itself, and relationship with God and our Father. "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." It is not only that we are born of God, which surely we must be, to have a part in salvation, but that our standing before God is not that of children of Adam, but as delivered from that position in which we were guilty, far from God and lost. Our standing before God is not in the first Adam, but in the second, all our guilt gone as belonging to Adam. "Christ suffered, the just for the unjust," and every believer stands perfectly cleared of all guilt before God. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth no sin."

But this, if we weigh it, is a solemn and wonderful thing. God dwells in us. Yet nothing can be plainer than Scripture on this subject. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God." And this is used (1 Cor. vi., 19) to restrain them from positive sin. It is not a matter of attainment, but the distinctive state of all Christians, as in 1 John iv., 15: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." The way it is spoken of in Galatians is striking, as show-

ing how well known and settled a character of Christianity it was. "This only would I know of you," says the apostle, "received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" That they had it, was no question. It was a known, recognized fact, so that on what principle they got it, was the question.

But these passages show, also, plainly, the Holy Ghost's dwelling in the believer was no matter of progress or attainment, it was a distinctive of the Christian, having assurance. If a man had it not, he could not be accounted such. (Rom. viii.) He might be on the way, and in a most interesting state of soul which would assure one who knew the truth that God would finish the work, but he was not in the distinctive standing and condition of a Christian yet. And note the cases where the possession of the Spirit is appealed to, are both of Christians in a bad state, to arouse them from it by this great fact: that of the Galatians in respect of doctrine, that of the Corinthians in respect of relaxed morals. It will be found that this presence of the Holy Ghost according to prophecies going before, is the effect of the redemption, and the immediate consequence of Christ being exalted as man to the right hand of God, but, though both of these are connected with redemption, and its consequences are of the greatest interest, I do not enter on them now. My object is to have the great fact clearly before the believer's soul.

I shall add what will make it clearly distinct from the operation of the Spirit in our being born again. That the Christian is born of the Spirit is a well-known Christian truth, but this is another thing; it is God Himself, the Holy Ghost dwelling in us consequent on accomplished redemption. In John vii., we read: "This spake He of the Spirit which they that believed on Him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet (given) because that Jesus was not yet glorified. Believers on Jesus were going to receive the Holy Ghost, that is, His presence as in Christian times, but He was not yet. The reason being that till Jesus was glorified in heaven as man, the Holy Ghost could not come down here. This was one of the two great functions of Christ, He was the Lamb of God, and he was to baptize with the Holy

Ghost. Hence in Acts xix., the twelve disciples say we have not heard that the Holy Ghost is; that is according to the promised baptism of the Spirit. They were disciples of John Baptist. But here again we see how distinct the receiving of the Holy Ghost is from being born again, for we are born again by believing. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" a question impossible if the two were the same thing. Again Gal. iii., "We are all the children (sons) of God by faith in Christ Jesus;" and then Gal. iv., "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying Abba, Father." The Spirit is given or sent into the heart because we are sons. It is the seal of the belief we have when thus given. "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." God does not seal unbelievers, he quickens them in grace; He seals believers. So "grieve not that Holy Spirit of God by which ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." And again "He that stablisheth us together with you in Christ and hath anointed us, is God, who hath also sealed us and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." Lastly Peter in Acts i., says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." That men are through grace born of the Spirit, is perfectly clear, but, also that they are sealed and that the two things are quite distinct. Baptizing with the Holy Ghost was one of the two great facts of Christ's work. This was accomplished on the day of Pentecost, Acts i. 2. He is the other Comforter promised by the Lord, whose presence characterizes Christianity.

All of the teaching connected with it, is full of interest. It connects itself with the existence of the Church and the whole condition of Christendom, vivifies all Christian relationships and action. But I confine myself to one point now, it is the presence of God in the believer on earth, distinct from his being born again. It is not a matter of attainment, a person is not in the Christian state who has it not, though God may be working in him to bring him to it. It belongs to all believers, but I think it will be found that it is immediately connected with faith in the blood of Christ.

There is this caution necessary in connection with what

has been said. The Church had wholly lost this truth but the Comforter had not left it, and there were souls who could truly cry Abba, Father, who were afraid to say they were children, and would have been frightened at the thought of their bodies being a temple where the Holy Ghost dwelt. For us all, it is a most solemn thought, which I would earnestly press on my reader.

J. N. D.

BOUGHT WITH BLOOD.

Bought with blood, we stand forgiven,
 Washed and clean in sight of God ;
 Made by grace, glad heirs of heaven,
 'Scaped the judgment's fiery rod ;
 Sons of God and heirs of glory,
 Heirs with Him who is our Head ;
 Sing we resurrection's story,
 Christ, the first-born from the dead.

Bought with blood, we're slaves no longer,
 Satan's bondsmen though we were ;
 Broke by Him, whose arm is stronger,
 Is the yoke he made us wear,
 Wakened from that deathful slumber,
 Rescued unto life are we ;
 Faults and failings without number,
 All are pardoned, Lord, in Thee.

Now we wait, by faith expecting,
 Pilgrims here and far from home ;
 Pleasure's pleasant ways rejecting,
 Look for Him who is to come ;
 Him, our Lord and Master, serving,
 Watching, waiting His return ;
 In His gracious word discerning,
 All that doth our hearts concern.

Press we onward, never weary,
 Looking upward where He dwells ;
 In this scene so sad and dreary,
 All around of ruin tells ;
 But with Him is joy eternal,
 Change we never more shall know,
 While around the Throne supernal,
 Songs of praise will ever flow.

J. T.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”—Ps. xlvi., 1.

AH, WONDROUS SAVIOUR!

Ah, wondrous Saviour! glorious Thy Name is,
 Strength of the helpless, rest of the weary.
 Out of the fulness of Thine own compassion
 Thou hast redeemed us.

Gladly we join with happy hearts and voices,
 Telling to Thee, and the Father who gave Thee,
 Of the blest work Thou hast in love accomplished,
 Bringing us to Him.

Oh, let all names of honor and of power,
 Be unto Thee, Lord, now and forever,
 Highest in heaven, One with God in glory,
 Such Thy perfections.

FRAGMENTS.

I find so much to do continually in my calling and in my heart, that I have no time to puzzle myself with per-adventures and futurities. Faith lies at anchor in the midst of the waves, and believes the accomplishment of the *promises* through all overturning confusions. Upon this God do I live, who is our God forever, and will be our guide even unto death. Methinks I lie becalmed in His bosom. As Luther said, in such a case, "I am not much concerned. Let Christ see to it." "Faithful is He that hath promised who also will do it." Keep close to God, and then a little of the creature will go a great way. Maintain secret communion with God, and you need fear nothing.

If our souls go on with God, sweet as is the assurance that we, washed in the blood of Christ, belong to God, yet the uppermost thought will be, in the long run, Himself. We shall come back to His person, we shall in our praises, weave with it; what He has done, suffered, and won for us; but the first of all thoughts in our souls is, the first of all thoughts in heaven is, not what we have gained, however true, but what He has been for us, and what He is to us, yea, what He is in Himself.

I hope you see all that the cross embraces; and thus that the death of Christ separates me from every thing here *unto Him*. His death opens a way for me out of everything here.

SOME LESSONS FROM JOSHUA.

Chap. xx. The land being taken possession of, God now provides for preserving from defilement the inheritance which He has taken, in His people. "Ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are, for blood it defileth the land. Defile not, therefore, the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell, for I, Jehovah, dwell among the children of Israel." (Num. xxxv. 33, 34.) This is the divine ground. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth." (1 John, i. 5, 6.) Nothing that defiles or makes unclean can be in His presence, or in the place where He makes His habitation. He would have His own about Him, gathered in joy and in peace with each other, acting in grace, remembering that our life is in Him,

In the Cities of Refuge we see how truly God is light and God is love. Whoso shed man's blood, by man should his blood be shed, was the law setting forth the former. But the gracious provision for the manslayer who slew unwittingly, brings out the latter. Stern justice to the utmost, where a man came presumptuously upon his neighbor to slay him with guile, "thou shalt take him from mine altar that he may die." (Ex. xxi. 14); tender mercy and full protection for him who slew unawares. Perfect arrangement!

What lesson has it for us? The interpretation that makes these cities typical of Christ as a refuge for the *sinner* as such, makes confusion, besides doing violence to the simple grace that saves without conditions, and with eternal life, the guilty. In a certain remote manner one might apply it to the sinner as being in danger like the manslayer, and having but the one resource. But there the likeness ceases, for the sinner is guilty, the manslayer was not.

The whole book of Joshua has to do with the people as redeemed and brought into the land. And now they are fully established there, and entering upon the possession of it according to Jehovah's counsels concerning them. Redemption already accomplished, was the basis of God's habitation with men. The setting apart of the six cities was to be when they came into the land of Ca-

naan, a type of what we are brought into, our standing in Christ Jesus risen. They were to be chosen out of the forty-eight cities that were given to the Levites. And who were the Levites? God's special possession, taken as His, instead of the first-born who were redeemed by the blood of the Lamb on the lintel, in Egypt; typically, a dead and risen people, presented to Aaron, type of Christ as High Priest, for service in the Tabernacle. They were as those gathered nearest Jehovah Himself, to be thus associated with the protection of the poor manslayer fleeing from vengeance, opening a refuge for him, that he whose act God did not retain, they should not retain.

But it was especially as connected with the life of the High Priest that the refugee found protection. And surely as liable to sin unwittingly, as knowing our infirmities, we (believers) are made to know the value of our Great High Priest, that ever liveth to make intercession for us. Wilful, presumptuous sinning, turning away completely from the whole work of Christ, is not supposed in the true Christian. For such there is nothing but the fearful looking for of judgment. They have crucified to themselves the Son of God. But where the thing was not wilful, and yet harm has come, how blessed to know that God has provided a covering and shelter among those given to the High Priest, and in Himself, "Who ever liveth to make intercession for us,"

It is in Exodus (xxi. 13) that an intimation is first given of the provision, in *grace* and *righteousness*, of such a refuge. Then in Numbers, as the place of testing themselves, and proving Jehovah as their resource, the matter is given more in detail. It is at the end of their journey (xxxv. 6, 11, 14) when all that they were was fully shown out, and that they must be cast on His hands as a perpetual charge; then the matter is taken up according to the *need* in the case. And now, in Joshua, as expressive of Jehovah's care for His own abode, and all that His people occupied, He calls upon them to appoint the cities. And here the names and localities are given. Three were appointed within the land, and three on the east or wilderness side of Jordan; the former suggesting to us what Christ is to us now in the glory, as connected with our *heavenly standing and*

privileges; the latter what He is to us in our *earthly need*. Each of the former three was on a mount, above the ordinary plain, itself a type of the heavens. Beautiful is this, as telling us of Him who is made higher than the heavens. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost (*i. e.*, completely) that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." (Heb. vii. 25, 26.) If we look at the signification of these names, we may find precious instruction as to what our Lord is to us, our refuge and strength.

Of the three in the land, the first was "Kedesh in Galilee, in Mt. Naphtali;" *Kedesh* meaning "holiness," *Galilee* "manifestation," and *Naphtali* "wrestling" (Gen. xxx. 8); the whole telling us that He is our "holiness in manifestation in the mount of wrestling." He is made unto us sanctification, and this is to be manifested in this very scene of wrestling.

In the second, "Shechem in Mt. Ephraim," we learn that He is our "portion in a fruitful mount" (Gen. xlviii. 22; xli. 52). And this is sweetly obvious in its application to Him who is the Portion of our soul, to whom having come we shall never hunger. (Lam. iii. 24; Ps. cxix. 57; xvi. 5; John vi. 35.)

In the third city, "Hebron in the Mountain of Judah," He is our "fellowship in the mountain of praise" (Gen. xxix. 35). What wonders are told out here! We are called into the fellowship of God's own Son; our fellowship is with the Father and the Son, in His own light, into which we are introduced. In His presence is fullness of joy, at His right hand are pleasures forevermore. What a triumphant expression of all that He has done in bringing us to know Himself as our *Holiness* our *Portion* and our *Fellowship*, and these as ourselves raised and seated in heavenly places in Him.

But though all this be true, and we may say our place is really always in heaven, yet how few of us apprehend it, and how little we reach up to our real standing, taking a wilderness place and seeing more of the trials of the way than the glories of His own place and ours. If, therefore, we, like Reuben and Gad and the half of Ma-

nasseh, will take a place farther off, He must needs come to us, to be to us *all* in our need. Shall our unbelief make the word of God of no effect? He cannot deny Himself. He is everything to us, though we may but feebly know the richer things.

So we see Him shadowed forth in the three cities on the east of Jordan. He is there our "Bezer (*stronghold*) in the wilderness," our "Ramoah in Gilead," that is, our *high place* in the position of *testimony*, and our "Golan in Bashan," "a *passage* in the midst of *slander*." Our testimony is only of Him as the Exalted One, and this may bring us into being hated for His sake, and spoken evil of falsely. But what is HE in all this! As guilty sinners we have learned the value of His blood, the virtue of the cross, and resurrection by which we are made free from condemnation forever; but as redeemed and brought into association with Himself, we learn more each hour of what HE is.

" Of the vast universe of bliss,
The centre, Thou and Sun;
The eternal theme of praise is this
To Heaven's beloved One;
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,
That every knee to Thee should bow."

But there is also a very precious meaning in this provision, for *Israel*, in the end, when the Lord shall set His hand a second time to gather them into their own land. As the man was out of fellowship with his family, an exile from them during the time of the High Priest's life, so have they been away from their land. They killed the Prince of life, it is true; but how does God view them? We hear the words of Christ on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Here they are treated rather as the man-slayer than the murderer, and on this they shall be allowed to return, when His place as Priest shall have ceased, when the Church is taken away. Then shall the exiled remnant be gathered again. Paul's own words, "for this cause I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief," declaring, too, himself as "a pattern of those who should believe," tell of this, "For God hath included them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all. Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen." Rom. xi., 33-36.

Chap. xxi. Divine faithfulness has accomplished what divine grace had promised. "And Jehovah gave unto Israel all the land which He swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it and dwelt therein. And there stood not a man of all their enemies before them, and Jehovah delivered all their enemies into their hand."

He is faithful. "He *hath* blessed us with all spiritual blessings 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, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." Ephes. i. 3-5. As we apprehend this, the Spirit being given as the earnest of our inheritance, and walk in the Spirit, we know heaven as ours, and are living in the power of the glory. Now are we sons of God, and it doth not appear what we shall be, but we know when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. We are to be conformed to the image of God's Son in the glory. We have not that yet here, but the Spirit makes it real to us as the whole principle and power of our living.

Chap. xxii. The warriors of the two and a half tribes having performed the commandment of Jehovah, now return, in accordance with their own word, to Moses (Num. xxxii), "bring us not over Jordan." They were drawing back from the mind of the Lord concerning His people. He had not said that he had gone down into Egypt to lead them into the wilderness, but the land itself. But their possession of cattle became a snare unto them. They found it a place for cattle, judging according to the sight of their own eyes, rather than waiting in faith for that which God had called the goodly land. Even though they gave these few warriors when remonstrated with by Moses, yet the tribes themselves stopped on the east side of Jordan, refusing, as we may say, to enter into death.

Alas! how much we know of all this! The spirit and the ground occupied are familiar to most of us.

Their will had come into action, for they had said, "we will not inherit with them on *yonder* side Jordan, or *forward*." There was much to excite uneasiness in the servant of the Lord in this, and he plainly lets them know that it is of the same spirit of rebellion that was in their fathers at Kadesh-barnea, whom the Lord had judged and destroyed. And we see that the very purpose involved a new way of looking at Israel as "we" and "they" whom God had made *one people*.

And are we not warned that divisions among us in which one says, "I am of such an one," or, "I am of such a denomination," demonstrate that we are "carnal"? (1 Cor. iii. 3, 4.) We are one in Christ Jesus, and it is a sad sound to hear "your church" and "our church."

But though these two tribes and a-half had promised all their men to go battle, only a portion of them went. And though these wrought faithfully, it was only the fulfilment of a pledge, a kind of professional or perfunctory exercise, not one of them fighting for his own possession, for a home, and not on God's principle, "every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon shall be *yours*." They had no personal interest in it; they were only keeping a promise. And, surely, they had their reward! They were sent away with "much riches and with very much cattle, with silver and with gold, and with brass and with iron, and with very much raiment." (Ver. 8.) But these were rather the spoil from the enemy and the wages of the hireling, than the fruit of the land. They were going out of the scene where all was gained, as strangers in it, and to be dwellers in the wilderness side of Jordan. Was it not all out of order—out of God's order? God had meant them to be pilgrims in the wilderness, and established in Canaan.

And need I ask who are they to-day, who, looking upon Christian life as a series of duties, the reading of the Scriptures and prayer, and other sweet occupations that flow naturally from fellowship with the Lord's mind, are finding a home in what was a wilderness, and worse, to the Lord Himself? To such "ye are not of this world" has not the real meaning that death would involve, changing the whole condition and bringing into the

scene where "*all things* are of God," but only an omitting of the grosser forms of vice and abstaining from the outward forms of immorality. This is at best only a *negative* testimony. It is not in Egypt, but it is not being in Canaan. It is not the heavenly.

And now as these men cross the Jordan, how different is it from the day they went over into the land. No Ark of the Testimony leads the way, and no priests, at the touch of whose feet the waters part and let them go through dry shod. The Lord does not lead His people in that direction. It is away from His own dwelling-place. To manifest unity, each must keep with Him. We may ourselves slip down to anything of division and self-will, but He goes not with us.

Their going seemed to be, in character, what is described in after days in 1 John ii. 19: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us." So they seemed to feel it, and themselves suggest the question as likely to come up, though laying it on their brethren rather than themselves. Their brethren had never suggested such a thought, but we see conscience at work. But instead of leading them to abandon their false place, they resort to an expedient, something the Lord had not taught them, to meet an imaginary question from their brethren, ostensibly, but really to quiet their own consciences. They build an altar of witness, man's flimsy counterfeit of union, that they that are on God's ground cannot accept. They dare not have it as an altar of worship or sacrifice. It was a poor affair for them, and a source of uneasiness and trial to those gathered around God's centre at Shiloh.

It is beautiful to see the faithfulness of the nine and a half tribes towards their brethren and the Lord. So the place of self-judgment they take before going to their brethren, in tracing this conduct to the rebellious source in the heart, in which all had had a share in other days, "the iniquity of Peor," and the trespass of Achan. So should we, before going to others, see the sin as our own, through an evil nature, and thus judge it in the presence of God.

In the end the forty thousand proved their faithfulness, but it was, at best, expediency rather than obedience,

sight rather than faith. In later years these tribes practically denied that they were one people with one interest with Israel. In Judges v., in the day of trial, when every man was called to follow Deborah and Barak, it is told, "For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart. Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds to hear the bleatings of the flocks? Gilead (Gad and Manasseh) abode beyond Jordan."

Most full is all this of the most solemn and searching lessons for us of this day. May we anoint our eyes with eye-salve that we may see.

Chap. xxiii. gives us Joshua's words of warning, in view of the accomplishment of the word of Jehovah in establishing them in Canaan, "a long time after Jehovah had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about." In that time they had opportunity, in peace and safety, to enter upon the enjoyment of that which Jehovah had given them, with its cities already built up, and its vineyards and olive yards, and its abundant wealth, its feasts of joy, its Sabbaths and its tabernacle of witness.

But they seem to have fallen far short of His mind in regard to all, and to have sunk down into indolence and ease, while the nations left in the land, told of unfaithfulness. There was still occasion for the sword, though, for the present, they had rest from their enemies round about. The day had not yet come when it could be said that there was "neither adversary nor evil occurrent." It must be conflict still, and thus the whole book of Joshua is a type of our conflict in heavenly places with Satan, who is there. He is a conquered one, and if we resist him he will flee from us, but his purpose is to keep us from possessing or entering into the confession and power of our heavenly title. In Rev. xii., we learn of the time when he shall be cast down out of that scene, and there (v. 11) we learn by what means he is overcome by the "blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony." It is what is accomplished by the blood, and using the sword of the Spirit. But it must now be ever active and never sheathed. Thus Joshua reminds Israel of what Jehovah had done (v. 3), and (v. 6) exhorts them "to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses."

"Else if ye do in any wise *go back*." What a sad thought! Their fathers had, while in the wilderness, "in their hearts turned back again into Egypt" (Num. xiv. 4; Acts vii. 40), and for them to cleave unto the remnant of the nations that remained, and to make marriages with them, would be doing the same. Such a startling thought should have aroused them to drive out at once these nations. Their only security from turning back was their death and the entire extermination of the enemy was the only thing. Alas! they soon ceased to see them as enemies, and Ps. lxxviii. 56-61 tells the shameful story and its result. And so, if we reckon not all things crucified, dead to us, and treat them as so, and Satan as a subdued one, we shall know the world and all things about us as "snares and traps and scourges in our sides and thorns in our eyes."

These were Joshua's parting words to them. "Behold I am this day going the way of all the earth, and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which Jehovah your God spake concerning you." God had stood to His word concerning the good, so would He concerning the evil things, if they turned away. Our Captain has gone on before us. He has entered the heavens. We are chosen in Him, and for Him, called to be partakers with Him of the glory. It is for us, therefore, while we await the moment when He shall come to take us unto Him on high, to walk in entire separation from this world, its principles and its gods. We too, are plead with by what has been done, the finished work of Christ, our standing as sons in Him, the assurance of His strength, who is able to keep us from falling, and by warnings concerning those who have turned aside denying the faith, to be steadfast and hold fast that which we have received. We are told of the severity of God on others, and if we abide not in His goodness we too shall be cut off, as Israel ceased to be a testimony for Him, the candlestick being removed. The word is yet "fight the good fight of faith, lay hold upon eternal life," commended, in view of evil come in, "to God and the word of His grace."

Chap. xxiv. And now all Israel are called to Shechem, to hear a recital of God's dealings with them.

How tender the story from verse 2 to 13. It is all "I have given, I have done, I have delivered." Their father was but a poor idolator, a lost one, far off from God, and guilty. They themselves were found down in Egypt, under the most powerful of oppressors, helpless, they had nothing, and everything they did was but a badge and result of their wretched bondage. There was a deep sea, a waste howling wilderness, a river swollen at its flood between them and what was set before them. There were within their habitation, great and warlike nations, strong cities, walled up to the heavens, gigantic men, with all the advantage of being on ground with which they were familiar. But the Lord alone did lead them and would have had their pilgrimage throughout, as at the beginning and the ending, a continuous hymn. He took up the difficulties as little things, and brought them in, fresh and strong, and all was accomplished;—clearly all His own work, from beginning to end. What then? They were simply to keep their place of dependence and obedience, let Him be all, and do all still.

Even so may we make mention of His mighty acts. What has broken our bondage, delivering us from all condemnation? The Cross, an accomplished work. What has made us a new creation, bringing us into sonship and fellowship and oneness with the Father and the Son? The resurrection—an accomplished fact—the working of His mighty power.

And now, as with them, it is a question of service, really waiting upon His will. Whose service shall it be? The simple and beautiful response of the Thessalonians is the only true one. They "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." (1 Thess. i. 9, 10.) And the true path marked out for us is in Eph. iv. 17—24; vi. 11, as to things that we were once associated with. "The truth in Jesus" is, that we put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, and that we put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

It was at Shechem that Joshua assembled Israel, the place of their father Jacob's shame, resulting from his settling down before he had come wholly to the Lord's

place (Bethel, God's house), the memorial of failure. And as Jacob, disciplined there, and commanded by God to leave and go up higher, said to his household, "put away the strange gods," so Joshua enjoins the same, and there under the oak where Jacob had buried the idols of the earlier day, the great stone of witness was set up, that Israel would serve Jehovah only and obey His voice. It was but the temporary action of the heart, at the rehearsal of His blessings, though sincerely given, and *not* upon the knowledge of what God is in Himself. It was therefore kept only so long as they lived who "had known all the *works* of Jehovah that he had done for Israel." In the very place of their father's failure, they might have been reminded of their own coming short of what they had promised in Exod. xix; but we see rather the same self-confidence giving answer to Joshua's word, "Ye cannot serve Jehovah, for He is a holy God." "Nay, but we *will* serve Jehovah."

The remembrance of His blessings will not hold us to Him. We need to know Him, as He is, in Himself, beholding His glory; and then, judged and broken to atoms, we shall know that we are weakness itself, and shall gladly own the sovereign grace that holds us, as it saved us, that from first to last displays itself by all the occasions of our failure and worthlessness. Occupied with our sense of what He has *done*, we may think much of service in return. "What shall I render unto God for all He has *done* for me?" But when our eyes see *Him*, we abhor ourselves, and in the very depths of self-abasement, or rather, self being out of the scene altogether, and Himself filling the whole, we shall only rejoice in Him, as He is, and thus engaged, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks, and the fruit of the Spirit is manifested, and service is Himself working in us to will and to do according to His own good pleasure.

Joshua and Eleazer die. The links with the past are broken, and sight had naught else to walk by. There was no following on to know the Lord, who Himself dwelt now in the land. It is for us to know our Lord and Head in the glory. "Ye *believe* in God, believe also in Me." The things of Christ are brought to us by the Holy Ghost, not Jesus Himself before us in the body.

"It is needful for *you* that I go away." Captain and Priest are withdrawn, and at rest, in the mount of fruitfulness (Ephraim). Thither the Forerunner is for us entered.

"By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones." This was the one act in all the beautiful life of Joseph, that the Holy Ghost marks as of *faith*, and that because it took hold of that which was to him then "unseen," the land, and the word of God concerning it. It was fitting that he who was so clear a type of Christ, as the one separated from his brethren, then taken out of the pit, and placed over the kingdom, should be gathered into the land with those who possessed it, though a whole generation of successors were left in Egyptian graves.

Thus all was perfect on the Lord's side, but it was left to man's responsibility, and of course, there was failure. Left alone, the will of man came in and ruin, awaiting the day of restoration in the true servant, the Messiah, in whom all His purpose shall be fulfilled, and He shall betroth them unto Him forever, in righteousness and in judgment and in loving kindness and in mercies, "and I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know Jehovah." (Hosea ii. 19.)

Even so was the church left down here for the "little while," in responsibility, and he who was "the minister" of it, when the time of his departure had come, showing out the elements of evil, the idols that were still retained, gave the alarm. (2 Tim.) In Corinth, "debates and envyings, wraths, strifes" and other expressions of the flesh were manifest; in Galatia, legality and a denial of Christ crucified, practically; in Colosse, a slipping away from the Head, and a subjection to ordinances; among the Hebrew Christians, ritualism; elsewhere, many were the enemies of the cross of Christ; and in fine, all they in Asia were turning away from him and his message. It was all "going back." Dread words! In learning the danger and weakness of Israel, we have learned our own. But in this whole book, we have found the faithfulness of God to His own word. He bound Himself to it, as He binds us to the same. Here then, we can rest; counting on Him. May He teach us all, more deeply, the rich and varied lessons of this wonderful book.

THE LORD'S "DEATH," AND "COMING."

How very sweet it is that the Holy Spirit has, in the Lord's Supper, linked these two things together. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." 1 Cor. xi. 26. His death has taken us out of this scene judicially; His coming will take us out bodily. So that the whole intervening space is bridged over. Dead to the world (as to our belonging, as to our position before God,) and waiting for One who was crucified by it, and disappeared from it at His death, there is nought of earth that can lay its hand on our shoulder and say, "Come, serve me; I have a claim upon you."

But more than this: the sorrows we pass through, the sin we see around, the open blasphemy against Christ that shows itself on every hand, the condition of that which calls itself His, the snares into which God's children are drawn, the misery man inflicts on his neighbor, the whole creation groaning in bondage, all these make us long for His coming more than aught else. But what makes us long for Him? Is it not this? "He died for me." He it is "who loved me and gave *Himself* for me." He, who, constrained by love that knows no measure, took *my* place and bore my sins. Ah! yes! *His death* is that which touches the heart, and draws out the ardent desire, "Lord Jesus, come."

So then, although we shew "death," the Lord's table is not a place of mourning; for He who died is the very One who is coming *from glory* to take us to Himself in glory.

C. H. B.

"I HOPE I AM SAVED."

These are words that fall incessantly from the lips of those who profess to believe in the precious name of Jesus. If one went through the ranks of professing Christians, and put the question to each one, "Are you saved?" his heart would sicken at the almost universal answer, "I hope so." This being the case, there must be something very wrong; either the gospel that they have heard and received must be a *defective* one, or they have not fully received that gospel which the great apostle of the Gentiles calls the "glorious gospel of

Christ." A defective gospel will perform imperfect work; but, the "glorious gospel of Christ," when preached fully, and received in simple faith, will conduct the soul into positive and *absolute assurance* of salvation.

No doubt in hundreds of cases, a defective gospel is preached, and hence, the people who hear and receive it are moulded by it, and, consequently, reach no farther than "I hope to be saved." It is always true that Christians are moulded according to the kind of teaching they receive. If it is a mixture of law and grace, they are shaped accordingly; if it is "grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord," they are brought up to the proper standing, moulded in the divine mould, and, consequently, into the enjoyment of absolute assurance of being accepted in the Beloved. Let those who preach, thus take heed what they preach, that no detriment be done to the souls that accept their teaching, and no dishonor brought upon the name of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

Is it right, then, for those who profess to have faith in the Lord Jesus to say, "I hope to be saved," which simply means that there is an amount of uncertainty about the matter? The word of God with its array of statements answers, *No!* But more, it intimates that the words, "I hope so," falling from the lips of the children of God, are a gross dishonor done to the Lord, and unbelief in what the "glorious gospel of Christ" announces. God has spoken, then let his word be true, and outweigh every subtle argument of man or devil. Let God be true, but every man a liar. Man's gospel may teach a Christian to "hope to be saved in the end," simply because it is founded upon man, what he is, and what he can do; but God's gospel is founded not upon man or what he can do, but upon the finished work and Person of the ascended and glorified Christ of God. The cross proves two things, namely: man's absolute ruin and impotency, and that God therein has been glorified about sin, in it being atoned for, and put away by, the sacrifice of the Son of his love. His resurrection and glorification are the demonstrative proofs of all this. What more? All believers are justified from all things. God is the first to declare His righteousness in thus acting: "To

declare, I say, at this time His righteousness that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 26.) "Again, be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man (the ascended Jesus) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. And by him *all* that believe *are* justified from *all* things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) This is the blessed language of the gospel of Christ; nothing but the most absolute certainty here, founded upon God's estimate of the work and Person of His Son. Take another passage: "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein *he hath made us* accepted in the Beloved. In whom we *have* redemption through his blood, the *forgiveness of sins*, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. i. 6, 7.) This is the gospel that the apostles preached in their day, and the result was, "*assurance of heart*" was enjoyed by those who embraced it. The apostle Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, could say, "Knowing, brethren, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, *and in much assurance*; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, and joy of the Holy Ghost." (1 Thes. i. 4-6.) If the same gospel were preached now, in the same way, accompanied with the life of holiness on the part of those who preach it, the result would be the same. It is still God's power unto salvation to every one that believeth.

Beloved Christian reader, will you say "I hope to be saved," still? What! hope to be saved when God says, "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." (Eph. ii. 8-9.) What! hope to be saved when Jesus died to save you, and rose again that you might enjoy assurance and peace? "He was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification. *Therefore* being justified by faith *we have* peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 1.) What! *merely* hope to be saved, when the Holy Spirit has been sent down to witness of God's acceptance of the work of the Lord Jesus, and to assure believers that "Their sins and iniquities he will remember no

more?" (Heb. x. 17.) Away! away forever with such consummate folly and unbelief; let us rather blush that ever a "I hoped to be saved" fell from our lips, and take our stand upon "God's gospel" and its blessed statements, and rejoice in a present, personal, full and everlasting salvation in the Lord Jesus; that we are "saved in Him with an everlasting salvation." (Isaiah xiv. 17.)

It is not what we are, but what *Christ is* to the Father; not what we have done or can do, but what Christ *has done*; not *our estimate* of the blood, but God's; not our measure of apprehension, but God's. Yes, the grand answer is—Christ: Has God accepted Him and His work? If so, He has accepted all believers in Him. He hath made us accepted in the beloved (Eph. i, 6); and meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. (Col. i. 12-14.) To His name be everlasting praise! E. A.

THE EMPTY GRAVE AND THE OCCUPIED THRONE.

What a privilege is ours to be able to look into the empty grave of Jesus. How full of blessings for our souls, and how pregnant with eternal import, are the words of the angel to the woman who came to the sepulchre: "Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." (Math. xxviii. 5, 6.) What a wondrous tale that empty grave tells to every Christian's heart—a tale which banishes from his heart forever, anything like terror or dread of the future or judgment—a tale which fills his heart with divine joy and peace! "He is not here: for He is risen," settles the whole matter for the believing soul. Many there are, and Christians too, I doubt not, who have not laid hold of the *emancipating* truth of "*Christ risen.*" They know it as a historical fact; but do not see it as the divine attestation of the value of the work that He completed on the Cross. True, it was upon the Cross He cried "It is finished;" but it is when we see Him as the "Risen One" that we learn their full blessedness.

Now, it was very blessed for Israel to be sheltered by the blood of the paschal lamb, and to have the sword of

judgment averted from them; but to have remained there would have left them in Egypt in the hand of Pharaoh. To get delivered from Egypt and from the hand of Pharaoh they must pass through the *Red Sea*. The blood that sheltered them from judgment was undoubtedly the ground of their deliverance from Egypt; but for them to have remained merely under the blood, would be the same as Christians who only look at *Christ as dead upon the Cross*, and His blood shed for them (of course most blessed to know); but do not know the power and blessedness of His resurrection to their souls, as the divine witness to them of the everlasting acceptance of that work of the Cross, which they through grace have been brought to appreciate, and its value in some measure to apprehend.

The Red Sea is a type of the death and resurrection of Christ as that which delivers from the power of Satan and the world. It was the means of Israel's deliverance from Egypt and Pharaoh; and the very thing which proved salvation (Ex. xiv) to them, was death and destruction to the Egyptian host. It was on the wilderness side of the Red Sea that Israel sang. There was no such song in Egypt. It could not possibly be so. Under the blood they were, and sheltered from the avenging sword, but they were still in Egypt—the land of death and judgment. They were not as yet brought to Jehovah. That was yet in the distance. Their enemies were not vanquished nor destroyed. Standing upon the wilderness shores of the Red Sea they could turn and look upon that which had proved to them *salvation*, and behold in it the *judgment* of God upon their enemies. "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord" was spoken to Israel, and "The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone" was spoken of their enemies.

This is of all importance when applied to the various *states* of the souls of God's people in the present day; for it is a day wherein Christians are stopping short of *full redemption in Christ*. It is undoubtedly *through* His blood they have redemption; but it is *in Himself* they have it, and that as the *Risen One*. Many are in the experience of their souls under the blood, but have got no farther; *they do not know the meaning of the passage of the Red Sea*; hence, they have not yet,

actually, sang the song of redemption. They have not apprehended the meaning of the death and resurrection of Christ. They are under the law, full of doubts and fears, trying to better the flesh; they need to know the emancipating truth of the sixth, seventh and eighth chapters of Romans. In the third chapter, we have the blood, verse 25; in chapter six, the death of the flesh, verse 6; in chapter seven, deliverance from the law, verses 1-6; in chapter eight, *full deliverance*, verses 1-4.

This now brings us to the title of this article: "The *empty grave* and the *occupied throne*." The Christian who fully knows the gospel, or who knows it truly, does not hug the Cross as if Jesus were hanging there; but he stands on the resurrection side of His grave, and looks into it, and like Israel of old, beholds the vanquishment of all his foes, and the satisfaction rendered to everything that once, necessarily, because of his sins, stood against him. Satan is indeed now a vanquished foe—his power is broken, and the ground laid for his eternal expulsion from God's domains. He sees the world a judged thing, and himself crucified to it, and it to him, that he is not of it. He sees the "flesh, or old man" is not to be improved by any process, but has been condemned in the Cross; that he is not under *the law* for justification or as a rule of life; but that he is under grace, and that Christ risen, *who is his life*, is his rule of life or conduct.

Did the Justice of God demand a satisfaction? it has been rendered. Did the throne of Heaven demand a vindication? it has been vindicated. The law of God was broken and outraged by man; it has first been magnified and made honorable, and secondly, every one of its claims established by its curse being borne by the divine substitute. Four things were accomplished by the Lord Jesus in death or by dying;

- 1st. God was glorified about sin;
- 2nd. Satan was forever vanquished;
- 3rd. The need of sinners was perfectly met;
- 4th. The ground laid for the establishment of the new heaven and the new earth.

As we look thus intelligently into the *empty grave* of Jesus, how the heart swells with emotion, and breaks

forth in praise and song as did Israel of old. If Israel could sing, "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously—the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea," the Christian can say, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and *hath* made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever" (Ex. xv.; Rev. i. 5, 6); and the angelic beings in heaven will delight for ever to speak forth the worthiness of the Lamb; they will say, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." (Rev. v. 12.)

Dear reader, do you understand the empty grave of Jesus thus? The angel invites you, and says, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." Oh! the blessedness of those words! He lay there once, but He is not there now. The mighty Victor has risen, and bears upon His precious brow laurels of unfading glory! Can you shout, beloved friend?—

" All hail the power of Jesus' Name!
 Let angels prostrate fall;
 Bring forth the royal diadem,
 And crown Him Lord of all "

From the empty tomb of Jesus let us turn our eyes, and gaze upon the occupied throne of heaven; or the throne of heaven occupied by a glorified man. Such had not been before. Such could not be until the grave had been vacated by the Lord Jesus. The occupation of the throne on the part of the blessed Lord, *as the accomplisher of redemption*, is dependent upon the fact that He has vacated the grave. What a sight meets our gaze as we look into the opened heavens and behold Jesus crowned with glory and honor; yea, to see Him, as man, not only glorified with the glory which He had with the Father before His assumption of humanity, but to see Him surrounded with *acquired glories*: glories which He never could have had had He not assumed that humanity. As a man He is made the centre of a scene of glory—the Father's supreme delight; blessed answer to His having glorified God about sin, and for having laid, in His death, the ground for the putting out of God's domains, *sin*, which will have its grand fulfilment in the new heaven and the new earth (Rev. xxi.).

There is another fact which is dependent upon the glorification of the blessed Lord Jesus, a fact of the deepest importance for us. I refer to the descent of the Holy Spirit. This took place at Pentecost. When the Son was upon the earth He bore witness of the Father, He glorified the Father, He was the servant of the Father's glory. He glorified Him perfectly. Now the Son is glorified, the Holy Spirit is sent down as the servant of the Son's glory. "He shall glorify me," said the Lord when upon earth, in view of His going away and the coming of the Holy Spirit the Comforter. This the blessed Spirit delights to do, and does perfectly. He is the blessed witness to our hearts of the glory and preciousness of the Son. Unto us who believe, is the preciousness; but, only as the Spirit leads us into it, and gives us to apprehend the Person of the blessed Lord, do we realize it in our souls.

Oh! how that occupied throne tells to our hearts, not only God's estimate of the work of the Cross, that in which we rest; but also of the Father's appreciation of that blessed One who performed the work. It is the demonstration of God's infinite delight in the One whom man failed to appreciate, and in whom he saw no beauty. Alas! for man's corrupted taste. Again, it is God's vindication of His dear Son whom man rejected and slew; as it was also the divine answer to all the shame and contempt that man heaped upon Him, because of His voluntary humiliation. God delights to put honor upon His dear Son whom man dishonored; and a man's guilt is measured by the treatment he renders to the earth-rejected Son of God. This is a terrible fact for this poor world, who will not *kiss the Son*.

However blessed this truth of the "enthroned Christ" is to the people of God, it is a solemn one for the world. God has committed all judgment into the hands of that blessed One; and in the proper time He will deal it out, and then, none shall stay its progress! His enemies shall be made His footstool; and the kingdom and the power and the glory shall be His; and all shall own Him Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

All hail that blessed time, when the mysterious permission of evil unjudged on the earth shall cease, and He whose right it is, shall have first taken his bride to

Himself, then come to claim the kingdom as His own—when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. A.

DIVINE CONCLUSIONS.

I conclude I am a sinner, guilty and justly condemned. I have come to this conclusion alone from God's Word. I have learned from that blessed book that I have sinned, and sinned, and sinned, and am a sinner, and can do nothing but sin; further, that I hate God, and have murdered His Christ. Some people have said to me, "How do you know you are so bad; has your conscience or feelings told you so?" I answer, "My conscience is a bad one, and my feelings are changeable; I cannot trust either. I simply believe what God says. He has made me out a sinner, and written it down for me, so that I may read it for myself, and have His mind and His thoughts upon me, and I believe it; that's all I can say." I endorse every word of Romans iii. 9-23. That wonderful summing up of what man is, tells me what I am. I can only bow before it, and confess my sin and guilt.

I have also concluded that every effort on my part to make peace with God must be given up. I have given up working, feeling, and striving as absolutely useless, concluding from God's own word that "salvation is of the Lord," and that by "deeds of law" shall no flesh be justified. I was also led to read Romans iv. 4, 5, and, of course, as it was God's own Word, I simply believed it, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that *WORKETH NOT*, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Whenever I read these verses I gave up all trying to save myself. I very clearly saw that God justified the ungodly; that is the ungodly who gave up working and believed on God. I also discovered that "righteousness"—the very thing I was labouring to get—was imputed *without works*. This made me very glad.

I conclude I am saved, because God tells me in His own Word, that I am. Am I wrong in believing Him? Can I be mistaken when I simply believe what He says? Some of my friends say, "You are too sure; you are too

presumptuous; you are deceiving yourself." They tell me that the good and excellent of all ages feared and doubted, and were made fit for Heaven, and sure of it only at the last moment. I can only say that I am neither "good nor excellent," but am quite content to believe, and *give thanks, too, for having* been made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. I can say, and sing also, "*hath made meet,*" "*hath delivered,*" "*hath translated,*" "*have redemption*" (Col. i. 12-14). I do not believe that these "haths" apply at the moment of death; for how, then, could I give thanks? They are for me *now*.

I conclude that, having believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, I am saved; for the "Word" says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts xvi. 31.)

I conclude that, having believed on the name of Jesus, I have "remission of sins;" for the "Word" says, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth on His name shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 43.)

I conclude I am "justified from all things;" for the "Word" says, "By Him all that believe *are* justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 39.)

I conclude I have "peace," having been justified by faith; for the "Word" says, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God." (Romans v. 1.)

I have come to other and most happy conclusions from the Word of God alone. W. S.

JOHN XX. XXI.; OR, THE SINGLE HEART OF GRACE.

When a person is seen pursuing his way or his purpose, undaunted by resistance on the one hand, unseduced by solicitations on the other, we have a full witness of the singleness and devotedness of his soul to the business he has in hand.

So likewise, when we see him refusing all occasions either to enrich, or to display, or to gratify himself, intent on the good of others, we have a like witness of the singleness and graciousness of his heart.

I judge that the way of the Lord, after His resurrection, as recorded in these chapters, is of this second

character. Occasions are used by Him only as serving the blessing and instruction of His saints, though they might naturally and without effort have ministered to Himself, in one or other of these different ways.

His first appearing is to Mary. He discovers Himself to her, as she was fondly mistaking Him for the garden-er. The moment must have been very grateful to Him. He was in company with something that was as dear to Him as the whole range of creation could afford—the affection and desire of one who, at that moment, as He well knew, was counting His dead body more important to her than all the world beside. He does not, however, take up the occasion, in this character, at all. He does not indulge Himself through it. He does not linger where affection like this was gratifying His heart. The occasion He uses only for others, and sends the loving Mary away on a mission which was to bear light and joy to the hearts of others.

So, in the next scene, He joins the disciples and shews Himself to them. They are glad—glad with a human or natural joy. They receive Him, as of old, into the midst of them, and, like Mary, were ready to gratify Him with every token and expression of attachment. But no: He will not meet them in such a place or in such a character. He came not to be indulged in the midst of such affections, pleasant as all that would have been to His heart of love. He at once blesses them, and prepares to make them a blessing to others. He imparts the Holy Ghost to them; and, causing them to know the peaceful fruit of his own accomplished travail, bids them go forth and share it with others.

Just in like spirit He deals with Thomas afterwards. The material here was different. Mary's fondness was grateful to Him, but it could not detain Him from His purpose of blessing others; Thomas' slowness must have been contrary to Him, unattractive, uninviting. But neither could this hinder Him from doing the same gracious work. Simply to bless Thomas, He pays the disciples another visit; and when he had accomplished that, He leaves them as before.

A fourth occasion only, and perhaps more illustriously, exhibits the same. The disciples go together to their former fishing. They were on the lake where oftentimes

their Master had resorted with them. And they are fishermen again. But Jesus is the same Jesus also. Resurrection has made no difference. He takes them up, as of old, in the midst of their nets and their fishing, and gives them a draught again. And at the end He pledges them a better service and a richer feast and companionship with Himself in all things.

He waits, however, on His business with wonted singleness of heart. It is not to display, enrich, or indulge Himself that He is now in action. It is for us. For when we find Him here in possession of Peter's heart, when He gets such a piece of property as that (precious to Him as it was, and which He would not have been without for the world) still he uses it for others. "Do you love me, Peter?" "Yes, Lord," says Peter. "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep," says Jesus. He uses His possessions for His poor people.

Such are the bright occasions which illustrate singleness of purpose, this devotedness to His business, which marked and animated the mind and path of the Lord in these chapters. How do they convince us that the resurrection had made no change in Him!

But, further, the style of the Spirit in writing is just the same as this style in the Lord's acting. The Spirit might have recorded many and many a thing beside, had the object been to display the Lord. (See chap. xx. 30, 31.) But this was not the object, and therefore this is not done. All that is done is to record what is enough to lead sinners to the faith that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and thus to life through His name.

Blessed testimony! blessed warrant for our souls to trust Him altogether! He goes on with His purpose to bless us, never using a single occasion to either enrich, display, or indulge Himself.

I speak after the manner of men; but in all this I ask, can anything more effectually lead the heart into confidence than this? Is it not true in Him and in us? Do we not see it so? Is not all darkness passing away and the true light of perfect love here shining before us and upon us?

J. G. B.

It is certain that nature will not receive either the

THE LITTLE FLOCK.

The days are evil, light
 Has come, and men regard it not ;
 Another light hath blinded them—
 This world their chosen lot,
 Its flowering paths but lead astray,
 And turn the soul from God away.

There is a little flock ;
 There is a golden thread that binds
 Thine own in love, and all to Thee,
 Where'er the true light shines,
 Where'er the word takes root, and grace,
 Finds in the heart a resting place.

And we are gathered there,
 Within the circle of Thine arms ;
 Within the fold of Christ we meet,
 Safe from the world's alarms ;
 Without, men's passions rage and swell,
 But here is peace, no words can tell.

Our Father, unto Thee
 We lift our hearts, our voices raise,
 In full assurance of Thy love—
 In songs of grateful praise,
 Weary of ill, to Thee we turn,
 And lessons of sweet patience learn.

The Spirit helps our need,
 We look to Him, to aid and guide,
 To take of Christ, and unto us
 Rightly the word divide ;
 His blessed presence cheers our souls,
 And all erratic thought controls.

Around Thy table, Lord,
 In faith Thy saints are gathered now,
 Thy death remembering, Thy death,
 To whom all knees shall bow—
 The risen One, so soon to come,
 And take His ransomed people home.

J. T.

Were subjects treated methodically and separately in Scripture, especially in the New Testament, they would be much less perfectly understood. It is in life and power, whether that of Christ or that of the Holy Ghost, in the inspired writers, that they develop themselves to our hearts.

A WORD OF EXHORTATION.

Acts xi. 26.

Beloved of the Father and God of our Lord Jesus Christ for His Father's sake (John xvii. 9, 10), to you who are accepted in the Be'oved (Eph. i. 6), through faith, and by the Holy Spirit: Greeting.

I want you, beloved, to place yourselves with me, by faith, among the company of three thousand souls, described in Acts ii. 41-47, the early believers on the day of Pentecost; and, again, in that of the five thousand men described in Acts iv. 32-37; and to consider how far we are *practically* what they were—so full of the Holy Spirit, and each heart so gone after the Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven, so conscious of Himself there on the throne (Himself our own and our blessing), as that, selfishness laid aside by us, we are living down here as to Christ alone and for His people. If we have the same objects of faith and the same Holy Spirit as they, and yet are *not* like them in practice, should we not be ashamed and humble ourselves before God? If in any measure we are selfish, or earthly minded, or lying under the power of the God of this world, does not confession become us?

Come again with me to the faithful assembly at Ephesus as it was when Paul wrote his letter to it. Can you, can I, so drop into all the blessedness of the one Spirit and one body, brought out in the mystery as they held it (it is our own as well as theirs), "quicken together with Christ," "raised up together," "and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (as Paul and they saw it) and not say, But then, how short, how very short is our walk, are our lives, of what Paul (a man of like passions with ourselves) describes in Phil. i. 19-21, as his state in most trying circumstances; and again in chapter iii. 8-16. Alas! how few now-a-days "hold the Head." The freshness and beauty of Paul's life, even to the end, ever brings "the Head" before me; the poor Ephesians afterwards "left their first love" (Rev. ii. 4); shine as they still might and did, in their duties as being a candlestick."

And is my life and yours, in body, soul, and spirit, such now, down here, as that if 1 Thes. iv. 13-17, were to take place to-day, none of us would have a regret to be

found as we are? Should we each say, "Oh, the grace that has prepared me individually for this, and that enables me now to say, "I am awaiting Thee, my Lord, and am ready?" To find nothing about oneself (save a mortal body), which cannot at once find its place in the light! How blessed he of whom this is true!

But further: If I place myself with you in the presence of the Christ now in Heaven upon the throne (eternal Lover of my soul, as one given to Him before the foundation of the world)—of that Anointed Man that died for me on Calvary (the only One who ever laid down His life for me, and He the Man that is Jehovah's Fellow)—of Him who patiently watches over me above, and is coming again to receive me and us to Himself, that where He is there may we be also—can I, can you, in the light brightly down-shining, say, "Lord, Thou knowest that I reckon my old self to be dead to sin and self-willed independence of God, and myself to be alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. vi.) as having been crucified together with Him—*v. 6*—having died together with Him—*v. 2, 3, 5, 8*,—and been buried together with Him—*v. 4*;—sin has not dominion over me; I live to God and God alone; all my members are devoted to Him and His service alone? And yet the power of the new nature goes far beyond this, and I am to live as one Spirit with, and a member in particular of, that body, the glorified Head of which is on God's throne in Heaven. Eph. ii. Nothing to do down here save to serve the living and the true God.

Brethren, myself a partaker of the benefit, I may well write to you thus; and you, through grace, co-partners of these things, may well read anything calculated to help you to understand better the humble, unselfish path of lowly dependence and obedience here below, which become those who are in Christ Jesus, partakers of the exceeding riches of God's grace by the Spirit. What were we in the first Adam, and what our prospect then? And the flesh is in us still, and the world around us and Satan (God's enemy and ours) watching against us hourly! And have I, have you, overcome these things, and are we practically representing Christ down here, as He represents us up there, anchor and forerunner fixed within the veil? If not, what deep repentance and humiliation become us.

G. V. W.

FROM THE LIFE OF GOSSNER.

While Gossner was living with Feuneborg, a poor traveler asked the latter to lend him three dollars to reach home. Feuneborg, at the time, possessed but three dollars, but as the poor man asked in the name of the Lord Jesus, he lent him all he had, even his last penny. Some time after, when in extreme want, he recollected this fact while in prayer, and with childlike faith and simplicity, he said: "O, Lord, I lent Thee three dollars, and Thou hast not given them back to me, though Thou knowest how urgently I need them. I pray Thee to return them to me."

A letter arrived that day, which Gossner delivered to the old man, with these words: "Here, sir, you receive what you advanced." It contained two hundred dollars, sent by a rich man at the solicitation of the poor traveler, to whom he lent his all. Feuneborg, quite overcome with surprise, said, in his simple way: "O, dear Lord, one can not say a simple word to Thee, without being put to shame."

FRAGMENTS.

It is hard to keep the helm up against so many cross winds as we meet upon this troubled sea of life. I therefore cast all my concerns on the Lord. In the midst of painful events, I say with myself, Is *this* an affair in which He will choose otherwise than well? Can infinite wisdom be mistaken? Can perfect goodness intend me evil? Have I left my *eternal* interests with God, and can I not trust Him with those of *time*? I find that while faith is steady, nothing can disquiet me; and when faith totters, nothing can establish me. If I stay myself on God, and leave Him to work in His own way and time, I am at rest, and can sit down and sleep in a promise, even when a thousand troubles rise up against me; therefore, my way is not to plan beforehand, but to go on with God day by day. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

The deeper anything is in our hearts, the less we care to let others see it, but because of its depth and power it *tells of itself*, as it is said, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

JUDGES.

Chapters i.-viii.

The book of Joshua has given us the power of God in bringing in His people, and establishing them as His possession, in the land, according to His promise. True, there were weakness and failure, on their part, to take up all that He had given them, and to drive out the heathen, but no word of His had failed. And this is instructive to us, of the Church set up in heavenly blessing on the earth, as given in the book of Acts, according to the counsels of God, and the revelation of the mystery which had been hid for ages (Eph. iii). All the way through the Acts, we see the weakness of the objects of this unspeakable love, and their inability to keep that which was committed in responsibility to them, though the blessed purpose of God is accomplished in seating us in heavenly places in Christ.

In the book of Judges we find a sad contrast. There is a painful coming down from all that Jehovah had done. Instead of holding on to what they had, and pressing on in the acquisition of what was theirs in the mind of Jehovah, they were oftentimes deprived of what they already had, and only by the compassion of God, delivered by instruments which He raised up, in the extremity of their misery, "for His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel."

It is no doubt humbling to read such things, and to know that they are a portrayal of that which happened in the Church, in the very beginning, developed in its grossest forms after the withdrawal of the apostles. As we follow the Epistles, we see the germs of every corruption which now tests the faith and obedience of the faithful, and which augur a speedy cutting off, at the return of the Lord Jesus. But how gracious is it of God to give us these disclosures, and the truth that meets each manifestation of evil, or each working of iniquity. In the later Epistles, and the Revelation, we are shown that which was already, in the beginning, seen by the Holy Ghost, as the dread foreshadowing of the false doctrines and schisms which so deeply grieve and dishonor our Lord. Look where we will in God's word, and right alongside of the wonderful and perfect things

of God, we find man exposed. How clearly is it shown that he cannot stand, practically, in that in which God has placed him. In the book of Judges we shall therefore have the portraiture of a declining Church, and Christendom in well-matured apostasy. It is all "for our admonition."

God shows us, that whatever the time, or dispensation, and on whatsoever ground, He has set up a people or an individual, in responsibility, they have always slipped, even from their first establishment—that departure has not been the slow result of centuries. Should this be comforting to us? No, it should be a warning, and a cause of humiliation. Centuries but unveil and develop what God saw from the very beginnings of the evil. Thus among the Galatians, the little leaven of circumcision, adopted there without thought of its important bearing, is shown to be that which dismisses Christ entirely from that of which He is meant by God to be the Centre and the All. It was Law superseding Grace, the old man, instead of the new, the earth for heaven. All these have come out in the years, until the grossest and most heinous iniquities in doctrine and life have characterized that which is named the Church. The blessed thing for us is that God never excuses this. And hence we have clear teachings in righteousness and truth, we have Him abiding by that which was in the beginning, and insisting that everything shall be abandoned but that. Whatever man's self-conceit may add, God refuses to go on with aught save His own things. Our fellowship with God is in HIS thoughts, not contributing ours, and there is nothing that can please Him, save that which is in the line of the Holy Ghost's communication and action.

There is this, then, for our comfort, God cares for His own name, and will find a way for those who are His. Moreover, He will accomplish His purpose in the end, both as to Israel and the Church, though both have failed to reach up to His purpose, in themselves.

So here we find when the place of confession is taken, He raised up judges which delivered them out of the hand of them that spoiled them. "And when Jehovah raised them up judges, then Jehovah was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge." This is blessed. If we are the

same; as man has always been, so is He the same, wondrous in mercy and infinite in grace. What a Resource!

Chap. i. Accordingly we see the tokens of His power and presence in grace, in the victory over Adoni-bezek (ver. 1-7); Kirjath-sepher (ver. 13-15), and the driving out of the Philistines (ver. 18). And here are some beautiful specimens of faith—in the daughter of Caleb, approving herself of kindred spirit with him, and receiving “springs of water;” and Othniel, “God’s lion,” who, to be joined with her, subdued a city. They thus laid hold upon the hope set before them, and it became to them a source of refreshing, for a distinctive glory of the land was its springs, “and Caleb gave the upper springs and the nether springs.”

But the faith of the tribes failed, and they did not drive out the Canaanites, so that they still were allowed to dwell among them. What insensibility to evil, or to God’s mind! Of some of the tribes, as Asher and Naphtali, it is told that they themselves dwelt among the Canaanites, the latter predominating evidently. “Unto the angel of the Church in Pergamos, write: These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and *where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is.*” And this at the beginning!—just at the close of the Apostle’s days, as this chapter gives a summary of the condition of things, “after the death of Joshua.”

Chap. ii. From Gilgal to Bochim! Gilgal had been the place of strength, and from thence had they gone forth to battle, and thither had they returned after victory. It characterized their condition when God was with them, going on according to His purpose. It was the place where the reproach of Egypt had been rolled away, where flesh had been judged, receiving sentence of death—circumcision. Moreover, Jehovah had been there—His people gathered about Him, in continual remembrance of His completed work, and in sight of the Jordan of death, themselves nothing and He everything. With all weakness in them, Gilgal expressed morally, the truth of the book of Joshua, as Bochim seems to express the character of the book of Judges—as denoted by Jehovah, the moral condition of the people in ruin. It was

the place of *tears*. They had been acting in wilfulness and ease-seeking, unmindful of His designs in leading them through and out of, the great wilderness. They were sparing, tolerating, dwelling among, and then intermarrying with, the idolators, whom God had told them to exterminate. How foreign to His mind in everything. Now they must learn that He was a jealous God, resenting, in holiness, this dishonor to His name.

“The angel of Jehovah came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you into the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you. And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of the land: ye shall throw down their altars; but ye have not obeyed my voice; why have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you, but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you. And it came to pass, when the angel of Jehovah spake these words unto the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice and wept. And they called the name of that place Bochim; and they sacrificed there unto Jehovah.” This was a proper answer, and the only one, to the words of judgment. Jehovah’s relation to them is still unchanged, and He accepts their tears and their worship.

How deep the lessons of this scene! As with them, God refuses now to give the full expression of His power by the Holy Ghost, as in the early day of the church (Acts ii-v.); for His people are not separated from the world as then. What is left for us? Confession of ruin, and weeping, as, in view of such things, the “tears” of Timothy were prized. Moreover, God is still to be worshipped when self has been judged. Has he established a ground of meeting, giving us knowledge of what He will accept? It is the name of Jesus, alone. We are to gather to that, giving Him the worship due, following “righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart.” Weakness will not excuse from that, “*The joy of the Lord is our strength.*”

Ver. 11-16. Their grief was short-lived. They did evil in the sight of Jehovah and served Baalim. They forsook Jehovah, God of their fathers, which brought

them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods. And the anger of Jehovah was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hand of spoilers. This was not that He did not love them, for His heart was ever for them, and when they entered into the truth of their state, He hastened to their relief, but in such a way as to maintain His holiness. And this is ever blessed for us, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say, we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth." "The fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." (1 John i, 5, 6; Ephes. v, 9.)

In the raising up of deliverers at certain periods of distress and humbling before God, we have what corresponds to *revivals* in the history of the church, in which God in grace, and in faithfulness to His own name, brings back a remnant of His children to the acknowledgment of the truth, when all around is apostasy. Such was the way in the days of Luther, and such is His doing now, in calling out a people to be "waiting for His Son from heaven"—the original posture of the saints—and thereby recovering much that has been lost, and opening the word anew to find the old paths, and the blessings of old. But to such, instead of the manifestation of power, it is said, "Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."

Chap. iii begins the details, of which we have had, in the former two chapters, the general statement; giving the nations that were left, and the deliverers whom Jehovah raised up, Othniel, Ehud and Shamgar, taking them out of the hands of the King of Mesopotamia, the King of Moab, with Ammon and Amelek, and the Philistines. In these we see the way of God in choosing things that are weak and despised, to confound things that are mighty, for Othniel was the younger son, Ehud was left-handed, and Shamgar slew the six hundred with an ox-goad. In each there was a something that betokened inferiority. If there be faith and faithfulness to God, how easily that grace which is ever seeking occasions for blessing, can flow out in deliverance through the simplest instrument, yea, through things that are not. But what a difference between this and the days immediately following Joshua, even, when Judah and

Simeon went out together, and the only question was, who should lead. This was retrograding very rapidly.

In chaps. iv. v., even individual men are not to be found, and woman, the weaker vessel, is brought into action by God. God was still keeping His word among them, for Deborah was a prophetess; but what of the glory of Israel, when not a man could be found to lead? Barak refuses to go forward unless she goes with him, and Jehovah sells Sisera into the hands of a woman. Then follows Deborah's song of triumph. It was to Jehovah, for the avenging of Israel when the people willingly offered themselves. But unbelief kept many of the people at home, and some, holding back, are accursed. When God comes in manifestation of His power to deliver, it tests all, and reveals whether it be conscious weakness, or ease-seeking and indolence.

Chap. vi. But the story of evil repeats itself with a dreary monotony. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of Jehovah, and Jehovah delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. Again they cry unto Jehovah. They were exceedingly low, in dens and caves, the place for fugitives, or wild beasts. It was not suffering for righteousness sake, but as evil-doers. "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf." (1 Peter iv. 16.) They had not this consolation that the spirit of glory and of God rested on them. And now, out of the depths they cry unto Jehovah. And he sends a prophet to them, to arouse the conscience. But He also sends an angel to Gideon, whom He had chosen to accomplish their release. In this instrument we see one who had, in his own soul, entered into the sad condition of Israel. Never were they so low. He felt the terrible degradation of one of God's people to be cowering behind a wine-press, through fear of the Midianites, when their normal place was to be a terror to all surrounding nations. It was a grievous descent from the hour when they went into the land, and all the inhabitants of the land were faint because of them, and deep were the exercises of this one whom the angel now accosts,—"Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." He was taking the sorrows of Israel into his heart rather than his own. "If Jehovah be with us, why then is this befallen us? and where be all his miracles

which our fathers told us of? Did not Jehovah bring us up from Egypt? but now Jehovah hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites." Once faith takes hold of this, that God, not the enemy, is acting, it is very blessed. It becomes the ground and pledge to faith, that He will take care of His own glory, and He cannot deny His people either, whom He has redeemed. Still His word and purpose are with Gideon. "Jehovah is with *thee*." "Go in this *thy* might and *thou* shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites." Have not I sent thee?" "Surely, *I will be with thee*." Was not this enough? So low had things become, so little was Jehovah known, that this poor servant has to be taught by signs that God will do His word. And He graciously condescends to this weakness. The excellency of the power shall be all of God, that no flesh shall glory in His presence. Grace here brings out the nothingness of the instrument. In the presence of God, he counts himself as good as dead. But God answers, "fear not," and "peace." And this makes Gideon a worshiper, making public this testimony of peace, in the name of his altar, JEHOVAH-SHALOM. "Jehovah send peace." This is an exceedingly important principle. How can there be any service, any fruit, any worship, if the soul is not at rest before God? Salvation must be known as assured. And here is where so many fail. They labor from an unsatisfied, unestablished conscience. In all the truth that God is restating in this day of evil, concerning His church, He begins by making known the assurance of salvation. And it is especially needful, as we shall find, that all matters are being brought into the light to be judged, and if one is not established in the grace of God, does not know he is saved, he can never listen to the judgment of God on his ways, without fear, and a legal mind. He will be afraid that everything God says to him imperils his soul's salvation. How much need there is now of pressing this on every believer—"He that believeth on the Son of God *hath* everlasting life."

Another thing is seen here, that when God will use a vessel, it must first be purged. So we see in Isaiah vi., and in 2 Tim. ii. 21: "If a man purge himself from these (vessels of dishonor) *he* shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, prepared unto

every good work." So Gideon must begin the work of judgment at home, by breaking down the altar of Baal that his father had, and from this he won a new name, as the adversary of Baal—Jerubbaal. How the Lord delights to give new names to His children commemorating that which His own grace produces. (Rev. iii. 5, 12.)

And now we see how the purged vessel can be used in power. The Midianites come up with the Amalekites and the children of the east, and pitch in the valley of Jezreel. But the spirit of Jehovah comes upon Gideon. It matters nothing now if his family be poor in Manasseh, and he be the least of his father's house. Jehovah has fully accredited him. How precious above all things in our day, is the acknowledgment by the Lord of the two or three gathered in His name. How speedy His acceptance of faithfulness. To such He gives His testimony to be given to others. Gideon blows a trumpet and gathers Manasseh, and from Zebulon, Asher and Naphtali. The faith that acknowledges God in relation to His people, and puts away evil, is in the power of the Spirit of God. And God further gives to one thus drawn to Him, tokens of His design to deliver Israel. He waits upon the word of Gideon, as having borne fruit and having His word abiding in him. (John xv. 7.) What a place of solemnity and power with God, to be asking what he will! It may be weakness; it is like man. But what grace in God, condescending to all this, giving the dew on or off the fleece, at Gideon's word!

Chap. vii. Startled and attracted by the bold and open stand taken by Gideon, thirty-two thousand men gather around him. In a time of revival it is easy to gather the multitudes. But Jehovah said, "The people that are with thee are too many." It must be wholly of God. Gideon had challenged the miracles that the fathers told them of, as connected with Jehovah being with them. And now, as He has said, "surely *I* will be with thee," He must act by and as Himself. And only such can go with Him, or be used by Him, as He can work in to will and to do according to His good pleasure.

And first, those that are fearful are permitted to return. Naught but real, individual, simple faith in God will do, for such a conflict. It is easy in the excitement of a religious upheaval to go with a multitude, but enthusiasm

is not faith. And God would have none but those who are perfectly confident in Him. He has given us boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him. (Ephes. iv. 12.) And now, what a spectacle! Twenty-two thousand withdraw, without apparent shame, or thought of how few they left behind. So long had they been out from the presence of God, and mingling with the idolatries of the heathen, that they could not trust in the living God. His bringing them out of Egypt, His establishing them in the land, and gathering them in peace to worship Him at Shiloh, and the wonders He had wrought for His own name, were nothing. They would have been as far off from Him, had they stayed and mingled in the triumph, for they would have vaunted themselves against Him, saying, mine own hand hath saved me (ver. 2). Do we get this lesson? Do we often—where there is a recognition that we, (the church) as the children of Israel, have done evil in the sight of the Lord, and desolation and ruin are every-where apparent—do we hear many say, we can not do anything, we must let things go as they are? It is a time of desolation, and of weakness, for great wrong is done to the name of our Lord. What then? Have faith in God, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Nothing but this will do. Our own strength is nothing, our own plans are rebellion, our unions are but a gloss thrown over that which is offensive to Him. Can *He* not do everything for us and for His own honor? It is an age of boasting, and now to have everything withdrawn that would give that place, is to be made very little indeed, and to hang wholly upon God. If we really see ruin, we have to come to this, that God must do all.

But the people are yet too many, and a second test is to be applied. "Bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee, there," was the word of Jehovah. If it was a question of faith in God before, here it was something that had to do with self. "Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth"—not taking their ease, as usual; taking refreshment when offered for sustenance, but not caring for the manner of it, as one in pursuit, with his mind on something else. It is the setting aside of self. Am I willing to be nothing more than a dog? The Syropheni-

cian woman of the Gospels, gained everything by cheerfully and as the natural thing, taking such a place. If she were spoken of as a dog, so let it be, but the dogs got refreshment in their own place. She was not there to exalt or defend herself, or to assert her comparative national dignity, but for *His* grace and power to be all to her. What can be done to a man, who, wherever you place him, is happy in God; has no regard to circumstances, is above them all, in quiet fellowship with the Lord? Any treatment from the world is taken as just the proper thing, for "it knew *Him* not." There can be no slight, for he has expected nothing; no flattery, for his ear is closed; no want or destitution, for he has all things in God; no indignity, for he knows how to be abased; he is every-where and in all things *instructed* to be full, and to be hungry, to abound and to suffer need. What a tuition such an one has had. It has been in the school of Him who *emptied* Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, *humbled* Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the CROSS. Oh, this emptying, this humbling, this obedience unto death, the death of the cross! "If any man will come after me, let him deny *himself*, and take up *his cross* and follow me, for whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." (Matt. xvi. 24, 25.) Taking up a cross is not carrying a burden, it is going to death, for the one who carried a cross was *to hang on it*. Men may be very sincere, very active, heading many a grand enterprise and enjoying it all. It may be giving them reputation for beneficence, or sanctity, as christian workers, but as living in the flesh, *God is not using them*. "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me, and where I am, there shall My servant be; if any man serve Me, him will My Father honor." It is always being delivered up to death. It is always bearing about the dying of the Lord Jesus—never reckoning self in the account, that the *life* also of *Jesus* might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. There is no reputation, no wealth, no ease for flesh, no gratification of taste, no having a will, in all this. The mind of the flesh is enmity to God, and though it may profess service, and be found

in company with those of the Spirit, it has nothing for God. God tests all His own servants, and to be anything for Him, self must be kept under.

There were only three hundred, but Jehovah said, "By the three hundred men that lapped, will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into their hand." It was such that could do all things, who counted not their life dear unto them. And this word of assurance from Jehovah, savors of the early day, when they trod the Red Sea and the Jordan, dry shod by His power and grace, and the walls of Jericho fell. What a word for us, is found in 2 Tim. ii. 4, "No man that warreth entangleth himself with this life," illustrated by Paul in chap. iv, "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith." He had counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord.

And now Gideon is commanded to go down to the camp of the enemy, and there he hears what estimate they put upon him—"a cake of barley-bread." Yes, but it "tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along." Jehovah would have His servant's heart encouraged by knowing that terror was already in the camp of his adversary. Their confidence fades before his faith. Ah, nothing is impossible to faith, it is the victory that overcometh the world. Gideon worships and returns to the host of Israel, and says, "Arise, for Jehovah hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian." The humility of one that has been broken in the presence of God, is sweetly seen here. Himself is nothing. "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all," is the word of the apostle to the Philippians. Such a captain and such men must needs spread alarm among the enemy.

And now they go out to battle, with strange weapons, trumpets and pitchers and lamps! These tell of testimony, of death working in us, in the blowing of the trumpets and the breaking of the pitchers that the light may flash out. We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. They were in the light, while the enemy in darkness and confusion, destroyed one another. When

we have sentence of death in ourselves, the victory is easy, it is already wrought. Satan has found the end of his power, in the cross.

Others of the tribes are now brought in to share in the rout and defeat of the adversary, and even the men of Ephraim receive a tender and gracious acknowledgment of their having a place, too. He who, in the time of prostration, took up the case in confession as his own, in the hour of his victory, gives all a share. Even so are we one body, and members one of another. "There should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one of another, and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." (1 Cor. xii.) So are we to pray always with all prayer and supplication, in the Spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication, *for all saints*, and so are we prayed for that we, being rooted and grounded in love, may comprehend *with all saints*, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height. How precious is it to see this in Gideon, when defection and division were apparent and a sad lowering of everything. And we, if we would act on that which was in the beginning, will know a deepening love for all who are dear to the Lord Jesus Christ, and their right to all the blessed things He has wrought.

With all that is deeply interesting in the recital, and precious in the exhibition of God's grace, the general condition and tone of the people was lower, morally. This dear servant, blessed as had been his service and testimony, as a vessel that God used to restore the truth, fails in the end, and gives Israel occasion to sin, and so they sank lower still in later years, and God's love must go out the farther.

And has there not been made, in Christendom, an ephod, some traditional thing to be handed down, something aside from the living, abiding presence of the Holy Ghost, ministering to the religion of the flesh rather than presenting only the things of Christ? Are not men wanting this and that, to symbolize and make apparent to the senses, the truth? In so doing, they are practically denying the Holy Ghost, whom the world cannot receive, because it *seeth Him not*.

CHRIST, THE DELIVERER.

Some time ago, on a crowded steamboat that had just started *up* the river, I noticed a group of people gathered around a man who seemed greatly excited. Joining the company, I soon found the cause of his trouble was that he had mistaken the direction of the boat. He wanted to go *down* the river. In his trouble he sought the Captain, and offered fifty times the price of his passage to have the boat put back to let him off. But it could not be. As the boat moved along, the very speed that was cheering others with anticipations of soon arriving at home, only added to his anxiety, which seemed to be really agony, as he had started to see a sick friend, who was possibly dying. The river was beautiful; the scenery along its banks was enlivening; the vessel was sound and commodious, and was fitted up much more luxuriously than the one he should have taken; but he heeded none of these things, for every revolution of the wheels, was bearing him farther away and deepening his sorrow, for he was in the wrong boat, without hope of remedy.

Even so, amid the fascinations of society, and the busy whirl of life, is there many a heavy, anxious heart, that has learned that "there is a way that seemeth right to a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death." Beauty is changed to ashes, and joy to mourning, when it is felt that "sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." There are many who do not know this, who feel secure in their course of evil, but it is, nevertheless, true that they are going farther away from all hope and happiness, and destruction is before them. But, thanks be to God, there is the offer of deliverance to all who are thus in bonds under sin. I saw that this man kept ever looking towards the shore, that he might signal to some boat to come and take him off, but in vain. But to us, comes the gracious announcement, "deliver them from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." Could the troubled man have seen some one moving towards him, with a strong oar and vigorous arm, he might have had some hope, mingled with anxiety lest there should be a failure to overtake him. But how different the word of life to us, Our Deliverer is *here*. Say not in thine

heart, Who shall ascend into Heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart; that is the word of faith which we preach. "*I am He that blotteth out thine iniquities for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.*" Precious assurance! "blotted out" and "remembered no more," because the Lord has laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all. Oh, sinner, you meet Christ in the way before you, whichever direction you go, saying, "look unto *Me* and be saved." That is all, Look, believe, that He was delivered for your offenses, that He has made peace. He that believeth, shall never come into condemnation, but *is passed* from death unto life. This deliverance cannot be purchased. It is a gift, and the gift of God is eternal life.

THE THREE CHARACTERS OF LUKE VII.

The first presented to us is JESUS. "And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house and sat down to meat." Verse 36. Let our eyes be fixed for a little upon Simon's guest—the meek and lowly Jesus. Who is He? What is He? He is the Eternal Son of God, and the seeker and the Saviour of the lost. Going a little further back and looking at that same Jesus, when a babe, lying in the manger, at Bethlehem, the question rises up at once in the mind, "Was this the beginning of His existence?" Ah, no. Here humanity was assumed—that body prepared for Him—but not the dawn of his existence. This little child—this meek and lowly Jesus, Simon's guest, had an existence before all worlds. Amazing thought! Oh! that Simon had known this. That blessed One speaking of Himself through Solomon of old, said: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before him." (Prov. viii., 22-

34.) Back, back, into eternity, before time existed, we see this blessed One enjoying the ineffable delight of the Father's bosom, and forming His supreme delight. There was the hallowed reciprocation of delight and joy. Here we are introduced to the inner circle of heaven long before the creative fiat of the Great Elohim had been exerted. Oh! what a sight meets our view! The Father, Son, and Spirit dwelling in the enjoyment of reciprocated love, delight and joy! Happy creatures are we, to be privileged to look back at such a scene! Again, how easily is His existence to be marked, when God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." (Gen. 1, 26.) Here is to be seen the concerted action of the Great Elohim—the glorious Trinity—the blessed Three in One. And after His incarnation, when man, because of His voluntary humiliation, would rob Him of His deity, how the blessed Spirit of God delights to revert, for His vindication, to the same two glorious scenes. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." (John i. 1—3). And speaking of His assumption of humanity, He says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (Verse 14.) How illustrious, then, was the guest of Simon! From the heights and centre of divine and eternal glory had He come; down from the very throne of heaven had He traveled, until we see Him accepting the invitation of Simon, the Pharisee. And why this leaving of heaven and the glory there—this taking upon Him the form of a servant, and assuming humanity—becoming man? Oh! that I had words wherewith to give the proper answer. Oh! that I could speak out the answer, so that every fallen son of Adam could hear it and drink it in. Let that blessed One give His own reasons, and may the reader drink them in: "The Son of man is come to SEEK and to SAVE the lost." (Luke, xix. 10). Again: "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a RANSOM for many." (Mark, x. 47). Here, then, we have the blessed answer, coming

from the very lips of the Son of God Himself, as to why He was found below, as man in humiliation. It was all voluntary! His love to man had brought Him down, in accordance with the Father's will. Faith can see, then, in that lowly guest of Simon, God, as well as man—the mighty Creator, as well as the dependent One—the Prince of Life, as well as the One who became obedient unto death—the eternal Son of the Father, as well as the Son of man. Oh! how the heart dwells with emotion, and wonder, and praise, as we gaze at that lowly guest of Simon! and as we gaze, have all these testimonies of the Spirit, as to who He is, before the mind. Fain would we fall at His feet in the blessed service of the “woman of the city.” Connect, then, the fact of His eternal existence, and of His deity, with His Saviourship, and tell me, is He not one mighty to save? Blessed be God, He is! Faith finds in Him a perfect Saviour; the conscience finds in *His precious blood*, perfect peace. The soul enjoys rest. Who can tell the grace of those blessed words, “The Son of man came to *seek* and to *save* the *lost*, and to give His *life* a *ransom* for many?”

Now we come to the second character, and that is Simon, the Pharisee. He has invited the blessed Jesus to eat with him. Jesus accepted the invitation, and deep down in His own loving heart is found the reason why. How great the contrast between the two characters! We have seen the glory, grace, and humiliation of Jesus; now let us look at Simon. Who is he, and what is he? He is a son of the fallen Adam—a sinner, and guilty—and owns it not. He is a proud, self-righteous man. He is deep down in the pit of moral woe and corruption, and feels it not; he is at an infinite moral distance from God, and knows it not. He even presumes to sit as judge, and slight the moral glory and perfect grace of the Judge of all the earth. Tremendous guilt! He is blind to what he is himself, and consequently blind as to who the One is whom he has invited. Oh! how dark and dreadful, in the sight of a holy God, must be the character of a proud, self-righteous, and self-exalting sinner. It is the very opposite to His own pure and holy nature. And what grace shines out in that blessed Lord Jesus, as He patiently bore with the insinuations of the sinner's heart before Him, and who had invited Him!

And yet, how deeply He felt the slight purposely put upon him, in the withholding that which the laws of custom even enforced, viz.: "Thou gavest me no water for my feet, no kiss, and no oil to anoint the head." Ah! yes, poor Simon was enwrapped in moral darkness; himself alone, stood before his gaze and filled its vision, and hence, there was no perception nor appreciation of the blessed One reclining at his table.

How solemnly true are the words of Jesus: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance!" Poor Simon thought he was righteous, and, therefore, did not require repentance or salvation. Jesus was not a Saviour to him. He presumed to sit upon the judgment-seat himself, instead of being broken-hearted in the presence of his Judge, on account of his sins and guilt. This was an alarming state to be in. But, alas! not peculiar to that day any more than the present.

We will now look at the third character presented to us in this very precious scripture. "And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His feet, behind Him, weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment." (Verses 37 and 38.) Not now a self-righteous, self-exalting sinner; but a sinner convicted, humbled, and truly repentant. Blessed sight! Not now the justification of self and the condemnation of Jesus; but the condemnation of self and the full justification of Jesus. Blessed reversion of order! She has heard of Jesus, and where He sits at meat; she has heard that He had said: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," and "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." She feels her heart drawn to Him, and she comes to Him in all her sins and guilt, with all her deep moral stains and depravity, and in *simple faith*, casts herself at the feet of Him who was both Lord and Saviour. She bathes His blessed feet with her tears, and takes the glory of her person and wipes them therewith, and anoints them withal. She utters not a word, but her actions told out to the blessed Lord, who could look right into her heart and know all that

was there, her repentance of heart and faith in Himself. He gives now, not as in the case of Simon, a rebuke, but meets, out of the fulness of his own love and perfect grace, her deep need as a poor lost sinner. She came in her sins, hiding not one, and she got the infinite blessing; she came, believing, and the Saviour immediately responded to her faith, and said to her: "Thy sins are forgiven thee. Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

E. A.

VALUE AND AUTHORITY OF THE WORD OF GOD.

The supreme authority of holy scripture should be deeply impressed on every heart. It is the only safeguard against the many forms of error and evil which abound on every hand. Human writings, no doubt, have their value; they may interest the mind as a reference; but they are perfectly worthless as authority.

We need to remember this. There is a strong tendency in the human mind to lean upon human authority. Hence it has come to pass, that millions throughout the professing church have virtually been deprived altogether of the word of God, from the fact that they have lived and died under the delusion that they could not know it to be the word of God, apart from human authority. Now this is, in reality, throwing the word of God overboard. If that word is of no avail without man's authority, then, we maintain, it is not God's word at all. It does not matter, in the smallest degree, what the authority is, the effect is the same. God's word is declared to be insufficient without something of man to give the certainty that it is God that is speaking.

This is a most dangerous error, and its root lies far deeper in the heart than many of us are aware. It has often been said to us, when quoting passages of scripture, "How do you know that that is the word of God?" What is the point of such a question? Plainly to overthrow the authority of the word. The heart that could suggest such an inquiry does not want to be governed by holy scripture at all. The *will* is concerned. Here lies the deep secret. There is the consciousness that the word condemns something which the heart wants to hold

and cherish, and hence the effort to set the word aside altogether.

But how are we to know that the book which we call the Bible is the word of God? We reply, it carries its own credentials with it. It bears its own evidence upon every page, in every paragraph, in every line. True, it is only by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the divine Author of the book, that the evidence can be weighed, and the credentials appreciated. But we do not want man's voice to accredit God's Book; or, if we do, we are, most assuredly, on infidel ground, as regards divine revelation. If God cannot speak directly to the heart—if He cannot give the assurance that it is He Himself who speaks, then where are we? Whither shall we turn? If God cannot make Himself heard and understood, can man do it better? Can he improve upon God? Can man's voice give us more certainty? Can the authority of the church, the decrees of general councils, the judgment of the Fathers, the opinion of the doctors, give us more certainty than God Himself? If so, we are just as completely at sea—just as thoroughly in the dark, as though God had not spoken at all. Of course, if God has not spoken, we are completely in the dark; but if He has spoken, and yet we cannot know His voice without man's authority to accredit it, where lies the difference? Is it not plain to the reader of these lines that if God, in His great mercy, has given us a revelation, it must be sufficient of itself; and, on the other hand, that any revelation which is not sufficient of itself cannot possibly be divine? And, further, is it not equally plain that if we cannot believe what God says, because He says it, we have no safer ground to go upon when man presumes to affix his accrediting seal?

Let us not be misunderstood. What we insist upon is this, the all-sufficiency of a divine revelation apart from and above all human writings, ancient, mediæval, or modern. We value human writings; we value sound criticism; we value profound and accurate scholarship; we value the light of *true* science and philosophy; we value the testimony of pious travelers who have sought to throw light upon the sacred text; we value all those books that open up to us the intensely interesting subject of biblical antiquities; in short, we value everything

that tends to aid us in the study of the holy scriptures ; but, after all, we return with deeper emphasis to our assertion, as to the all-sufficiency and supremacy of the word of God. That word must be received on its own divine authority, without any human recommendation, or else it is not the word of God to us. We believe that God can give us the certainty, in our own souls, that the holy scriptures are, in very deed, His own word. If He does not give it, no man can; and if He does, no man need. Thus the inspired apostle says to his son Timothy, "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and *hast been assured of, knowing of whom* thou hast learned; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. iii, 14, 15.)

How did Timothy know that the holy scriptures were the word of God? He knew it by divine teaching. He knew of *whom* he had learned. Here lay the secret. There was a living link between his soul and God, and he recognized in scripture the very voice of God. Thus it must ever be. It will not do merely to be convinced in the intellect, by human arguments, human evidences, and human apologies, that the Bible is the word of God; we must know its power in the heart and on the conscience by divine teaching; and, when this is the case, we shall no more need human proofs of the divinity of the Book than we need a rushlight, at noonday, to prove that the sun is shining. We shall then believe what God says because He says it, and not because man accredits it, nor because we feel it. "Abraham *believed God*, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." He did not want to go to the Chaldeans or to the Egyptians in order to find out from them, if what he had heard was, in reality, the word of God. No, no; he knew *whom* he had believed, and this gave him holy stability. He could say, beyond all question, "God has established a link between my soul and Himself by means of His word, which no power of earth or hell can ever snap." This is the true ground for every believer—man, woman, or child, in all ages, and under all circumstances. This was the ground for Abraham and Josiah, for Luke and Theophilus, for Paul and Timothy;

and it must be the ground for the writer and the reader of these words, else we shall never be able to stand against the rising tide of infidelity which is sweeping away the very foundations on which thousands of professors are reposing.

However, we may well inquire, can a merely national profession, a hereditary faith, an educational creed, sustain the soul in the presence of an audacious scepticism that reasons about everything and believes nothing? Impossible! We must be able to stand before the sceptic, the rationalist, and the infidel, and say, in all the calmness and dignity of a divinely-wrought faith, "*I know whom I have believed.*" Then we shall be little moved by such books as "The Phases of Faith," "Essays and Reviews," "Broken Lights," "Ecce Homo," or "Colenso." They will be no more to us than gnats in the sunshine. They cannot hide from our souls the heavenly beams of our Father's revelation. God has spoken, and His voice reaches the heart. It makes itself heard above the din and confusion of this world, and all the strife and controversy of professing Christians. It gives rest and peace, strength and fixedness to the believing heart and mind. The opinions of men may perplex and confound. We may not be able to thread our way through the labyrinths of human systems of theology; but God's voice speaks in holy scripture—speaks to the heart—speaks to *me*. This is life and peace. It is all I want. Human writings may now go for what they are worth, seeing I have all I want in the ever-flowing fountain of inspiration—the peerless, precious volume of my God.—*From Life and Times of Josiah.* C. H. M.

"THE HEAVENLY CALLING," AND "SEATED IN HEAVENLY PLACES."

The relation in which Christ is presented to His people as "the Apostle and High Priest of their profession," in Hebrews; and Christ as Lord and "Head of His body, the church," of which we are the members, in the Ephesians, might of itself explain what the difference is, and determine it. There are, however, other considerations of interest to which the Scriptures guide us.

We are looked at in the Hebrews as a collective number of persons, on their way into the rest that remaineth, and therefore pilgrims and strangers, in virtue of our heavenly calling. Another and a very important point is, that "the time of need" measures the provision made for our supply by "the throne of grace," to which we are exhorted to come boldly, in order "to obtain mercy and find grace to help" us. Moreover, we have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one who is able to succor them that are tempted, for that "He himself hath suffered, being tempted." It is evident, from such provisions as these, and others of a similar character, that the people are not contemplated as in Canaan, or in the rest, but on their way to it: "we who believe are entering into rest;" and again, "let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest." Further, "the heirs of *promise*" are encouraged to lay hold on *the hope* "set before them, within the veil, whither the *forerunner* is for us entered, even Jesus," &c.

In brief, we see in all these instances that Christ is separated off from His people—a High Priest passed into the heavens, and He alone "*set down*" on the right hand of the Majesty on High—though there on behalf of His people, but a people as yet on the earth, with a heavenly calling, and on their way to the rest. So as to "the Forerunner"—He is within the veil, but alone—though He has entered there for us; and "to them that look for Him shall He appear" a "second time," &c. What can be plainer than that the character and provisions made by God, in the Hebrews, to suit Himself in the Holiest, and a people whom He has called into His rest, recognize distance, and infirmities, and a time of need. In short, the necessities of a people *on their way* are met by the resources of the heavens above their heads, and ministered by the great High Priest of their profession.

In the Ephesians, we are viewed as members of Christ's body; of His flesh and of His bones—which He nourishes and cherishes. Besides this, the power which wrought in Christ to place Him where He is, at the right hand of God, is likewise to usward who believe—God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us hath quickened us *together with Christ*, and hath raised us up *together*, and made us *sit together*, in heavenly places *in*

Christ Jesus. This epistle is just the opposite of the Hebrews; for there, as we saw, the Lord was *alone*, and set down as a Priest—or entered in alone as a Forerunner (and very precious these relations of Christ are to us); but here, in the Ephesians, He is not *alone*, for we are in Him, as the members of His Body, *seated in Him* in the heavenlies, because He is the Head of the Church—not in *an office*, which priesthood is, but as Head of His Body—not as a forerunner, but we are quickened together, and raised up together, and *seated*.

Moreover, our infirmities are not the question, but a direct and different ministration from the Lord, in love to the members, "till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

There is *no* corporate body in the Hebrews, but a collective number of people, with a pilgrimage and the rest of God in view—whereas in the Ephesians there is nothing of this kind, but a "unity"—"a habitation of God through the Spirit"—and "a body" upon the earth—not units, tens, hundreds, and thousands (numerically considered), like the children of Israel, who were "six hundred thousand, and a thousand seven hundred and thirty," when numbered on the plains of Moab, before their entrance into Canaan—on their way into rest—but "one new man."

The saints of God, in this dispensation, stand in the relation to God of a people on earth, "begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away," &c., of which Peter's epistles give the description. Till we enter into this inheritance by our own resurrection, or translation, we are addressed as "pilgrims and strangers," and exhorted "to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear," calling upon the Father, &c.

But the saints of God have another relation to Christ, as "the beginning, the first-born from the dead," and "Head of the body, the church"—and in which relation we are *not on our way*, but *seated* in the heavenly places in Christ; for as members of Christ, and of His Body, we should be denying our relation to both, if we do not

allow that we are seated, as our Head, and in our Head. A Christian can therefore say in his *Church* relation that he is quickened, raised up, and seated in the heavenlies in Christ—because he is a member of His body—whereas, if viewed in another relation (as in the Hebrews) he is one of the holy brethren, and a partaker of the heavenly calling—moreover called to consider Christ, not as Head of the Body, but in *an office*, as the Apostle and High Priest of His profession—who appears in the presence of God *for us*, and lives *to make intercession* for us. Does the Lord do *this* for the Church, the Body, of which *He* is the Head? On the contrary, one of the prayers in the Ephesians is, that the members "may know *the love* of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." How different *this love* to the intercession of the great High Priest—though that is the fruit of grace, too.

A Christian is therefore one of the holy brethren, with a heavenly calling; on his way into the rest that remaineth, with a promise of entering in, but in the meanwhile obtaining mercy, and finding from the throne of grace in the heavens, the help that is suited for the time of need, or the pilgrimage journey. A Christian is also "joined to the Lord," and "one Spirit;" and as such "baptized (with all his fellow-members) by one Spirit into one body;" and "made to drink into one Spirit"—and this body is *Christ*. To introduce "a calling," or a "pilgrimage," or "intercession," where all is vital, and existing in the unity of a Body, would be to disturb these relations with Christ, and put all into distance again, and reduce the Body to mere units, tens, hundreds, and thousands. A Christian, as a *Church-man*, is already raised up, and seated in heavenly places.

I trust these remarks will make plain the difference between the "heavenly calling" of the Hebrews, and "seated in heavenly places" in the Ephesians. I trust also that we shall be able to hold our duplex character of "holy brethren," on our way to the rest, and laboring to enter in—yet quietly take our places, as knowing no distance, nor difference in this respect, between Christ as Head of the Body, and ourselves as of His flesh, and of His bones, seated with Him in the heavenlies! It is thus we are contemplated and addressed in these two

epistles, and *faith* accepts it in communion with the Father and the Son, through the Holy Ghost. J. N. D.

THE PRISONER OF GLATZ.

In a cleft of a mountain range in Upper Silesia, through which the wild and raging Neisse forces its passage down to the Oder, stands the impregnable Prussian fortress of Glatz, a natural fortress, almost unequalled in the world, begirt by mountain-peaks like walls, and fortified yet more by human skill. The valley itself is shut out from the rest of the world; and one who is enclosed by the massive walls and gratings of the castle, is an exile from the world, as if buried alive. Woe to the man imprisoned in Glatz! Every thing calls out to him, "No hope remains for thee! no hope!"

Here, in the second decade of this century, lay the Count of M——, hitherto petted and thronged, now hopelessly immured behind bolts and bars. By treason against the realm, and especially by personal violence offered to Frederic William III of Prussia, he had drawn down the rage of that monarch on his head, and was condemned to solitary imprisonment for life. For a whole year he lay in his frightful, lonely cell, without one star of hope in either his outer or inner sky, for he was a skeptic. They had left him only one book—a Bible—and this, for a long period, he would not read, or, if forced to take it up to kill time, and relieve his consuming weariness, it was only read with anger and gnashing of teeth, against the God it reveals.

But sore affliction, that dreadful, and yet blessed agent of God, that has brought to the good Shepherd many a sheep, was effectual with the Count of M——. The more he read the Bible, the more he felt the pressure of the gentle hand of God on his forlorn and hopeless heart.

On a rough and stormy November night, when the mountain gales howled round the fortress, the rain fell in torrents, and the swollen and foaming Neisse rushed roaring down the valley, the Count lay sleepless on his cot. The tempest in his breast was as fearful as that without. His whole past life rose before him; he was convicted of his manifold short-comings and sins; he felt that the source of all his misery lay *in his forsaking*

God. For the first time in his life, his heart was soft, and his eyes wet with tears of genuine repentance. He rises from his cot, opens his Bible, and his eye falls upon Psalm l. 15: "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." This word of God reaches the very depths of his soul; he falls upon his knees, for the first time since he was a child, and cries to God for mercy. And that gracious and compassionate God, who turns not away from the first movement of faith towards Him, heard the cry of this sufferer in the storm-beaten dungeon of Glatz, and gave him not only spiritual but temporal deliverance.

That same night, in his castle, at Berlin, King Frederick William III. lay sleepless in bed. Severe bodily pains tortured him, and in his utter exhaustion he begged of God to grant him a single hour of refreshing sleep. The favor was granted, and when he woke again, he said to his wife, the generous Louise, "God has looked upon me very graciously, and I may well be thankful to him. Who, in my kingdom, has wronged me most? I will forgive him."

"The Count of M——," replied Louise, "who is imprisoned in Glatz."

"You are right," said the sick King; "let him be pardoned."

Day had not dawned over Berlin ere a courier was dispatched to Silesia, bearing to the prisoner in Glatz, pardon and release.

It is the usual way of our good Shepherd, in gathering His lost flock, for whom He died, to do it "without observation," and when He holds up to us a marked instance like the above, no doubt it is that our dormant faith may be quickened in His power to save in the face of every obstacle.

This poor Count's heart was more strongly fortified against him, according to human observation, than even the prison home, whose impregnable walls continually echoed "no hope." His was a case, no doubt, which required unusual means; but with our God nothing is an obstacle which He wills shall be done. O, that our faith might stretch its hands to Him with a firmer grasp, and that we may count upon Him more largely!

In order that God's purposes might be accomplished

in his salvation, he must be put into prison; but that accomplished, how easy is his release. And yet the means that are used seem as marked and striking as in the case of Peter.

Once made His child, the very best thing must be done for him; not but that continued imprisonment might not have been the best, if He saw it so, but as He did not, his release is no difficulty. What a hard lesson is this to learn, that *our* difficulty is no difficulty to God; that *our* impossible is to Him, "*all things* are possible."

And to *faith* all things are possible. The Lord give us more largely of this, His gift, not only for ourselves, but in our efforts for others.

J. A.

THE POWER OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

An Extract.

They were living to themselves: self, with its hopes, and promises, and dreams, had still hold of them; but He began to fulfil their prayers. They had asked for contrition, and He sent them sorrow; they had asked for purity, and He sent them thrilling anguish; they had asked to be meek, and He had broken their hearts; they had asked to be dead to the world, and He slew all their living hopes; they had asked to be made like unto Him, and He placed them in the furnace, sitting by "as a refiner of silver," till they should reflect His image. They had asked to lay hold of His cross, and when He reached it to them it lacerated their hands; they had asked they knew not what, nor how; but He had taken them at their word, and granted them all their petitions. They were hardly willing to follow on so far, or to draw so nigh to Him. They had upon them an awe and fear, as Jacob at Bethel, or Eliphaz in the night visions, or as the apostles when they thought they had seen a spirit, and knew not that it was Jesus:—they could almost pray Him to depart from them, or to hide His awfulness. They found it easier to obey than to suffer—to do than to give up—to bear the cross than to hang upon it; but they cannot go back, for they have come too near the unseen cross, and its virtues have pierced too deeply within them. He is fulfilling to them His promise, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me;" but now

their turn is come at last, and that is all. Before, they had only *heard* of the mystery, but now they *feel* it. He has fastened on them His look of love, as He did on Mary and Peter, and they cannot choose but follow. Little by little, from time to time, by flitting gleams, the mystery of His cross shines out upon them. They behold Him, and lifted up, and the glory which rays forth from the wounds of His holy passion; and as they gaze upon it, they advance, and are changed into His likeness, and His name shines out through them, for He dwells in them. They live alone with Him above, in unspeakable fellowship; willing to lack what others own, and to be unlike all, so that they are only like Him. Such are they in all ages who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. Had they chosen for themselves, or their friends chosen for them, they would have chosen otherwise. They would have been brighter here, but less glorious in His kingdom. They would have had Lot's portion, not Abraham's, if they had halted anywhere—if He had taken off His hand and let them stray back—and what would they not have lost? What forfeits in the morning of the resurrection! But He staid them up, even against themselves. Many a time their foot had well-nigh slipped. But He in mercy held them up; now, even in this life, they know all He did was done well. It was good for them to stand alone with Him, on the mountain and in the cloud, and that not their will, but His, was done on them.

“ Oh! break, whatever it may be,
That holdeth back my heart from Thee,
Who died my heart to win.
All other love, however dear,
However old, or strong, or dear,
Of which Thou art not theme and sphere,
Is only polished sin.

“ All other love would cease to flow—
But Thine no chill, nor change can know,
In spite of ill return.
The source of Thine is not in me,
In what I am, or I can be;
The deep, deep spring is found in Thee—
It cannot cease to burn.”

JUDGES.

Chapters ix-xvi.

Chap. ix. The wilfulness and ingratitude of Israel are seen in turning away from the house of Gideon, who was the vessel of God Himself among them, and so rejecting Him. And here the first suggestions of "the wilful one" are given in their choosing Abimelech (the "King Father") a type of the antichrist, the one whom, coming in his own name, the nation will receive, resulting in judgment to them by fire. This gives us the instructive parable of Jotham, a word of admonition for us, of the character of the apostasy, as springing from that which is neither "fatness," nor "sweetness," nor that which "cheereth God and man." And we see in their choice of the "bramble" (emblem of the curse), upon the rejection of Jotham ("Jehovah is upright"), the mystery of iniquity already working; in their case, tending to "being cut off" when there was no remedy, (2 Chron. xxxv. 16) and, in Christendom, to the manifestation of the wicked one, and believing a lie, that they may all be judged. (2 Thess. ii.)

The overthrow of Abimelech is followed by peace, for a time; but their whole tone is evil, and soon they fall into idolatry, and are sold into the hands of the Philistines and the children of Ammon, who oppressed them eighteen years. When they cry to Jehovah, He tells them to go and cry unto the gods which they had chosen. But upon putting away the strange gods, He has compassion on them—"grieved for their misery." Jephthah is used as a leader, to deliver; but he is vastly different from Gideon, who was, as we have seen, deeply exercised in his own heart, and brought into fellowship with Jehovah. Yet, as one cast out by his brethren, he takes a place among the roll of deliverers who, through faith, "waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens," (Heb. xi.) and as God used him, became a type of Christ to us as a cast out one "whom Jehovah set free." Personally, little better than the leader of a guerrilla band, with reproach in his birth, he is one of the weak things and things that are not, used to bring to naught things that are. (Chap. xi.) His whole conduct with the people when they complain, and his rash vow, show how thoroughly all had gone away

from God's own mind. Yet he was used. God can take up any thing when He rises up to deliver, though He may, by the agents He employs, show the low state of the people.

Chaps. xiii.—xvi. Again, we have the too familiar record, "the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah." Their course is in one direction only—downward. And in this last of the judges, we see not only their intensely low condition morally, but other features come out as associated with this condition. The enemy is the Philistines, the most persistent and malignant, and from *within the land*, and those that they had left by their faithlessness, become conquerors for forty years. It was of the same weary length as their stay in the wilderness, which had so thoroughly exposed their manners. And, doubtless, as it was a new kind of bondage, particularly flowing from unbelief and unfaithfulness, it must run its complete course of trial. They were eating the fruit of their own wrong. But man in the flesh can profit neither by grace nor judgment, and they had settled down to the condition as though it were normal, with no cry unto Jehovah, no sense of degradation, no resistance, no asserting the holiness and majesty of God. Accordingly a new thing is seen in the Deliverer—Nazariteship. It is a complete separation to God. Israel, in their original position, morally, were to manifest this principle, and this, which is called for in Samson, was of an extraordinary kind and purely voluntary, and only temporary, when they were "holiness unto Jehovah." (See Num. vi. 1–21.) But now, when they had sunk so far out of all of God's thoughts and purposes, and were satisfied, He must re-assert the principle in special power, and Samson is from his birth, which is distinctly of almighty power, to be a Nazarite. It is calling back still more loudly to that which was in the beginning. It is God first, and His rights, His holiness. How wretchedly Samson failed, is fully seen in these chapters, and yet, all along, by the situations in which he was placed, by the occasions in which power was manifested, and by the dulness of his brethren to all that he was to be and was doing, we get vivid traces of Him, the true Nazarite, of whom Samson was a peculiar type.

When the power of the enemy reigns in the Church, nothing but entire separation unto God will give power to resist or meet it. "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world." "Holy Father, keep *through Thine own name* those whom Thou hast given me." (John. xvii. 16, 11.)

"No flesh shall glory in His presence." The instrument is chosen from the tribe of Dan, where, last of all, we should have expected to find anything suited to His hand, as we see in chap. xviii. (an account of them many years previous to this), the prevailing wilfulness and weakness, and moral laxity, which would bring out what had been prophetically intimated (Gen. xlix.) by Jacob, as marking the apostasy of Israel from God. Then his strength was specially associated with that which nature itself teaches is shame to a man, that he wear long hair. (1 Cor. xi. 14.) Our only power of walking apart, separate from evil, is by the cross, an offence, a shame. The secret of this power is unknown to men of the world. By the cross and resurrection we are brought into the same place of separation from the world, as Christ has, and we retain our strength, the Church retains its strength, only as it abides in this. Our joy and peace are not drawn from the world, but from Him, in the place unto which we are called—the only place of power. This is the essential position of the Church. If she fails in this, all is failure, as Samson, failing to maintain his place, becomes a poor blind prisoner in the house of the enemy, and a plaything, contributing to a lie, that Dagon is stronger than Jehovah.

What is the state of things to-day in that which takes the name of the Church of Christ? He, the wholly separated One, made higher than the heavens—she, exalted on earth, boasting of a name and power here, and sunk down into the mind of the age which is enmity to God. Oh how fallen! "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked in His eyes." This is to be an enemy of the cross of Christ, and to glory in her shame. How can she go along, in any one thing, with the world that crucified, with excessive malignity, her Lord, and which is in every element and manifestation, enmity to Him? Our Deliverer is the true Nazarite, and this is our position if we would be in fellowship with Him,

purging ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. This alone is our place, and we can be recognized by Him in no other.

Samson is a type for us of the place Christ and we have taken, and of power in that place, while he sadly represents in his failure, our tendency to fall away from that position, which in the end leads to entire loss of strength. He fails signally in the very thing which he was called out to do. Nevertheless God uses him. For the people are in a wretched condition. Impatient of Jehovah's will when He restored them to their liberty, and murmuring continually in the wilfulness of their hearts, they were now sadly and culpably patient of the enemy's rule, and of all the disgrace, and toil, and servitude that came from their going after the gods of the heathen. It is exceedingly bitter to hear from *Judah*, "Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us?" (xv. 11.) Where is the glory of Israel now? Is this he whom his brethren shall praise, whose hand was to be on the neck of his enemies? (Gen. xlix. 8.) Could anything be more gloomy than this, as an expression of their pitiful moral degradation? Alas! we know the lines of this picture but too well. It is a Christianity that is ready to compromise to maintain peace, that would make those who are acknowledging the power of the heavenly calling, and standing for the truth against worldliness, the evil-doers.

While maintaining his place, the lion had no power against Samson, but is rent, as a kid would be, and honey is found in its carcass to refresh him. So Christ has destroyed him that had the power of death (Satan), and from that we have sweetness. "Out of the eater comes forth meat." It is our victory through Christ, the conqueror, and joy and refreshing, in Him alone. But it is a secret to such as know Him, and a riddle to the world. Poor Samson did not keep his secret. Have we kept ours? What came of it was vexation and loss to himself, and judgment upon the world. God must needs come in to put a stop to this alliance by causing hostilities between the parties, on lower grounds. What was the secret to this daughter of the Philistines but a means of humiliating the servant of God, while to him,

when kept, it was strength and gladness. "What fellowship hath light with darkness?" Shall we have anything in common with the world which has both seen and hated both the Son and the Father, and does not receive the Holy Spirit because it seeth Him not? They do not receive our "riddle" in its power and meaning, and we are brought down to their level.

Still Samson retains his power, and Jehovah is with him giving him victory on the battle-field, and sustains him in his fainting condition by water from the weapon of his warfare, a despicable thing to the Philistine and unclean thing to an Israelite, as the power of God is now foolishness to the Gentile and a stumbling-block to the Jew. (1 Cor. i. 1, 3.)

This seems to close the general history of Samson, for it is added, "he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years." God had broken up an unholy alliance before it was consummated fully, and given his servant a righteous ground, although it had selfishness in it, to take vengeance on the Philistines. If, when they were God's enemies, he could have fellowship with them, God would show him they were *his* enemies, and that by means of the "riddle."

But we turn for a moment to look at the supplemental history, including his death. And here we find the same things as before, only in a more emphatic degree. Poor Samson falls lower still, but God is faithful to the secret of the Nazariteship as long as it is kept. Samson sins again through his alliance with the daughter of a strange god, and the end is loss of his secret and his strength, and that which was of value to him personally, but which had been the chief instrument of his oft-repeated falls—his eyes. There has but One who ever stood, and Satan had nothing in Him. Adam, Noah, Israel, the Church, all have failed, but He is the Faithful and True Witness.

But it is refreshing to notice the abundant grace of God to His poor, erring, and stricken servant. If Paul, through his own determination to go to Jerusalem, gets into prison as a result of temporary failure, then the Lord visits him to say, "Be of good cheer, for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." This is our God! It may have

been weakness and the action of his own will to be in Jerusalem. It was right to testify of the Lord when there. And this is met by the promise of his bearing testimony in Rome, though the government of God in righteousness will have him there a prisoner rather than a free man. So with Samson. He had lost his eyes and his liberty by his own folly, but he was hated because he was God's own instrument, and Jehovah would avenge this, giving his poor servant (doubtless led more deeply into His mind by his suffering) the opportunity of bringing more honor to Him in his death than in all his life. And so it was. The Philistines would use his regained strength as a plaything, but that strength was of God, and given now in answer to prayer, and for the double purpose of avenging him for his two eyes, and of chastisement to himself, to which he bows, accepting death with them. And that which, now gives strength in separation unto God in His children, the cross of Christ, is a dangerous plaything. It is a savor of death in them that are lost, while a savor of life in them that are saved. It is the ground of God's judgment on the world, and of His redemption of all who believe.

If the Church takes its place with the world, corrupted by it, a word is given in Rev. iii. 3, of His coming as a thief, the same judgment as is to happen to the world of which she makes herself a part. But let not the world boast. If judgment begin at the house of God, what must the end be of those that obey not the *gospel of God*? Meanwhile, the word is now to us, as one of the "sayings" of Revelation, to which we are distinctly urged to give attention. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her plagues." (Rev. xviii. 5.)

Here the history of Israel, in Judges, closes, the remaining chapters but giving some incidents that had preceded, early in their history, after the death of Joshua, and showing how gross their departure was when every man did that which was right in his own eyes. Could anything be more shocking and atrocious? Surely God would be justified when He speaks, and clear when He judges. (Ps. li. 4.) May we, by these, be warned of our own tendencies.

1 SAMUEL.

Chapters i.-vi.

We have been tracing, in Joshua, Jehovah's faithfulness, in bringing Israel into the land, and establishing them in peace, in His holy habitation. In Judges, we saw the unfaithfulness of Israel, in wretched contrast with all this, set up in responsibility to drive out the heathen, and fully occupy their possession, according to His purpose, but sinking lower and lower, all the time, hastening on to utter ruin. It is easy to be seen that the first man is not the one through whom God can or will accomplish His glory, but the second, the man of His eternal counsels, Jesus Christ who was ever with Him, His unceasing delight. And as we go along through these histories, we find traces more wide and deep, not only of the need of this One, but of the abounding grace, that will, in due time, send Him to do all God's will. How *could* God endure all the forgetfulness of His word, and the defiant departure from Him, through these long dreary years of their acting "according to all the works which they had done since the day that He brought them up out of Egypt wherewith they had forsaken Him," but that He was having His heart on the coming One, in whom alone He could establish a covenant of peace and righteousness? So we shall notice alongside of the story of their evil ways—"the smoking furnace," telling what they were—the repeated flashing out of "the burning lamp," the Deliverer in grace, and the faithful servant. All God's thoughts of goodness must meet their accomplishment in Him. Each of the judges successively gives, in his own way, though failing himself, the token for the time, of this purpose of the years of God.

The book of Ruth sets forth, that the ground of blessing for them is solely mercy. There we see one who had no claim at all (being a Gentile and even of accursed Moab), in simple grace cherished and exalted. And Israel shall be taken back when they take a like place of being no better than the Gentile as to their deserts. We get also a link with the King (Ruth iv. 21, 22), the new instrument, through whom He will further test, and, in the end, restore and establish His people.

Thus, these two thoughts are ever before us—need

and grace meeting need—and all the more vividly revealed as the history moves on in detail.

In 1 Samuel we find "the Anointed" is not to be the Priest any longer, but the One before whom the priest is to stand, the King. But first failure comes to its completeness under the priesthood, and Ichabod, "the glory is departed," is the expression of Israel's condition. Of course, this king is not Saul, the contribution of Israel's wilfulness, and the token of their rejection of Jehovah, the man of the flesh, image of apostasy, and of him who will head up the rebellion against the Man after God's own heart, the true David.

This book presents a transition period, the priesthood receiving a secondary place, yet the royal tribe not brought forward, only the preparation for it. The priest Eli, feared God himself, but his sons are not kept in order, and another family is chosen, to introduce the new style of priesthood, and for this there are certain conditions which we may briefly examine.

First, there is the "barren woman." It is the old principle, weakness and desolateness, as at the beginning where God took out Abraham and Sarah, casting all upon Himself as the Almighty God. "Even so, when *we* were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." It is the God of resurrection too. And Hannah, a woman of sorrowful spirit, speaks out of the abundance of her complaint and grief, really depicting the sad state of Israel, when the priests who represented them before God, were sons of Belial.

Then secondly, there is an "adversary," who was doubtless using the tongue of Peninnah to provoke the desolate one sorely. So with Israel in Egypt, and specially so now, when the Philistines were boasting against them, and took away the Ark. This adversary we see, too, in Zech. iii., to be Satan resisting the angel of Jehovah. And so, He who delivered us, by his death, hath "destroyed (annulled) him who had the power of death, that is the devil." And God brings out these special circumstances of trial, and the fitting experience of the heart in it all, in Hannah, when even the priest was not enough in the mind of God, to know her sorrow, but thought her drunken. And then He whose strength is made perfect in weakness, having manifested

the powerlessness of nature, gives blessing according unto His own will, and Hannah has a son, according to her petition, and according to her faith. Having received him thus from Jehovah, in the gladness of her soul she gives him back to God, as long as he lives. This is the response of the heart exercised by the grace that has been shown her. Her prayer had been in communion with God, as before and with Him alone, and she names her son, "Samuel," from this fact that she had been *heard of God*. In their later day of weakness, the little remnant of Israel are comforted with this that "Jehovah hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared Jehovah, and that thought upon His name." In our day it is "the Lord knoweth them that are His."

Chap. ii. gives us, first Hannah's prayer, a rich outburst of triumph, telling out vastly more than simply a mother's joy over the birth of a son. It is the spirit of a worshiper, having the mind and ways of God, and in accord with the meaning of the Spirit of God in this book. It speedily passes beyond all that pertained to her own circumstances or experience, into God's own thoughts, deeper by far, than Deborah's (Judges v.), as that told of the avenging of Israel when the people had a part in it; and reaching farther forward than the song of Exodus xv., touching upon "the glory," as that speaks of redemption completed. It is wonderful when one gets into the presence of God, in self-emptiness, how completely the heart is raised above, into *His* things. And surely He never stops short of the One Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom and for whom are all things. No doubt Hannah's special trial was but the sample of Israel's depths, giving occasion for unveiling to the eye of faith, His King, and for telling of His mighty power, to be manifested in due time when they shall have been thoroughly emptied, and they shall with a full and hearty meaning declare, "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory; for the pillars of the earth are Jehovah's, and He hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of His saints and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail, the adversaries of

Jehovah shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall He thunder upon them; Jehovah shall judge the ends of the earth; and He shall give strength unto His KING, and exalt the horn of His ANOINTED." The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. In a time of departure from Him, how does He make His own purposes to be the joy of His faithful ones. How quietly does the Apostle Paul in 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18, enter into this. "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion, and the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." And we are confident, for we are to be with Christ, and to be like Him, and He who formed us for this, has given us the earnest of the Spirit. After this we have the details of that which ended the first relationship of Israel with Jehovah, beginning with the dreadful account of the sons of Eli, who made the offerings of Jehovah to be abhorred. But alongside of this we have Samuel, the means that God used for direct communication with His people, a *prophet*—yet a child ministering before Jehovah, girded with a linen ephod. The house of Eli is to be cut off (he was not in the line of Phinehas with whom the perpetual covenant was made). Samuel, like the Holy One of whom he was a feeble image, "grew on and was in favor with Jehovah and with men."

In Chap. iii. God revealed Himself to Samuel, a child. "There was no open vision," "Eli's eyes began to wax dim that he could not see." These things tell us of the utter incompetency of that which had been the channel of communication for God with the people. We have already seen that the barren woman, rather than the anointed priest, entered into the sorrowful condition of the nation, and they, too, had no fellowship in this, he only seconding her prayer, while ignorant of its depth and purpose. It was dimness, indeed. But, "ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of Jehovah," He called Samuel. His light was not yet put out in Israel. A fresh vessel is to be used, for Jehovah must be heard among His own people, setting things to rights and judging evil. In the former chapters, it was a woman; here, it is a child. God will take up the least instrument, if it be but fitted to His use. Even so, Timothy,

a youth, "from a child had known the Scriptures," and was of like mind with Paul, so that he could be put in trust with the most solemn revelations concerning evil in the Church, and the path of the "man of God," in such a time. It is of grave import, this. It is God at once making apparent the lowness of every thing, and yet showing His delight to bless in grace.

One thing is settled: God must be heard as long as He has a people whom He can acknowledge at all here. In our day, He may break through all that religious man calls venerable, or sacred by his own ordination, to show His own appointment, and recall to the simple posture of the saints at the beginning. He has little to say to that which may be loudest in profession, except to warn it as He did Eli, of judgment, while He will turn with gladness to those who tremble at His word, valuing His name, though they have "little strength."

But so little was God accustomed to being heard, that He has to stand and call three times, before Eli perceives that it is His voice, and then the ear of Samuel is open, but what a message of dismay and ruin for him to deliver! Like Jeremiah in later days of complete ruin under the kings, whose ministry was "to root out, to pull down and to destroy," and Timothy, in the Church, whose charge was, to "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine," this dear young servant began his prophesying with a heavy declaration of disaster and death. And Eli bows to it, it is too late for aught else. Judgment from God is beginning, in high places, casting down so utterly that there should not a man be left in his house. *Our* God is a consuming fire. When He rises up, upon the rebellion of man, to set aside that which is spoiled, it is so done as to prove Him righteous, yet finally and with one stroke. "If we would judge *ourselves*, we should not be judged" (1 Cor. xi. 31).

"And Samuel grew, and Jehovah was with him and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beer-Sheba, knew that Samuel was established a prophet of Jehovah. And Jehovah *appeared again in Shiloh*: for Jehovah revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of Jehovah; and the word of Samuel came to all Israel." This is blessed, to see God opening communication again with His people. His heart

could not be shut out. If, in a day well known to us, evil men and seducers wax worse and worse; if the people "be turned to fables" it is exceedingly gracious that He thrusts forward "all Scripture," sets before us "an open door," and commands, "preach the Word!"

Chap. iv. Judgment falls in the saddest, strangest forms, in such a way as to stumble feeble faith. In one day, the sons of the priest are cut off, the Ark of God is taken by the enemy, and the high priest dies. The ground is being cleared for God to bring forward an altogether new thing, and the setting of the Ark in its true place, awaits His king established in peace on his throne. Israel was defeated by the Philistines, and instead of self-judgment and confession before God on account of it, they send and bring the Ark, God's dwelling-place, into the camp, seeking to make Him a party to their unfaithfulness and disobedience. Upon their entering the land, in their true place, as in fellowship with God, the Ark was to go before them around the walls of Jericho, but now when their own idolatry and departure from God had brought punishment upon them, it was but superstition, the desperation of an unsubdued will, really no better than heathenism. If they had really believed in God they would have gone to Him casting all on Him, seeing the dishonor of His land being occupied by the heathen. But the same spirit that shouted over the Ark now, led them to reject Jehovah and desire a king that they might have some one to go before them in battle. It was unbelief and rebellion, clearly. The Philistines, dwelling in the land, knew that the worship of Shiloh was forsaken by them, and the Ark was without power over them morally, and for God to have blessed them bringing it into the camp, would have dishonored His own name. "So He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which He placed among men, and delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemies' hand. Their priests fell by the sword, and their widows made no lamentation." (Ps. lxxviii: 60, 61, 64.) Are we not in danger of such things? How many a thing is put to a sacramental use, and rested in as an amulet, things of God really, in their right place, made objects of superstition and invested with a sanctity in themselves, to cultivate at once the religiousness of man and his enmity

against God. "Why *call* ye me Lord, Lord, and *do* not the things which I say?" Much of what passes for devotion is only the resort of an unhappy conscience unbroken before God, yet hoping in some way, to stave off judgment. "They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

The sensitiveness of Eli to God's honor, must have been very little, or his lack of authority to hold the Ark in his keeping, or to control his sons, is most clearly manifest. It was the paramount place of the priesthood passing away, all power absent, while there was still a moving of his soul toward God, for "he trembled for the Ark of God." It was an acknowledgement, in all his personal and official imbecility, of what was wrong and that God would not countenance sacrilege. The crisis had come. Jehovah's honor was nothing, their safety every thing, and having filled up the measure of iniquity, destruction comes. God's throne and His people are apart, and His glory a prisoner among the enemy. What can they do? Where offer sacrifice? The daughter-in-law of Eli expresses it all in the name she gives to her child, left an orphan at its birth. "The glory is departed from Israel."

What have they left? *The Word of God*, through Samuel, whose very name tells them that *God hears*, and more fully and clearly, even as at the beginning through Moses, is that word given. And in like manner if the glory and the great power of the early day of the Church are gone, and judgment is determined and the "spuing out of His mouth;" if the place of priest unto God, and the dignity and separation and nearness of the priest's sons, are unknown generally, and the many things in gifts and offices of the first day, are departed, we have *the Word* still. Let us not boast of strength where all is weakness and ruin, but with a deeper grief for the dishonor done our Lord and Head, more implicitly bow to that word to be judged and to be instructed and comforted alone by it.

Chaps. v., vi. God will take care of His own honor. If Jehovah is greater than all gods, could He not have saved Israel from their enemies? If He is the true God, why allow the idolatrous Philistines to take that which

was the seat of His presence and power among Israel? He will show. He was Himself giving the enemy power, though they might ascribe their success to Dagon. There is a great difference between protecting Israel, and chastising them. He must make them feel that all that they had was linked with His glory, and apart from this they are undone. But He can vindicate Himself, for He *is* Himself. The enemy put the Ark in the house of their god, Dagon, only to find him fallen and broken before it. And, besides, the hand of Jehovah was heavy upon the Philistines in all the places to which they moved the Ark, making them to know judgment in their own bodies, and to cry out, "They have brought the Ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people." It was but a little premonition of His power as declared against His enemies, when the full sentence comes to be executed. Just now it is a season of gracious entreaty: "Now is the accepted time, behold *now* is the *day of salvation*." He may be judging His own house, and they for their own humbling may be chastened that they may know the lack of communion with Him, and that power and glory are departed, but let not the world triumph, saying there is no truth, no Christ, no Lord. His people may have utterly failed, and it is for them to acknowledge this, but He is the same. What can the world do with His things? They become confusion and judgment to them, and, like Christ Himself among the Gergasenes, showing His power, who is desired to depart from their coasts (Matt. viii. 28-34), so here.

The Philistines devise according to their own thoughts, and God allows this. They send away the Ark, upon a new cart. In a later day, among Israel such a thing was resented, for the shoulders of the Levites were the proper carriage for it, a sanctified people. But He had made no such law for the heathen. If He go out among them, He will meet them according to their own state. This is rendered the more conspicuous by the contrast of His smiting the men of Beth-shemesh, who "looked into the Ark." He will be revered among His own people. But let it be known that He *now* judges His people, because they are not to be judged with the world. The sentence against the world lingers, but sudden destruction shall come in its time.

CLEANSING WITH WATER AND CLEANSING WITH BLOOD.

The difference between cleansing with water and cleansing with blood I find little apprehended by the christians whom I meet, and it has considerable practical importance. Jesus came not by water only, but by water and blood. The efficacy of His redemption lies in both. There came out of His side, when man gave the last blow to assure himself he was rid of Him, the blessed answer of God, water and blood. There is moral cleansing and there is expiation, not that the flesh is any better, but as a wholly new nature is given, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, so there is a sanctifying and cleansing by the washing of water by the word, "ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you," saith the Lord.

On the blood of Christ, (and its efficacy is eternal, is always itself before God,) all rests. He appeared once in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and bore our sins in His own body on the tree. That is finished once for all, where all the moral issues of good and evil came to a crisis, the sin of man absolute in hatred against God manifested in goodness. The power of Satan over men in absolute exercise. "This is your hour and the power of darkness." He was now shown to be the prince of this world. Perfection in man manifested in Christ, Satan had nothing in Him. He loved the Father, and as His Father gave Him commandment so He did, and at all cost, perfectly tested. There God showed His majesty. His own Son must suffer if He took this place, His perfect righteousness in the judgment of sin, and His perfect love to the sinner. The question of good and evil is settled, morally in the supremacy of God's goodness and righteousness over evil in all its fullest forms. This was in the cross.

The results, of course, in their fulness, have yet to be produced, the eternal glory of God, and that in a new heavens and a new earth. "Now," could Jesus say, "is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him: if God be glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself and will straightway glorify Him." The glory of God and His righteousness are identified with the

glory of Christ as man sitting at the right hand of God in a glory He had with the Father before the world was. His presence there, and the blood on the mercy-seat are the perpetual abiding witness of this great truth that God is perfectly glorified as He could be in no other way, in respect of sin where He was dishonored, through the blessed work of Christ.

But then there is more as regards ourselves. He met our responsibility and acquired the heavenly glory for us believers. The counsels of God, (for Wisdom's delight was in the sons of men,) were to have us in the same glory as His Son, who thus became a man, took this place, and by redemption puts us into it. We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son; we have borne the image of the earthly, and we shall bear the image of the heavenly. Hence the angels celebrate with unjealous love His incarnation, saying, "Glory to God in the highest; peace on earth, good pleasure in man." Christ made, and was in, this place, as to relationship, though not glory down here. (See the end of Matt. iii.) But He could only put us into it by redemption, and hence only after His resurrection, He says, for the first time formally calling them brethren, "Go, tell my brethren I go to my Father and your Father, my God and your God," putting us thus into the relationship, though not yet into the glory that belongs to it, and that is our Christian place.

But God did not begin with His counsels and the second man, the man of His counsels; but with the first man, the responsible man. On the ground of man's responsibility, all failed, without law, under law, and, when men were alike sinners and transgressors, man perfected his guilt in rejecting God come in goodness, as Israel also lost all title to the promises. We are in a world that has not only grown up from man's being driven out by God, under Satan's power, but in a world, which, as far as man could do it, has driven out God when present in goodness. But in the act which did it, God accomplished His own work of redemption in the cross; redemption through the blood of Christ. In this was met the fruits of man's sin, not only as we have already seen for God, but in propitiation as regards the whole world, and in Christ's bearing our sins in His own

body on the tree, and this once for all. It was not reiterated sacrifice as among the Jews, or, as it is said in Heb. ix., "He must often have suffered." He bore them all for us, and once for all, and has no more to do with them, nor have we who have believed through grace. The worshipers once purged have no more conscience of sins. He *sits* at the right hand of God, because by one offering He has perfected for ever (*εις το διηνεκές* in uninterrupted continuance) them that are sanctified.

If any question of guilt or imputation comes again, there is no remedy, and this is the very argument of Hebrews all through. There is no remedy, for Christ cannot suffer again. There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. The convicted sinner comes to the cross confessing his sins and owning they brought Christ there, but finds no Christ, no sins there. He is at the right hand of God who bore them. "*When He had by Himself purged our sins* He sat down on the right hand of the majesty in the heavens," and when I go to God there in the holiest, through the rent veil, I find Him there, the perpetual witness that my sins are *all* gone, never to be remembered. He has not them on Him now. All is settled forever. I wait for His appearing without sin.

There is more than this; for we are in Him, but I confine myself to my one point now. "Without shedding (not sprinkling) of blood, there is no remission;" but believers are washed from their sins in His own blood. The whole point in Hebrews is, that it is once for all, and eternal, *its efficacy in God's sight* who was offended. To this blood of sprinkling the believer has been sanctified (1 Peter i. 2); but by that offering he is perfected *forever*, and forever in the sense I have already noticed. Christ is always sitting, and we are always perfect (in conscience) as to guilt or imputation before God. He cannot impute to us, hold us to be under guilt for what has been already laid on Him.

Is sin, then, if we do fall into it, no matter? In no wise. There is another question behind this of all moment. We are brought by this sacrifice into the light, as God is in the light; into fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Holiness is in question, not guilt; communion with God, with the

Father, and with the Son. An idle thought, whatever, is not of the Spirit, interrupts this. Here it is, the use of water, that is, the word in the power of the Spirit, as at the first in our conversion, comes in. It connects itself with the advocacy of Christ, not exactly His priesthood. That, in the Hebrews, is not occupied with sins, in its present exercise, but with mercy, and obtaining grace to help in time of need, that we may not sin. But, "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father," not with God, remark, as priesthood is, but with the Father. Communion, assuredly interrupted by sinning, is the subject. The Advocate is the righteous one, our righteousness, the propitiation for our sins. As to righteousness or propitiation, there is no question raised, they are the basis of advocacy. Sin committed does not raise the question of guilt or imputation, needs no blood-shedding, without which there is no remission that was accomplished once for all, but Christ, by the operation of the Spirit and word, washes our feet, we are washed (bathed as the High Priest *λελουμένος*) thus at our conversion, but we have picked up dirt in our walk, and for communion, a just judgment of sin, in and by ourselves, is needed. Our feet must be washed, we want not a title, not righteousness, but communion to be restored.

We find the typical analogy to this in the red heifer, in Num. xix. All the value of the day of atonement remained in full effect; not only so, but the blood of the burnt heifer had been sprinkled seven times where God met the people to speak to them by Moses. (Ex. xxix.) But the man was defiled, and the ashes of the heifer burned outside the camp (witness that the sin, as guilt, had been consumed, put away in its burning), were put into running water and sprinkled on the defiled man and defiled goods in his tent. His communion was interrupted, he could not go to the tabernacle of the Lord. The holiness of God forbade it. The man would have been cut off, which in these types signifies that in the reality the thing cannot be. Sin was thus estimated in self-judgment, according to what it was to Christ, in bearing it and putting it away; the depth of His suffering in love to us, added to the contradiction to the nature of a holy God, doing what had been made the

burden of Christ upon the cross. Not that we can fathom either, but this is the measure of it for our souls in holiness.

There was thus also a probing of the heart, of our actual state. The defiled man was sprinkled twice. It was not a hurried thing. We learn what sin is in the presence of holiness and love, but we find, there, what holiness and love are in God alone, and so apart from the sin. Where blood was employed, the thing was at once complete, the sin forgiven, and the person pure.

I think, too, we shall find that the soul thus judging itself, searches out the point of departure from God, and what led to it. It is one of the marks of earnestness and sincerity to avoid the occasion of sinning if we are weak, and we look back and judge the root in ourselves, if we fail. The Lord never said a word to Peter of his denying Him, but He did say, "lovest thou Me more than these," so as to lead him to judge what was the root of it; and thus when utterly humbled He trusts the care of His sheep to him. Transcendent grace! It is well to be under the ceaseless care of such an one. "He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous." It is a love that in its kind equals that of His redeeming work. Indeed it is the same—the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. But thus is preserved perfectness of conscience before God, as to guilt and imputation where cleansing with blood is needed. As to this, the worshipers once purged have no more conscience of sins. They are by one offering perfected for ever. There is no question of judgment for it, (save under chastening.) The Judge is He who has Himself put the sins all away. It passes from the domain of guilt to that of holiness, and we are able to judge ourselves because we have not to be judged for it. While it needs blood it is a question of righteousness. But that is settled; but because we are in the light as God is in the light, our state of soul and walk is judged by us, according to that in which communion must be.

As long as it is a question of cleansing by the blood, it is one of acceptance, really, and the soul that knows its value is at once at ease, and, I find, in danger of taking it easy. When that is settled forever, when we are perfected for ever, it is a question of holiness. Right-

eousness is concerned with God's judgment against sin; holiness hates it in itself, as unholy, and as we have seen, as sinning against love. The Christian judges it as in the light, as God is, where blood-cleansing has put him in the holiest, though his spiritual progress may, and does increase his perception of it.

I only add a word, to distinguish administrative forgiveness, and eternal forgiveness by redemption. There is a government of God, besides removing guilt. God chastens a man, say with sickness; he bows, and his heart is set right; he is forgiven as to the present government of God, and gets well. The assembly can forgive in this sense. See 2 Cor. ii.; James v. 14, 15. It is not a question of eternal redemption and forgiveness in the sense of Rom. iv., where the Lord imputes no sin, but how God deals now in His government with souls, an important truth and greatly forgotten, but it is not to be confounded with redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins never remembered.

J. N. D.

THREE-FOLD REST.

When the Spirit of God first works with a sinner, it leads him to the discovery that he has sinned against God, who knows every sin that he has committed. He is not led to the discovery yet, that is, fully so, that his nature is wholly corrupt. But he is led, through the goodness of God, in the light of His word, as applied to his heart and conscience, by the Holy Ghost, to enter into God's thoughts about his sins and guilt. It is not so much the root of the tree that engages his attention, as the dark fruit that the tree bears. It is not so much the low depths of ruin that the defiler is in (that in most cases is learned after conversion), as the sea of guilt in which he swims, that occupies his now enlightened mind, and convicted conscience. Hence the language is, "Oh, I have sinned! How can my sins be pardoned?" It is such language that generally flows from the lips of the divinely convicted. He now takes, in heart and conscience, the place of one that has sinned, before God. What does he need? Is it not rest of conscience from the burden of sin, and the guilt that is found there? Most certainly it is. The first rest of the three, then, is the

rest of conscience—perfect rest of conscience, in the presence of God, with respect to sins committed, and guilt charged upon him. There can be no progress in the truly convicted soul before this is known. It lies, as it were, as the threshold to the state of perfect rest of conscience. Not to cross that threshold is to be still struggling on beneath the burden, without rest. To cross it is to step into a path which will infallibly end in heaven's brightest glory.

Many attempt to serve God before the removal of the load from the conscience—before this rest is obtained. As well might you expect a ship, upon the stocks—fast held there by the shores—to sail round the world. The shores need to be knocked away, the ship to be withdrawn. She needs to be launched into the proper element, before she can find her way over the ocean. But, loose her from the stocks, launch her into the briny ocean, set her sails, haul taut home the sheets of her courses, top-sails, top-gallant sails, and royals, and see how soon, guided by a skilful pilot, propelled by a pleasant gale, she will fulfil all your wishes. Loose, then, the sinner from the load upon his conscience, purge it therefrom, bring him into rest, and the result will be, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Not, indeed, in the spirit of legality, but as one who is at perfect rest as to sins and guilt, and happy in the presence of God.

The words of Jesus, in Matt. xi. 28, are, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It is easy to discover what rest it is that the blessed Lord speaks of in this precious verse. It is rest from that which the convicted conscience and burdened heart realizes to be intolerable. It is when there has been a divine teaching as to sins and guilt, that the laboring commences, and the burden is felt to be so intolerable (John vi. 45). What groanings there are, then! The soul is made to realize somewhat of what sin is in God's sight. God, in his infinite goodness, conducts the soul, at this period, into His own thoughts as to the heinousness of sin; He leads the one to pass sentence upon himself with respect to it all. (This is true repentance.) And then as to the One from whom must come his rest—his blood-purchased rest. Coming to Jesus, he finds rest. What a moment that is in the his-

tory of every saved sinner! Perhaps years of exercise have been passed through; with some, a much shorter period, as in the case of the Philippian jailor, whose conscience was ploughed up immediately, the mighty work performed at once, and the soul conducted into peace at the presentation of Jesus to it, and its reception of Him. But this is not generally the case in these days, when there is an universal profession of religion, and a needs be of the displacement of much foul rubbish so often found hidden in the heart.

The moment, then, is grand and unspeakably blessed, when the conscience finds perfect repose in Jesus, and beholds, with wonder and joy, its sins and guilt washed away, into eternal oblivion, by the blood of atonement. With what power and meaning such words as these find their way into the soul of such an one. "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth from all sin." (1 John i. 7.) And, "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purification of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself, without spot, to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews ix. 13, 14.) And, again, "For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." (Heb. x. 14.) He finds himself in the presence of that God, against whom he has sinned, and who has judged his sin in the person of His blessed Son upon the cross; He is there with a conscience perfectly purged by the blood of Christ, in the enjoyment of perfect rest and perfect peace. He realizes that there is "not a cloud above, not a spot within." Unsullied light is that in which he stands, yet without a ruffle upon his conscience or one disturbing thought in his mind. And what is the secret of the whole? The blood of Christ, in its own infinite and eternal worth, has settled the whole thing, and now he rests in the "Divine appreciation of that precious blood." It has satisfied the claims, and vindicated the throne of heaven, and perfectly and eternally purged his conscience, and hence, this unruffled, this perfect rest.

Having obtained, through faith in Jesus Christ, rest of conscience; having been born again of the incorruptible seed, and, consequently, become a child of God, he is set

in the path of faith, where he will find ten thousand things to interfere with his communion with God. He now learns that the pathway of obedience is the pathway of blessing. He is called to walk with God in obedience. It is now that Jesus says to him, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." (Matt. xi. 29.) In the obtaining the rest of conscience from the load of sins and guilt, we simply had to come to Jesus, and His own hand of purest grace lifted it off, or, in other words, we had simply to believe on Him. But this rest now before us is the result of "obedience," after the first rest is obtained. We cannot be yoked with Jesus if our sins are not forgiven. Now, in the word of God, there are two yokes spoken of, the yoke of sin and the yoke of obedience. The blessed Lord Jesus, when down here, never wore the yoke of sin, but ever the yoke of absolute and unwavering obedience to God, His Father. By turning to Numbers xix., we shall find, by type, beautifully taught, the fact that He never wore the yoke of sin: "And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, This is the ordinance of the Law which the Lord hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer, without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which NEVER CAME YOKE." Jesus—the Man Christ Jesus, the antitype of the red heifer, was that spotless, unblemished One, upon whom never came yoke—the yoke of sin. "He knew no sin." God's holy eye saw no stain in Him; nothing but what was in full and blessed accordance with His own holy nature. But, again, as we have seen, He was ever found, when down here, wearing a yoke, the yoke of unswerving obedience to God. In Matt. xi. He calls it "My yoke," and He says to His people, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." How wondrous the privilege to be found yoked with Jesus! "Surely, toil is sweet when yoked with such an One." It is in such proximity to His blessed person, that we learn not only that He is "mighty to save," but we also learn the changeless love of His heart towards His own. And what is the result of thus being yoked with Jesus, thus

walking in the path of obedience to the will of God; having no will of our own? It is rest, perfect rest unto our souls. How many there are, of the people of God, who although they know their sins to be all forgiven, are not in the enjoyment of this "rest of soul." They are continually disturbed; every little trial or circumstance brings a fresh ruffle upon the peace of their souls. And why is it? They are not yoked with Jesus; they need to take heed to the words of Jesus, "Take—take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find REST UNTO YOUR SOULS." Here, the rest is conditional, the result of obedience. Ah, yes! And when we get so close to Jesus, so yoked with him, how it makes the fashions to fly from our persons? How can we say we are yoked with Jesus, if we are giving attention to the adorning of our persons, or walking in a path of our own devising, with respect to anything? Would we enjoy this much to be desired rest of soul? There must be the taking up of the yoke of Jesus upon us, a learning of Him who is meek and lowly in heart. Then, and not till then, can we expect it. It is a plain fact that we are not yoked with Jesus if we are going on in any course that is grievous to His heart. There must, then, be the loss of this rest. And how great the loss is! Oh, then, for that being yoked with Jesus, that holy nearness to His person, that acquaintance with His heart, and that holy obedience to the wishes and claims of that heart! Then our rest and peace of soul will be profound, and will flow like a river. We shall find, then, that the love of the heart of the "One with whom we are yoked," is as a mighty, bottomless and shoreless ocean; that it is infinite—unchangeable, eternal!

It remains for us to look a little at the third rest, the last in the three-fold link. We shall find it spoken of in Heb. iv. 9. "There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God." We have got rest of conscience; we are, as we pass along the wilderness, learning the preciousness of being yoked with Jesus, and so enjoy rest of soul by the way; and our eyes are to be fixed upon the "rest of God"—the rest that remaineth to the people of God. How wondrous is our experience, our path, a path already brightened with the beams of that glori-

ous rest, into which we shall enter when our blessed Lord descends and gives the shout to His own, and calls them away from this sin-blighted scene, to the Father's house on high! How perfect and unruffled will be our rest there, dwelling in the unsullied light and glory of Him who was pierced for us, on the Cross!

“ That rest secure from ill,
No cloud of grief e'er stains,
Unfailing praise each heart doth fill,
And love eternal reigns.

“ The Lamb is there, my soul—
There God Himself doth rest,
In love divine diffused through all
With Him supremely blest.

“ There, in effulgence bright,
Saviour and Guide, with Thee
I'll walk, and in Thy heavenly light
Whiter my robes shall be.

“ God and the Lamb shall there
The light and temple be,
And radiant hosts for ever share
The unveil'd mystery.”

May we keep this glorious, blood-purchased rest in view; and, whilst in the waste, set the One “always” before us, who is coming to introduce us into it, and to fill our hearts with His own divine and eternal joy, to conform us to Himself, and to encircle us with His own glory for ever.

E. A.

FRAGMENTS.

Real Christian progress is characterized by our estimate of great essential truths—truths connected with, and flowing from, the person of Christ, “that I may know Him.”

We are never so near failure as when we have acted faithfully. We can hardly trust God in two consecutive instances.

When is faith most wanted to sustain the soul? When all visible evidence of power is removed.

Faith is present dependence upon a present God; it cannot live out of His presence.

The real amount of our faith is proved when there is nothing visible to cling to

"GETTING ROUND IT."

"But no two of you can agree as to what God says in the Bible on almost any point."

"I think you are mistaken; there is very little difference as to what God says; indeed there can be little, for He speaks to us plainly and simply."

"Why, I might open the Bible almost at random, and there would be twenty differences of opinion as to the first passage my eye fell upon."

"Let us put it to the test, and you need not open the Bible at random, but select any passage that will best suit your purpose."

"Well, here is one, in Matthew: 'But I say unto you, Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.' How many of you are agreed as to what that teaches?"

"My remark, as you may remember, was, that there could be very little difference as to *what God says* in the Bible. And you and I cannot differ as to what the Lord *says in this passage.*"

"But each of you has a different way of getting round it."

"There you express exactly what our differences are. They are not differences as to what God *says*, but as to what men think He *ought to have said*; and most of our difficulties in Scripture are difficulties 'in getting round it.'"

"But do you mean that if I smite you on the right cheek, you will turn to me the other, also?"

"The question, you know, was not as to what I will do, but as to what God says. Your question shows that there can be no doubt as to what the Lord tells me to do."

"But if that were carried out it would put an end to war and litigation!"

"Precisely so; and therefore Christians who have made up their minds to go to war or to law, must try to get round it. But none of them have any doubt as to what the Lord said, though some of them may think that He ought to have said something different."

"Well, all I can say is, that if you are going to take the Bible in that way, and do what it says, you will make a strange figure *among other Christians.*"—*Extract.*

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"S. S.," DULUTH.—The salvation of infants who die, is, we believe, assured in Matt. xviii. 1-11, especially in verse 11, on the ground of what Christ has done. It is there distinctly stated that their "angels (representatives, as one may have a representative at court, and is so accepted himself,) do *always* behold the face of my Father who is in heaven, for the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost." (Here it is not "*seek* and save.") The infant as a child of Adam is lost, and the Son of Man came to save. That this applies to all infants, as such, is clear. There is no difference between the children of believers and unbelievers.

In regard to 1 Cor. vii. 14, the question was, should a wife separate from her husband, she having become a believer, while he remained an unbeliever? Among the Jews, the law was very stringent in regard to marriages with the heathen, and in Ezra's day, we see they were obliged to put away the heathen wife and her children, Ezra x. 3-8, 11-18. But here, Paul as teacher, not by special revelation, instructs that such separation need not take place, for the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, that is in respect to the wife, so that the believing party may abide with the other. (See for the use of the word, 1 Tim. iv. 5.) The children are also holy in the same sense as the father, for it is the same radical word as that translated "sanctified." It is more than saying they are legitimate, for the marriage might be according to law as a marriage, and yet the separation have to take place, in the code of Israel. But it is such, that the child of God may abide with the companion, with God, counting on Him for conversion, not being in disobedience or a place of dishonoring Him. It, in no sense intimates, that they or the children are saved.

"C. W. B.," Lowell, Mich., asks for an explanation of the "three days and three nights spoken of, in which our Lord lay in the grave." It was the Jewish mode of counting days by "evening and morning" (see Gen. i.), which was "one day." So, when they spoke of a day, it was often in this form, "a day and a night," as we say "twenty-four hours," meaning not the full measure of hours, but a day. It is to be observed also that the Jews generally speak of any part of a day, or period of time, as though it were the whole. Thus from about the ninth hour on Friday (3 o'clock p. m.), until early on Sunday morning would be part of three distinct days, and according to their peculiarity of speech would be called three days, and even three days and nights," the nights not literally and numerically meant, but the term "days and nights," standing for the simple days or diurnal period. Thus a week is called in John xx. 26, "eight days," and this is often so in modern languages, especially the German. This method of counting will be noticed in regard to years, in 1 Kings xv. 33, xvi. 8. Baasha's and Elah's reigns are both found in the twenty-fourth year of Asa's reign, and in verse 15, Zimri's reign is spoken of as being in the twenty-seventh year of Asa's reign, showing that the part of a year in Baasha's reign, in which he died, is called a whole year, and so with Zimri. It will explain the method of counting periods of time. This can easily be verified elsewhere,

"T. O. L.," Dayton, O.—We are deeply thankful to the Lord that He condescends to use the few thoughts given on the books of Joshua and Judges, in leading any of His children unto a more thorough and spiritual study of these richly profitable portions of His Word. The occasion of their being taken up, was the fact that they formed the earlier lessons for the year, of the "International Series of Sunday-school Lessons." And this will explain their brevity, when it is seen that the studies of a month had to be given in a few pages. As so many of the dear children of God were having their minds directed to these books, it was laid upon the heart to indicate some things that might be for our profit, following in the line marked out there. This oftentimes breaks off the continuity of the instruction, and the succession of the chapters, which have to be connected in a few sentences. In the present number, the book of Ruth is omitted, as there was an exposition given in last year's SOUND WORDS, by a valued contributor, now issuing a serial for the spread of the Gospel. First Samuel, however is begun. As to future lessons the Lord will determine. The Old Testament studies may be continued.

"THE DEAD PRAISE NOT THE LORD."—Psalms cxv. 17.

We who in trespasses and sins were dead,
Are quickened now (by grace) with Christ our Head,
And praise Thee, Lord, who suffered in our stead.

"The dead praise not the Lord."

Now dead to sin, yet unto God we live;
With Jesus crucified, and still we live,
To praise Thee, Lord, who died this life to give.

"The dead praise not the Lord."

We praise Thee, for the grace that brought us nigh,
And set our dying souls at liberty,
And seated us, one with Thyself on high.

"The dead praise not the Lord."

We praise Thee, for that wondrous, holy place,
To which we're brought, by Thine almighty grace,
As living worshipers, before Thy face.

"The dead praise not the Lord."

We praise Thee (though our praises feeble be),
As those may do, whose life is hid with Thee;
When with Thyself, we'll praise Thee perfectly.

"The dead praise not the Lord."

We praise Thee, for that promised, joyous day,
When Thou wilt come, and take Thy Bride away,
Lord Jesus, come! yea, quickly come, we pray.

"The dead praise not the Lord."

1 SAMUEL.

Chapters vii-xii.

The Ark, returned to Israel, served rather to expose the departure of the heart from Jehovah, in those among whom it came, than to give joy. "Who is able to stand before this holy Jehovah God? And to whom shall He go up from us?" was the cry of terror, but not of faith; of distance from Him, rather than fellowship. One can easily understand it in the heathen, but in the nation taken for His own, how sad! He chastens us "for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness," not that we should get farther away from Him. This is "despising the chastening of the Lord."

But the Ark had really no power, no meaning nor effect, morally, now, among them. Had there been a heart for God, could they have irreverently looked into the Ark, or when judged for this, have desired that He should depart from among them? Or, rather, would they not have justified Him in all this, and, having judged themselves, have learned more fully what grace was? God is not a wilderness to His people. He is not a hard master; and that is a fruitless affliction that does not cast us more entirely upon His bosom, rejoicing more deeply in His ways.

Chap. vii. Israel having suffered defeat, by taking their own way, and with no conscience for Jehovah, God means to bring victory, according to His way. It is, indeed, a very precious and important principle with Him; we are to expect triumph, just where defeat took place. God can speak of "the patience of Job," afterwards, though we read of his cursing the day of his birth, and saying his complaint was bitter. The man who had lain on his bed for so many years, was to take it up and walk, the very token of his weakness to be the trophy of his healing and triumph. So we can do all things through Christ. It was in the very place where they were conquered by the Philistines (Ebenezer), that they themselves conquered. But this conquest was of God.

The Ark is settled in the house of Abinadab, and one sanctified to keep it, "and all the house of Israel lamented after Jehovah." It was not the Ark, now. They had seen how that might be taken, and, besides, it had become the occasion of their lowest failure. But Jeho-

vah was more than His dwelling-place. And Samuel says, "If ye do return unto *Jehovah*." It is not now a returning to old forms of doctrine, which may have been used as a battle-cry. The Lord may have been in them, the life and soul of them once, but they have passed into mere propositions, or creeds, tokens and illustrations of departure of heart from God, the form without the power of godliness. Our whole strength is in connection with the *person of Christ*. Our testimony, too, our confession and life, are of Him only, not a creed, however orthodox; not a system, however venerable, or however adapted, according to human taste, to man's religious wants; not a rallying-cry of union; not a getting together and planning and building up, however natural, upon defeat; and, surely, not a boasting of numbers and appliances, nor gathering of forces for some great thing; but a returning unto the Lord. Less than this would be only trying to have Him help our side, accredit our unfaithfulness. But, to have meaning, it must be "with all your hearts," no reservations, no clinging to our old ways, our things. They are iniquity, and "let every one that nameth the name of the Lord, depart from iniquity." "Put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you." This is beginning by exposure. There had been nothing said of strange gods before, and yet they had had them all the while they had pretended a regard for God, and had shouted over His Ark. But now it comes out, and there is to be no compromise. If it is to Jehovah they would return, let it be real and absolute, having done with idols. What a disgrace to have to say this to God's people. What of the idols of this day?

"Serve Him only, and He will deliver you out of the hands of the Philistines." And Samuel gathers them together to Mizpeh and says, "I will pray for you unto Jehovah." They put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and took their place before Jehovah alone, the only thing. "And they drew water and poured it out before Jehovah." What a significant act! 2 Sam. xiv. 14, tells us its meaning. "We must needs die, and are as water spilled on the ground which cannot be gathered up again." It is taking the place of emptiness and death—they were nothing but water spilled. It was the abandonment of gathering up, of expedients, of plans and methods, in themselves.

Self was judged, for "we have sinned against Jehovah," was their confession. That was the dreadful thing, and there was no help in them.

And what place should we take in regard to the Church, to-day? There is a good deal of confession that things are not right. What ought to be done, in view of it? Shall we set up something, simulating the form of that which was in the beginning, appointing twelve apostles, or even elders, and looking for tongues and signs and expressions of power? Rather, it becomes us to take the place of utter abasement, and with shame confessing the ruin of that which was committed in responsibility to man, cast ourselves on Him alone.

Pouring out the water on the ground, tells it all. With this, they fasted and said, there, "we have sinned against Jehovah, and Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh." This was taking their true place, according to God. And what need is there to-day for us to be thoroughly broken before the abounding grace that has borne with us, amidst all the grieving of the Spirit, by disunion, legality, ritualism, worldliness, covetousness, pride, blasphemy, and all the departure from Him. Let us go to the root of the matter, too, and not, because God, in grace, is converting souls by hundreds, delude ourselves that man's systems, and disunions, in which these conversions are taking place, are thereby approved. It is an exceedingly bitter thing to have sinned against the Lord, to have failed in the very thing for which we were called and chosen. And if space is given for repentance, the proper thing is to repent, and not be building up and amending. We shall never know what a resource He is till we come to His mind in regard to all this. Grace and *truth* go together.

But this of course stirs up Satan, and the Philistines went up against Israel. Nothing so arouses our enemy as this taking the place of confession before God. "And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt-offering wholly unto Jehovah." This is the only instance of such a sacrifice, in the Scriptures. But, oh, what a lesson it gives! It is the very expression of weakness, of One who was crucified in weakness, of the weak things of God, confounding the mighty. It was a sweet savor of Christ ascending wholly unto God. It was telling that

in their own nothingness, He was all. And God took up the case accepting the offering. "And Jehovah thundered with a great thunder *on that day*, upon the Philistines, and discomfited them, and they were smitten before Israel." Thus the "sucking lamb" became a "stone of help," an Ebenezer. Christ alone is our power of victory always. Whatever be our failure and ruin, let us not limit God, nor distrust him.

The cities which the Philistines had taken were restored to Israel, and Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. Every thing depended upon him. He, through his relationship with God by faith, was the upholder of the people.

Chap. viii. But even this fails, for Samuel becomes old, and his sons, like Eli's, utterly fail, those as judges, as these as priests. The sons of Eli had made the offerings to be abhorred, the sons of Samuel took bribes and perverted judgment. Every thing is hopeless, in the provision hitherto made by God, of blessing and government through an intermediate person. The people would not lean immediately on God, and it was easier and less irksome to the conscience, to have Him at a distance. "Make us a king," was their remedy. Doubtless it was the purpose of God, too, as seen before, but not that they might be "like other nations." This was rebellion, desiring to get rid of Him. Why should they be like the nations? Had He not taken them *out* from the nations and made them a people unto Himself? Which among all the nations of the earth had such a wonderful history, rich in all His doings and dealings, and taken for such infinite purposes of good to themselves and to the whole world? Read Deut. iv. 7-40, for the record of this, by Moses, and Josh. xxiv., for the appeal of Joshua, and Ps. cv., for a rehearsal of His mighty acts. And now to want to be like other nations! Most surely the mind of the flesh is enmity to God.

And here we can certainly see ourselves, for has not the Church, with Israel, desired to be like other nations? Has she not aped it, in the appointment of men to official places, in becoming really the world, in seeking earthly greatness, in boasting and rivalries, and having as fine things as the world? What occasion for grief and shame! There are disunion, dishonor to the Head,

utter worldliness, denial of grace, Judaism in ritual, clericalism, rationalism, instead of the perfect and divine thing of the beginning, the glory departed, the power gone, discrowned of her virgin purity, counselled of Christ to buy "white raiment" and the "eye salve;" and she making a display of herself among the competitions of men! What has God had to bear, ever! Why has the Church to be like anything else, to have one principle that is not apart from, and unknown to, the world? She has been raised and seated in heavenly places, has been made the habitation of God by the Spirit, a thing not at all of the world, separated by death and resurrection from it, and solely for His delight, not the world's. There is nothing higher, richer, more blessed and beautiful, and more dear and near to God, according to His purpose; nothing more abject in degradation, nor abominable, when it becomes of the world. But we know our own evil heart of unbelief, that turns away from the living God.

And yet it was the purpose of God to raise up a king, as it is now His mind to bring forth Him whose right it is to reign. But Rev. iii. 14, shows us that it is as the faithful and true witness upon the fully demonstrated unfaithfulness of the professing Church. Israel's unfaithfulness is disclosed as the occasion of the king, rather than the simple ripening of the purposes of God. Both are here, doubtless, and really God is not defeated and taken unawares in all this. And *His* king is to be a rich blessing, a further movement in the wonderful plan of His grace and glory. They desire a king not to declare His glory, but as the expression of their unbelief. And Samuel took it to Jehovah, in prayer. It was a deeper thing than simply rejecting him, and Jehovah tells him so. "They have rejected *ME*, that I should not reign over them." Still He commands Samuel to hearken to their voice, yet to protest solemnly, and show them the manner of the king that should reign over them.

It is man's king, doing everything for himself, and oppressing them. And yet they said, "Nay, but we will have a king over us that we may be like all the nations." Mark the vivid contrast between this one and God's king, as set forth in Ps. lxxii., one who shall have His mind and act in grace and protection toward the people.

"He shall judge the people with righteousness and the poor with judgment, He shall save the children of the needy. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth. In His days shall the righteous flourish; and the abundance of peace as long as the moon endureth. Men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed."

And men, disaffected and disappointed, in all they have sought after by their own ways, are looking eagerly for their coming man—one like unto themselves. And they shall give their power unto him; all the world shall worship "the beast," man's king. As to the One offered, who was meek, and full of grace and truth, word has already been sent after Him, "we will not have *this man* to reign over us." The world having rejected the Son of God are fast getting ready by their pride and misery, their full-hearted rebellion, to receive him who shall come in his own name, who shall be the substance and embodiment of their culture and their lusts, "the wicked one," the world-king. And this is the religious world, Christendom! It will be rid of God, as Israel, in taking a king, were shown one utterly unlike God, who delights to give and bless in grace, while this one should *demand* from all. The voice of the people prevails.

Chap. ix. God seems to make every thing contribute to their having the object of their desire. It is folly, it is wilfulness; but man shall have full trial. Accordingly all circumstances unite to lead the man "upon whom was all the desire of Israel," to Samuel, who anoints him captain over Jehovah's inheritance. All is done as carefully and with as much favor, as though he had been the man after God's own heart. It is God's way. He gave the first man every possible chance; so that every mouth should be stopped, and they be without excuse. Saul is just such an one as nature would choose for a king. Beauty of person and height of stature, above all others from the shoulders up, distinguish him. Besides, he acts modestly, and withal shows filial affection and faithfulness. All seems clear at the start.

And God gives special tokens of favor to Saul, in the signs that Samuel gave him. But there was not an open ear, or a heart for the things of God.

Chap. x. 2. The first sign was the two men who should

meet him by Rachel's sepulchre, the place where the foundation of his family was laid, God taking him back to that, if he would but think of it, where the son of the mother's sorrow became the son of the right hand to the father. Would he become such? Would faith characterize him, now to be used as the head of God's own; would he be the one of His right hand? Again (v. 3, 4,) Bethel is to be the scene of refreshing to him. Would he go back still farther to the day of Jacob, when a helpless outcast, and the wonderful promise of God in that place, who in faithfulness had brought him back? Would he be nothing, casting all upon God, reminded of the honor of God at the "house of God?" Ah, we need not be told that flesh has nothing for God, gets no lessons of weakness or of strength, of grace or of glory. These three men that have a heart for God, salute him, and strengthen him—a promising token that all are ready. Then (v. 5), the third sign, brings him to his work, as shown in the state of Israel, "the hill of God," occupied by the garrison of the Philistines. Will he have a heart to see the meaning of this? What encouragement in the company of prophets, coming down from the high place "with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp before them," if he would but take it. The circumstances of Israel told out, by the Philistines being there, but joy and triumph in Jehovah, above it all. And the Spirit, also, was to come upon him, and he was to prophesy with them.

Ver. 7. "And when these signs are come unto thee, do thou as occasion serve thee, for God is with thee." We learn nothing of his actions, when all those signs came to pass. God has not accounted his prophecies worthy of record, but the simple fact that he did prophesy, as it was told him he should. The natural man receiveth not the things that are of God, for they are spiritually discerned, and we know that he took nothing of God. But God was giving every possible opening and advantage for their king. With these his faith and patience are put to proof, (ver. 8,) he is told to go down to Gilgal, Israel's place of learning the practical power of death, and wait the perfect number of seven days, for Samuel to tell him what to do. But we find that he did not wait (xiii. 12).

Next, Israel are called together that the king may be chosen, that there might be an open leaving of the matter to Jehovah, that no thought of unfairness might ever come afterwards, or of a full testing of the case. He was really their own choice, and all the people shouted him a welcome, and they are spoken of as "men of Belial" who opposed him, the godly really taking their place in allegiance, though at first it was departure from God to ask for a king.

Our place is to be subject to the powers that be, even though we do not help to form them, and may recognize that all that is in the world is not of the Father, but of the world, while we are not of the world.

In the next chapter we see that in the victory over the Ammonites, Saul seems to be meeting the desires of Israel perfectly, besides showing a magnanimity in the case of these "men of Belial," as he had before shown patience and silence. All seems well, and as they would have it.

And surely the flesh makes its boast, justifying its actions by a fair show in results, but it is not of God. The Ammonites were not the enemy that tested faith, but the Philistines, and they were left to occupy the land, the "hill of God," while he and Israel went out with great zeal against the king of the children of Ammon, though, of course, it was right that they should be rebuked. Only, an enemy in the land, strong and defiant, and holding that which God meant for His people, is a different thing from an outside enemy, who were encamped against them, making their haughty overtures. Why should they not come, when Israel were so patient of the Philistines within?

Even so, the natural conscience will rise up against the things that are immoral, and of course they are not to be allowed among the children of God—"let them not even be named among you"—but the sad thing is that Satan is allowed to keep his position, in more subtle ways, in the heavenly places, keeping down the saints from their true testimony, that which God really values first, the glory of His Son, the riches of His inheritance, the unity of the body.

Then again, we learn that when this is neglected, and the purpose of God is not regarded, when we sink down

to be satisfied with the earthly rather than the heavenly, soon the lusts of the flesh will be manifested, and looseness in moral conduct be allowed. But, how great the failure, when morality is all that the Church is occupied with. "If we walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh," as, if Israel had driven out the Philistines, and fully occupied the ground, the Ammonites would not have troubled them; or would have been put down easily.

Chap. xii. It is at Gilgal that Samuel assembles the people, to renew the kingdom there. It had not been heard of much since the days of Joshua. All the land was to be taken, from that place as their starting point, the place of the memorial of God's leading them through the Jordan, and rolling away the reproach of Egypt, and the place of their circumcision. It was going back to the original terms, practically. They seem to have known little of it, to have forgotten it during the years of apostasy.

Do we understand this lesson? Have we ears to hear, and a heart to take the place of crucifixion, of justifying God, of receiving sentence of death in ourselves? "As *living in the world*," we have been subject to ordinances, have given place to the flesh, have turned to folly, and brought in ruin.

They first pronounce upon Samuel's integrity. As the vessel of God, he had been thoroughly faithful, and they are witnesses to that. And God is justified before them, in all His dealings with them. But (ver. 12,) when they saw Nahash, the king of the children of Ammon (exercised more about that which was without, than the Philistines within), come against them, they said nay, but a king should reign over them, when Jehovah their God was their king. "Now therefore behold your king whom *ye have chosen*, and whom ye desired! and behold, Jehovah hath set a king over you." He then declares that if they will serve Jehovah that both they and their king should be blessed. But they had done an evil thing, and by a sign from heaven, of that which was entirely out of season, thunder and rain in wheat harvest, God confirms that fact. "As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honor is not seemly for a fool." (Prov. xxvi. i). They had sought, honor of being like the world, and had proved their own folly.

The world's man will be the choice of the professing church, when the Lord's own, with the Spirit of truth, the Holy Ghost, are taken out of the way, "and for this cause God shall send them a strong delusion (a working of error), that they should believe a *lie*, that they might be judged, who believed not the truth." (2 Thes. ii. 8-12.) And the principles of all this are working now. The choice is being made. Man's king, the antichrist, will have his reign before God's King shall come, whose right it is. And his coming is to be after the power of Satan, the spirit of antichrist cannot work against Satan, now, who is himself the god of this age.

And God having warned us that there are many antichrists even now, commits us to the Holy Ghost and His Word, to be kept from them that would seduce us, and even in a day of compromises and unfaithfulness, says to us, "fear not for the Lord will not forsake His people for His great name sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you His people," as Samuel said to Israel, really to the godly among them, to be their consolation amidst all the evil. Moreover grace in him would lead him to pray for them, as the dear Apostle of the Church, in writing to all the saints in Achaia (2 Cor. i. 2), writes (xii. 15), "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved," and in speaking to the elders of the assembly at Ephesus (Acts xx. 17-35), calls them to witness his life among them, and after warning concerning those who should corrupt them, prays with them. Ah, it is a time for bearing *all saints* before the Lord with special apprehension of the dangers that assail them, and not to do it, as with Samuel, is to sin—surely if we see their condition.

But what a betrayal of the state of conscience in their words to Samuel, "Pray for thy servants unto Jehovah, thy God, that we die not," and what a grave word closes the interview, "Only fear Jehovah and serve Him in truth, with all your heart; for consider how great things He hath done for you. But, if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king." "Behold the goodness and severity of God, on them which fell severity, but towards thee, goodness *if thou continue in His goodness*: otherwise thou also shall be cut off."

ROMANS I. 16-18.

Who so well qualified as the Apostle Paul, to say nothing of his inspiration, to utter the thought expressed in the words, "I am not ashamed," &c. Every thing in the past tended to this qualification. His boasted pedigree, his relation to the law, his blameless life, his ambition, as a Pharisee, to excel in human righteousness before God, all amidst the light of the gospel of the glory, were eminently calculated to show the contrast between Judaism and the gospel, between a religion of the flesh and that of the Spirit. No marvel the apostle with a new moral standing, in a creation where all things are of God, with a new and blessed object absorbing all the energies of the soul, in contrast with the miserable past, could say, "So much as in me lies, I am ready," &c. What a position, to see things in their true light—both God-ward and man-ward. Oh, how the glory that shines in the face of Jesus Christ illumines the dark and joyless scene below, and the blessed scene above. How abundantly we can afford to be pilgrims down here, and receive the sorrows and trials that come to us from our loving Father, with such a hope of glory swaying the soul. Ah, we do know by actual experience what even the best of the old creation affords, and with a knowledge more reliable, because declared by the imperishable word, the things that are ours, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. What a false conception man has, in his natural state, of the character of God, and the blessings he hath prepared already, through the work of Christ, to enrich the soul of the believer. Man looks upon God almost as his enemy, using His power and wisdom only to make man more miserable, by so putting blessings as to be out of the reach of the needy (the fruit of man's natural enmity to God), or even the Christian who does not understand the free and simple provision made, does the God of grace a similar injustice. Salvation is looked upon as something afar off, never sure, depending to a great extent on the feelings of the individual and as something to be earned by works, so completely contrary to the true nature of Christianity. Paul could truly say, what should be the heart-echo of every believer, "I know whom I have believed."

What a blessed thing it is to know that the power of God is for us, exercised for our complete deliverance from sin and its consequences, and fitted for the inheritance of the saints in light.

Truly, a wonderful application of power and wisdom! Profound mystery! It is God's marvelous scheme of salvation, man's need completely met, and God as completely glorified. The saved soul can only bow in worship and adoration. This display of power that saves man on the principle of righteousness, is hidden, save to those, who in virtue of a new life, have already entered into the secrets of the new creation. Man, amidst the gross darkness of the old creation, can expatiate largely on the power and wisdom of God in creation, not only in creating all, but sustaining and adjusting, with such nicety, every thing for man's physical good, change of seasons, &c., &c. Even with an intellectual understanding of the Scripture, the flood, the overthrow of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, the destruction of Sodom, the awful display of Jehovah at Mount Sinai, that burned with fire, blackness, darkness and tempest, a sight so terrible that Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." These scenes are looked upon as the greatest display of power, save the judgment of the great white throne. Such is man's conception and measurement of power, but how the word of God sets aside as foolishness all the highest expressions of man's wisdom. The visible Universe is the work of God. He spake and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast. Yet one act alone, seems by the Holy Spirit, worthy of special emphasis, namely, the resurrection of Christ. (Eph. i. 19.) "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward, who believe according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places."

Man estimates power by external manifestations. At the resurrection of Christ, the centurion is overpowered by the earthquake, but there was a power there exercised that could not be displayed to the natural man, that has already laid the foundation for the complete cleansing of the visible Universe from the entire remains of sin and

rebellion. "To reconcile all things unto Himself, whether things on earth, or things in heaven."

Beloved reader, visit for a moment the scene in John xx. 6, 7. The might of God's strength expressed in raising up Christ from among the dead, yet with more perfect order and quietness than attends some of the common occurrences of nature. And yet this mighty work that ushered in the new creation, exceeding beyond conception, the power and glory of the old, to those taught in the words that man's wisdom teacheth, the resurrection of Christ utters no words of wisdom and power. Well does the Holy Ghost explain the secret. "For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, but to those taught by the Holy Ghost, it is the wisdom of God, and the power of God." To know from such testimony what a solid foundation, that shall remain unmoved, when, by the same power that saves, earth and even heaven shall be shaken. What an undisturbed and calm repose, yea, what heart-cheering consolation for the believer, to know that the foundation of his hope is nothing less than the revealed righteousness of God, in the resurrection of Christ from the dead." "That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Oh, what scope for joy and wonder, not only to the saved themselves, but even the expression of divine wisdom to principalities and powers in heavenly places (Ephes. iii. 10); more than that, the expression of the surpassing riches of God's grace in His kindness, through Christ Jesus. While here in the body, we shall hardly begin to praise God for this wondrous grace. In the manifested glory, when we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known, then we can praise Him. Oh, what praise! *it shall never cease!* Who could not say with the blessed apostle, in view of all that might intimidate or occasion suffering on the part of man, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Oh, unsaved one, there is a sweet word for thee.

"*Every one that believeth.*" Wonderful plan! As all-embracing, unlimited as the boundless nature of the blessed God who provides the plan, whose nature is love. Canst thou, poor soul, question or find fault with such a perfect display of grace? Away with thy cold and heart-

less reasoning! Surrender thine arms of rebellion, close in with such gushing overtures of mercy, while it is the well-accepted time and day of salvation. *To every one that believeth.* What freeness! The gospel under the figure of life-giving waters to the thirsty soul, presents the same freeness. "*Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.*" "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." Sinner, the very freeness makes it awful for you to refuse. If you reject and suffer the unmitigated, unending tortures of the damned, you will know one thing clearly—that *it meant you.* Pause, consider, what will you do in that awful moment, when the power of God, now exercised in grace for your deliverance, is exerted for your destruction? Tremendous thought, it is but a matter of time! All that restrains the poured-out wrath, from the defenseless head of the unsaved, is the blood on the mercy-seat. Who can depict the horrors of that day, yea, who can conceive even its awfulness. The only possible measurement is by the felt darkness that wrung from the heart of the Son of God, the sin-bearer, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Sinner, you will know, when too late, when the throne of God's judgment, unprotected by the altar, shall send forth its lightning and thunder, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power. At the very moment too, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day (2 Thess. i. 8-10). Happy, believing soul, what a place, what a privilege, to know the standing we have before God, sure and steadfast through His revealed righteousness, already belonging to heaven, blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus The Holy Ghost in us as the earnest of the glory in the absence of our blessed Lord directing our hearts to the promised glory. But what responsibility comes upon us with this place of undisturbed blessedness. There are two passages of immense significance. May they fall with deep weight upon our souls—2 Cor. v. 15, "He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them

and rose again." 2 Cor. v. 9, "Wherefore, we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him. For we must all appear at the judgement seat of Christ."
G. O. A.

 A PRAYER.

The human heart is full
Of evil thoughts and blasphemies,
And liftings up of self against
The Lord whom it defies ;
And all its ways, in life, and death,
Below the beast that perisheth.

In Thy preknowledge Lord,
In the far back eternity,
Ere time its wing had spread for flight,
Thou sawest our misery,
And in the counsels of Thy mind,
For us redemption's plan designed.

In time, that purpose ripe,
The Saviour came, the Lamb of God,
Whose blood on Calvary was shed ;
For us He bore the rod ;
The burden of our sin was laid
On Him, and He, our ransom paid.

Men love Thee not, O God,
Nor know Thee, nor desire to know ;
The things of earth, of time, and sense,
In them they live and grow ;
Rejecting Thee, O God, in Christ,
And set at naught, love's sacrifice.

Thy patience, and Thy love,
In all their pow'r and beauty still,
In all their wealth of grace display,
And bend them to Thy will ;
Draw them, O God, to Him who died,
That they may count all lost beside.

Yes, blessed Lord, in these,
The latter days, when sin is rife,
Open the hearts and eyes of men,
To look to Thee for life ;
Then come, and gather up Thine own,
That Thou may'st reign, and Thou alone.

"PRECIOUS BLOOD."

"Blood—blood! strange, why so much about blood in the Bible?" said Mr. M. one day, laying down the sacred volume on the table. "Exodus," continued he, "is filled with it, and so is Leviticus. The historical parts of the Old Testament are crowded with accounts of sacrifices; and so are the prophetic; and as to the New Testament, it is the most prominent thing in it—strange!" He sat awhile in silent thought, while his mind ran over the principal contents of the great volume with which he had been familiar from childhood. "Why," said he, "every one of the patriarchs, from Abel downwards, shed the blood of victims, and offered sacrifices on altars. Noah did, and so did Abraham, over and over. Then Moses instituted a whole system of sacrifices: there was the blood of the Passover, and the blood of the consecration of everything that was consecrated—altars, vessels, priests, &c., and the blood of all the cleansings of lepers and persons ceremonially defiled, and the blood of all the different offerings—burnt-offerings, peace-offerings, sin-offerings, and trespass-offerings; and the blood of various victims on the great day of yearly atonement; and then there was the regular sacrifice of a lamb every morning and every evening. Why, the Jewish priests were shedding blood every day of their lives, and often many times a day—and this for ages; and sometimes offering hecatombs of sacrifices, as in the days of Solomon, at the consecration of the temple, when literally rivers of blood streamed from the place of sacrifice. And this blood-shedding was all by God's appointment, too, and continued for ages, existing until Judaism gave place to Christianity. And then, when I turn to the New Testament, I find the Lord Jesus solemnly insisting on the necessity of drinking his blood in order to have eternal life, and speaking of his blood being shed for the remission of sins; and Paul, in Romans, speaks of propitiation through blood, and being justified through blood; and in Ephesians, of redemption through blood, and being made nigh by blood; and in Colossians of peace through blood; and Hebrews is completely crimson with this doctrine from first to last; and Peter speaks of the sprinkling of the blood, and

John of the cleansing of the blood, and Revelation is interspersed with songs concerning the blood of the Lamb. Really, the Bible seems to me to be stained through and through, with the scarlet dye of blood; and when I soberly ask myself what it all means, I am at a loss for a satisfactory reply. I know the doctrines commonly taught about the remission of sins through blood-shedding; but what the true connection is between blood and pardon I do not understand. I wish I did. Some people seem to find rest to their souls in the view they entertain about it. Whatever that rest is, I have never experienced it. I know I am a sinner. I have been feeling it of late, more than ever. I fear to die, and still more to meet God as my Judge, with whom is no respect of persons. Somehow, I feel certain that the awful things I read in the Bible about future punishment are true. I cannot rid myself of the conviction. There is a voice within me confirming what I read in the Bible about it. And though I have often stifled that voice, at times it speaks out in the silence of my heart with a sound like thunder, and makes me tremble. The thought of *eternity* is altogether dreadful to me. What would I give if it were otherwise. Oh, if I could only be what I ought to be, and do what I ought to do! But I feel powerless to obey God when I try. I cannot love Him; I cannot keep that high and holy law which forbids me an evil thought or feeling, however transient, and accepts nothing but absolute perfection. As to delighting in such a law, I cannot do it; and if I could for the future, the sins I have already committed would be sufficient to sink me in perdition. When I only think about these things I am wretched; and yet banish them from my mind I dare not. It would only be to shut my eyes to certain destruction. God be merciful to me! Oh, that He would! I am weary, weary. Yes, more, I am wicked and helpless too. I believe there is help for me in Him. Oh, that He would grant it! But why have I not asked it? I have said prayers, but my heart has not really prayed. I feel now as if I *must* pray. I fear, if I don't, I may be lost for ever! How awful to be lost for ever! for ever! I cannot bear the thought; yet I dare not drive it from me. Oh, is there not some secret power in that blood which the Bible speaks of, to cleanse me?

The thought of it encourages me to kneel down and cast myself at God's feet, and cry to Him to have mercy upon me. Mercy is what I want. Nothing else will do. 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' "

So saying, he fell on his knees, and covered his face with his hands; his bosom heaved; sobs burst from his burdened heart; petitions and confessions poured out in broken sentences. His whole soul seemed absorbed in earnest desire for salvation: every thing else seemed forgotten. At length he rose, and, clearing his eyes from tears, sat down, and again opened the Bible. The page which lay before him was one in Leviticus, chap. xvii.; his eye fell upon the eleventh verse, "For the *life* of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." As he read these words, a beam of light seemed to shine into his soul; the word "*life*" arrested his attention. It appeared to stand out in large letters before his mind. He saw that God connects "the life" and "the blood." "The life" is *in* "the blood." That precious thing we call "life,"—that thing which man esteems most precious is in "the blood." And this is what gives "the blood" its value. He saw blood to be the rich equivalent to life. All the sacredness of life is shared by blood. Blood and life are one. To shed blood is to take life. The words blood and life are interchangeable. For general purposes it matters not which you use. The one represents the other.

As these thoughts passed through his mind, all the passages he remembered in the Scriptures, in which the word "blood" occurred, seemed illuminated with the precious thought of "life." In all this blood was "life." Every sacrifice was the sacrifice of "life." Thus he saw in the Divine law yearly sacrifices of life, and daily sacrifices of life; every morning and every evening were marked by the offering of life; and all the sprinkling of blood on persons and things to be hallowed, was but the putting upon them the scarlet token of life—of life taken—life poured out—life sacrificed. He saw in all this a constant sacrifice of life on the sinner's behalf. It was altogether for the sinner. All this pouring out of life was for the sake of transgressors. When any sinned,

they were to bring a victim to the altar of God, and have it slain. The sinner was to lay his hand on the head of the victim, and then the victim was to be slain. The one sinned, the other suffered. The one *forfeited* his life, the other *lost* it. The judgment passed from the one to the other, from the guilty to the innocent. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Here a man sinned, but the sentence of death for his sin is not executed upon him, but upon the victim which he brings to the altar of God. Thus life is taken because of sin, but not the life of the sinner. The life of the innocent victim is taken, and the life of the guilty sinner spared. Here is life for life; life exchanged for life; one life given for another life; one life taken instead of another life; the sentence executed, yet the sinner spared. Oh, mystery of justice and mercy joined! Full justice and full mercy; no blot on either; no imperfection in either. Mercy sparing the transgressor, while Justice slays him in the person of his Substitute. Justice asks no more. Mercy can do no more. The law has its free course, and so has grace. Both are glorified.

As he thus meditated, thoughts of Jesus began to fill his mind. His was the life thus "taken from the earth." All the countless lives of victims slain on Jewish altars were but the emblems of His one life "poured out" upon the cross. All told of Him. All were shadows of His sacrifice. They could not take away sin: He does. They were nothing: He is all. His own words were, "The Son of Man came to give *His life* a ransom for many;" "the Good Shepherd giveth *His life* for the sheep;" "I lay down *my life*." And the words of John are, "Hereby know we the love of God, because He (Jesus) laid down *His life* for us." While thinking on these passages, he began to see a connection between his own sins and the death of Jesus. *My life*, thought he, has been forfeited; and He loved me and gave *His life* for mine. His precious life given for my worthless life! His life for my life! He slain—I spared. Yea, since His life has been taken, mine shall never be, for I believe in Him; and He says of all who believe in Him, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." Joy now began to flow into his heart, and a feeling of gratitude and love to Jesus. How wonderful the thought! His

life and my life linked together. The one given for the other. His for mine—Himself for me! And I a sinner and an heir of wrath; while He is the Son of God, and heir of all things! His holy, precious, sacred life—a life linked with eternal glory and Godhead, laid down because mine was forfeited, and because He loved me; that my life might be spared, that I might *live on*—live in a higher sense—that, as a sharer of His resurrection life, I might live for ever and for ever! Gladly, then, will I give Him the life He has redeemed! Henceforth, thought he, henceforth I live; yet not to myself, but to Him who died for me and rose again.

Once more Mr. M. knelt, not to pray, but to praise! He had found the rest he sought—found it in precious blood.

Reader, have thine eyes been opened thus? Dost thou believe on the Son of God. H. G. G.

GOD'S JUDGMENT ; SELF-JUDGMENT ; CHRIST'S JUDGMENT.

“And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long and five cubits broad; the altar shall be four-square: and the height thereof shall be three cubits. . . . And thou shalt overlay it with *brass*. . . . All the vessels thereof thou shalt make of *brass*. And thou shalt make for it a grate of network of *brass*.” Ex. xxvii, 1, 4.

“Thou shalt also make a laver of *brass*, and his foot also of *brass*, to wash withal; and thou shalt put it *between* the Tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat.” Ex. xxx, 18, 19.

“For Solomon had made a *brazen* scaffold, of five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court; and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven.” 2 Chron. vi, 13.

The teachings to be learned from the use the Holy Spirit makes of brass (symbolizing judgment), are weighty and manifold; I do not therefore expect even

to touch upon all the lessons to be learned from it, but just to glance at three prominent ones; for just as we find "brass" in nearly every thing pertaining to the Tabernacle, and all the vessels and all the pins were of brass, so do we find that judgment enters into all God's dealings, and firmly unites all His counsels.

First, let us look at God's judgment about sin, and of sin, as typified to us in the altar of shittim wood overlaid with brass. A poor woman on her dying bed was asked, what she was trusting in? She replied, "The righteousness of God." Her interlocutor was surprised that she had not answered "The mercy of God;" and many thousands there are who are hastening on to destruction with a false, indefinite hope that "God is merciful." Fatal delusion! The Cross to such persons is a mere sophistry. What! God be merciful to sin, when He spared not His Son? True, indeed, blessedly true it is, that

"God, *in mercy*, sent His Son,
To a world by sin undone."

But having sent Him, did He spare Him? Ah, no! "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me except I drink it, Thy will be done." Was there any element of mercy in the Cross? Yes, mercy to the sinner, but none to sin, nor to Him whose soul was made an offering for sin. All, all, was judgment. It was justice that received the victim, it was justice that slew the victim, and blessed be God, it is *justice* that exonerates the believing soul from its sin. Oh, with what a voice the Cross should speak to every careless soul! God cannot pass over sin! He *can* pass over those who are under the shelter of "the blood of His cross," but not over those who have "trodden under foot the Son of God," and count that blood "common."

Many wear a cross round their necks, and their parlors are adorned with pictures of the Cross that hate the doctrine that it teaches. For just as the brazen altar stood at the entrance of the Tabernacle, so the Cross bars any approach to God, in the flesh. Man, unregenerate man, cannot worship God. Then, what do people mean by talking of "public worship." A Christ rejector cannot worship. Only as one who has been crucified with Him, and risen with Him, can I worship. Do I know that

Christ not only "bare our sins in His own body on the tree," but also that He "was made sin for us?" Well, then, I can understand what Paul means when he says, "we thus judge, that if one died for all then were all dead; and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again. *Wherefore* henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. *Therefore* if any man be in Christ he is a new creature." As a "new creature," as one who is no longer in the flesh, the old Adam state, but in Christ who died for me, and with whom I am to reckon myself (the old Adam state) dead (Rom. vi. 11), only, can I worship. And my "house of worship," where is that? Why, it is where the "throne of grace" is, of course. The *throne*, mark you, not the footstool. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter (where? into a house of brick, and mortar? No!) INTO THE HOLIEST!" How? By the blood of Jesus, by a *new* and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say His flesh." (Heb. x. 19, 20.)

Blessed be God for the doctrine of the brazen altar! It forever sets aside all attempts at self-improvement, making flesh holy and fit for God, &c., but it shows me the new and living way which Christ has made by bearing the judgment due to me; and so gives me peace not only about my past sins, but about my *state* too. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" inquires Job. Not one! Is there one reading this paper who has all his life-time been trying to make his unclean heart holy? Cease from the vain attempt, and see in the Cross *the end* of the unclean thing, and in the resurrection the birth of a clean. "If any man *is in Christ*." Are you in Christ? Are you a believer? Then receive what God says to you—"he is a new creature (or creation) old things *are* passed away; behold, all things *are* become new, and all things *are of God*." That could never be said if it was of *your* doing, but, seeing it is all "of God," faith can take it in, and, reposing in the sure testimony of God's word, rest in unshaken confidence.

Now we come to the brazen laver filled with water. This undoubtedly shows us self-judgment by the Word.

Notice its position, it is of the greatest importance; "thou shalt put it *between* the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar." Many would put the laver *before* the altar, while others, would dispense with the laver altogether. In other words, some, with a false idea of it being humility, will not draw near until they are sure they have put away all sin, and secured what they call "holiness of heart;" consequently, they never come at all. Others, claiming the efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ, would make a detour and avoid the duty of self-judgment altogether. In either case, there can be no worship. For, as we have before seen, the Cross is death, not improvement, to the flesh; and, in the other case, if I refuse to judge myself for daily defilement, I am out of communion with God directly, for He would have every thing judged by the word, and I refuse to do it. When I, a poor sinner, see Christ lifted up on the Cross as the *brazen serpent*, judged for *my* sin, fellowship with God is established directly; for He has judged sin in the person of His Son, and I judge myself in accepting the work of the Cross.

But if, after that, I contract defilement, however slight, and I refuse to own it as such, if I put it aside as of too little importance to be thought much of, I am walking in darkness and therefore cannot be in communion with God, for fellowship can only be "in the light." (1 John i, 7.) Walking in the light does not imply sinlessness at all, for it is then we need "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son" to cleanse us and to enable us to be there. But it *does* imply a "true heart." It *does* imply a recognition of the truth about things. It *does* imply that the body has been "washed with pure water."

If there is one dear child of God reading this, who is failing to judge self thoroughly, I would entreat you to remember with whom you are having fellowship. Not with God, but with Satan! For the Lord thus describes him in Job xi, 41; "His bones are as strong *brass*, . . . he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan (Jordan signifies judgment) into his mouth. His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone. . . . He esteemeth iron as straw, and *brass* as rotten wood. . . . Upon earth there is not his like who behave themselves without fear. . . .

. He beholdeth all high things; he is a king over all the children of pride."

In pointed contrast with this, will you turn with me to 2 Chron. xii. Here we have a beautiful instance of self-judgment. Rehoboam growing self-confident, had forsaken the law of the Lord (v. 1). The Lord in judgment sent against him Shishak, King of Egypt; also telling him by the mouth of the prophet why the punishment came. How did Rehoboam meet it? Did he "esteem brass as rotten wood?" Ah! no! he said "The Lord is righteous." He justified God; he bowed to the governmental dealings of the Lord, and consequently He could act in grace to him. "And when the Lord saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, saying, they have humbled themselves; therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance; and my wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak." But grace does not disannul the governmental dealing of God. "Nevertheless they shall be his servants. So Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasure of the King's house; he took all; he carried away also the *shields of gold* which Solomon had made." But the grace of God, restoring the soul, enables it meekly to bow to His discipline, for we read on, "Instead of which King Rehoboam made *shields of brass*, . . . and when the King entered into the house of the Lord, the guard came and fetched them, and brought them again into the guard's chamber. And when he humbled himself, the wrath of the Lord turned from him, that he would not destroy him altogether; and also in Judah things went well." Beautiful picture, this, of a soul shielding itself by self-judgment. Can your heart have any wrath against your child when it frankly owns its fault? You may find it necessary for the proper government of your house, still to inflict some punishment, but the child is *forgiven* the moment it confesses. My dear brother, are you under the shield of brass? Have you judged yourself, saying, "the Lord is righteous?" If you have, you have the blessed presence of God with you, even though you may, like Jacob, have to go halting the remainder of your days.

Now let us look at the third aspect of judgment that I have named—Christ's judgment. In the description given of Him as Son of Man in Rev. i., His feet are described as "like unto *fine brass*," thus fitly describing Him as the one whose governmental dealings, as portrayed in that book, are founded in justice. "In righteousness He doth judge and make war." In the text I have quoted (2 Chron. vi. 13) we see that judgment *finished*. "Solomon had made a brazen scaffold." In David and Solomon conjointly, we have a type of the Lord Jesus, *first* putting down all rebellion, then reigning in peace. As we have it in Heb. vii. 2, where "Melchizedec" is interpreted for us as "*first* being by interpretation King of Righteousness, and *after that* King of Peace."

The subject is one which Christians generally are not very clear about. The coming of Christ for the church, and the judgment of the great white throne, are associated in their minds as all one event; whereas a reference to the chapter (Rev. xx.) where that judgment is recorded, will show them very clearly that that is but the finale of a series of judgments. The great white throne is not set up until after the thousand years of peace, (v. 4-6) and they are preceded by the judgments recorded in the earlier part of the book, viz., the judgment of the great whore (ch. xviii.) and of the nations (ch. xix. 19-21.) David is a very plain type of the Lord Jesus as the reigning one; as Jer. xxiii. 5, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." That He is *not* doing that now is very evident from the fact that *this* is the year of *grace*, and not the day of judgment.

How significant is the action of the Lord recorded in Luke iv. 20, "And He closed the book." He had been reading from Isa. lxi., and closed with the words, "to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." The prophet continues, "and the day of vengeance of our God," but these words the Lord did not read, for the time had not come yet. And although we find the Lord governing and ruling the church in Rev. i-iii., that is a very different thing from reigning over the world. "As a Son over His (God's) house," Jesus does indeed govern now. In

the Corinthian church many slept because of the Lord's judgment upon them, "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.*" (1 Cor. xi. 30-32).

But how different this gracious discipline is, from the judgment that casts the beast and the false prophet alive into the lake of fire, sweeps off the living, and raises all the dead to receive the final sentence at the great white throne! That *cannot* take place until the church is removed. So Paul says, "Now we beseech you, brethren, *by the coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by our gathering* together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that *the day* of Christ is at hand, or has come." (2 Thes. ii. 1, 2.) The very fact that Christ has *not* come for His Bride, and that we are *not* gathered unto Him, is a conclusive proof that the *day* of Christ is not come. That "day," is the day so often spoken of by the prophets of the Old Testament as bringing judgment to the nations and deliverance to Israel. "*In that day* 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 supplication; and they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced. . . . *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. And it shall come to pass *in that day*, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the lands." (Zech. xii. xiii.) These Scriptures show us very plainly that "that day" is not "our gathering together unto Him," but a day in which God shall take up the cause of His ancient people and, by His Son, ("For the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son") judge the earth for its wickedness.

David having judged all his enemies, passes off the scene, and Solomon takes his place; the special feature of whose reign is peace and prosperity. In Solomon's brazen scaffold we have typified what is plainly declared in 1 Cor. xv. 24-28, "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the

Father; *when He shall have put down* all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son himself also be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."

The size of the brazen scaffold was exactly the same as the brazen altar. This teaches us a very solemn lesson. The judgment that will overtake this world that rejects the sacrifice of Christ, will be in exact proportion to the infinite value of that sacrifice. As the atonement was infinite; so will the punishment be. As the atonement is of eternal value; so will the punishment be of eternal duration. As God proved by delivering up His Son that He could not pass over sin; so He will not, He cannot pass over those who reject Him and die in their sins. Oh, that every reader of these lines may escape that judgment by bowing the knee to the Son *now*, so that when the time of judgment comes they may be with those "much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are His judgments!"

C. H. B.

"THE LORD IS ABLE TO GIVE THEE MUCH MORE THAN THIS." (2 CHRON. XXV. 9.)

It is not the Lord's way to restore to man that which he has forfeited through failure, unless He restores it in a different character. We find this whether in the case of an individual or a nation.

For instance, one who has fed upon the sweet manna turns back again in heart to Egypt, desiring the flesh-pots and food of the Land of Bondage, thus leaving the manna which it loathes. But the soul in such a state finds no sense of rest. Surfeited with Egypt's food, he comes to himself. His spiritual tastes are once more revived; he is again convinced that "Bread from Heaven" alone can satisfy his hunger, and he returns to the manna. Still he will now find that he is not, as it were, on the same ground as before his failure. There is some difference since his restoration from what his experience was before that cause. Not that the heart and love of God are changed to him; but he does not, as it were, re-

trace his steps to the first hour of failure, and go on from the point at which his eye, being off Christ, turned to something of the world with a desire after it. But it learns God and itself in a new character, and this in order that God may be exalted and self humbled.

It is a solemn thought, I can never regain what I have lost! How important, therefore, to treasure the present character of blessing while it is mine.

But here grace comes in and abounds for the soul. In keeping with God's dispensational dealings from the very first, I learn that he never restores the ruined thing, but brings in a new, or a better. I also learn that He creates in my soul the necessity which my very failure has produced—the occasion for a new and more blessed manifestation of what He is in Himself than before. His resources are inexhaustible. He is God and not man. My repeated failure only serving, as in the case of Israel's history, to bring to light what God is, and that *for me!*

Some one has remarked, that after the Children of Israel despised the manna, its taste was never the same again. At first it was like "wafers made with honey," and afterwards like "fresh oil." (Ex. xvi., Num. xi.)

I would just remark here what it was that preceded this notice of the change in the taste of the manna, in Num. xi. 5. "*We remember* the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, the leeks and the onions, and the garlic. Was it not a *dangerous* retrospect? I do not believe we can be thus engaged, even for a moment, unless self-judgment is promptly exercised, without suffering from it. It should be ever "forgetting those things which are behind." If we allow our desires to go back to the domains of our old taskmaster, we too shall be led to imagine that the food we there sought after was eaten "freely," being blinded to the recollection of the vexation of spirit and cruel bondage that the prince of that land laid upon us, while we *earned* it. Let us not tarry at such an occupation, or we shall loathe the manna. "The serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety," and "we are not ignorant of his devices." Lot's wife only "*looked back.*" We are on slippery places, while our eyes look not right on, and our eyelids straight before us, *unto Jesus*, who is in the glory.—*Words of Truth.*

1 SAMUEL.

Chaps. xiii., xiv.

Chap. xiii. Saul is now established as king, and his authority confirmed; Samuel, confining himself to his prophetic office. Saul starts under the most favorable circumstances. "Howbeit, that was not first which was spiritual, but that which was natural; and afterward that which is spiritual." And Saul is the heading up of "that which is natural," man's way of mending things, the mind being turned away from God. The end will be "the wilful one," towards whose brief reign every thing is tending.

V. 3. We see Jonathan, not Saul, as the one in whom there is faith. "Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines." This was beginning, though late, (for Saul had reigned two years) in the right place, against that which dishonored Jehovah by its presence, the enemy within. And God gave success. And flesh follows the impulse given by faith, but it is but flesh still, and Saul's first proclamation exhibits this. "Let the Hebrews hear!" *Hebrews?* God had taken the title of Jehovah in relation to the people of *Israel*. But the people had asked for a king that they might be like other nations; and now, this man of their choice is treating them as one of the nations, giving them their gentile name, as it might be called, the name the nations all around would call them, who knew nothing of their nearness to God, and knew not Jehovah. But for Saul to use it, showed that he understood no better than the gentiles around, what God's thoughts were. The name of *Israel* was given to Jacob, when, in utter brokenness and known helplessness, clinging to Jehovah, he said: "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me," and, as a prince, he prevailed with God. What a precious origin for the name. "When I am weak, *then* am I strong." But it is all forgotten and ignored here, and they are valued and named as though belonging to Saul. They were his people and he their centre. How man shows his desire to be independent of God!

Now, if we trace the analogy between the state of Israel and the church, will we not see how the church has come to be divided on the ground of nationality,

having, too, a political significance and bearing? Then, too, "our church," and "your church," are phrases that show how disposed we are to connect things with ourselves rather than with God. How thoroughly foreign to the true thought of God, in giving the Holy Spirit to join us to Christ the Lord, in the heavenlies, as members of His body, His flesh and His bones. "Know ye not that ye are *not your own*? For ye are bought with a price." This is solemn, as suggesting the general dullness to all the working of the mystery of iniquity, already, and for so long.

In the midst of all this, it is sweet to see that faith can act, and God blesses it, as in the case of Jonathan, though Saul got all the credit of it. "*Israel was had in abomination with the Philistines.*" This was bringing things to the right condition. If the enemy is within the land they should be seen *as such*, and we should be acting in our place, so as to be hateful to them. It is sometimes said that the day of persecution and of being hated for Christ's sake, has passed. *It has not.* But, there is too little adherence to the purely christian ground, of separation from the world, and unto Christ. While christians are helping on the world, flattering its efforts to elevate the race and to educate it away from God, compromising every principle, giving up every thing that is distinctive, no wonder such things are said.

Israel had become an abomination to the Philistines, in what manner? By the attack of Jonathan. Even so, if we really act in faith, not attacking men, but maintaining our warfare against Satan, and not yielding an inch, a single principle, but only living as those whose dwelling-place is heaven, being too happy for the world's pleasures, too rich for its wealth, too greatly blessed for its dignities, too profoundly possessed of the peace of God to heed its sneers, the eye and ear too much occupied with Him whom the Spirit is displaying to us, to see its attractions, or hear its invitations; what then? If we treat the whole thing as crucified, surely it will treat us as crucified too; and it was the crucifixion that brought out the jeers and mockery, the hatred and malignity, and all bitter things, from that which was the established religion, having "no king but Cæsar," and keeping its feasts.

It remains immutably true that "all that will *live*

godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." This was said in connection with the developments of "the last days," in 2 Tim. iii. As the peril of these "perilous times" is not from without, so much as within the nominal church, so the persecution is not from government by stake and gibbet, but the bitter words and acts of those of one's own household. If we "turn away" from that which has "the form of godliness," will we not be objects of suspicion religiously? Or, if we turn from that which is a lover of pleasure and of self, will we not offend, or be fools in the esteem of those practising such things? If we stand firmly to the claim of being heavenly, will not Satan be stirred, since his purpose is to resist our occupation of that ground? "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some *strange thing* happened unto you; but rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings." (1 Pet. iv. 12-15.)

The Holy Ghost will not use the name "*Hebrews*" where the antagonism of the Philistines (Satan) is noticed, but of those who go over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead (v. 7), the term is used. They left the ground in which God had placed them, and at a time of peril. How humiliating this sight! Philistines holding Jehovah's land, and Israelites leaving it! So, how solemnly come the words to us, "if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." (Heb. x. 38.) It is noticeable that the occupation of "the land," from the time it is shown by God to Abraham and spoken of as their possession, becomes the test and measure of faith. It is seen in the fathers', and in Joseph's command concerning his bones, in Moses, and then Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, Samuel and David. (Heb. xi. 1.) It is so with us; faith, in this day, since Christ has gone on high, takes hold of *our place there*. Are we falling short of this? Then we are leaving out God's thoughts altogether, and failing of the apprehension of our true name as solely of and for Christ.

And now comes Saul's testing. He had been told by Samuel to go to Gilgal and tarry seven days, and he would come and show him what he was to do. Simple enough, surely, we would say. But flesh cannot wait, and Saul broke down just before the complete time ex-

pired. No doubt he could frame excuses, could say the people were being scattered from him, and that Samuel came not within the time appointed, that the Philistines would come down and he had not made supplication unto Jehovah—plausible reasons these. But Saul was not the one to offer sacrifices. That pertained unto the priest's office, and Samuel was the one whom God had appointed for this. But had he cared for God's word he would have waited; he would have known that nothing is necessary but doing the will of God.

And is it not needful to draw attention to this in our day of expediency, and the various projects and movements in the professing church? Is there not a following in the way of Saul of "forcing" himself, and offering a burnt-offering, in this intruding into sacred things that belong to the Holy Spirit, or the Head above, such as organizing so-called "churches," and appointing teachers, and pastors, and officers? Why is there so little waiting on the Lord?

Samuel meets these pleas and proceedings, with a prompt and decisive word from Jehovah? "Thou hast done foolishly; thou hast not kept the commandment of Jehovah thy God, which He commanded thee. Thy kingdom shall not continue; Jehovah hath sought Him a man after His own heart, and Jehovah hath commanded him to be captain over His people." If the flesh has nothing for God, surely He has nothing for it. It must be cut off. It may be tested to show just what it is, but, at the very beginning, its case is settled. If there is that which resists now, it is blessed to know that it shall be cut off. What a condition for Israel, and what a verdict upon their choice! The very king they had set their heart upon, rejected thus early, and, whatever time he may continue, by the long-suffering of God, yet already judged and set aside, as to his house.

And let not Christendom flatter itself that its continuance in this scene is because of any thing else than the forbearance of God, awaiting His own time to bring forth the One whose name shall endure for ever, and with whose glory heaven and earth shall be filled.

Israel's condition is further disclosed in the remainder of the chapter. Saul's army is reduced to six hundred men, and the spoils came out of the camp of the Phil-

istines in three companies. Saul has done nothing for their deliverance. (Satan will not cast out Satan.) They could not even sharpen any instrument with which to battle. "So it came to pass in the day of battle that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan; but with Saul and with Jonathan, his son, was there found. And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash." The people of God were thus naked and unarmed before the enemy!

And has not her commerce with the world, blunted and dulled every weapon of warfare in the church, taking out of her hands the power to fight? How can there be testimony to holiness of walk, or a rebuke of sin with any power, when the church itself is the world? Even though there may be some show of armor, how can it be used? Are not many of the most renowned, and those most resorted to, of expounders of the Scriptures, simply men of profound human learning, whose christianity itself is even doubted, and who are in the pay of that which is wholly of man? (the German theologians, for instance,) Just think of the word of God being interpreted with the limitation of men's systems that have been framed to allow all looseness in doctrines, and indifference to the honor of Christ! Here is a nakedness in the presence of the enemy. The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God; but if that word is handled deceitfully, or if man's judgment is called into play to decide what part shall be taken, or if we have become settled in things which it condemns, so that the conscience cannot feel at all the force of it; if it is to be taken on the express condition that it does not mean *us* in all its rebukes, that it shall leave *our* system or *our* thoughts untouched; what profit or power is there in it?

It appears that they had very limited means of sharpening their instruments of husbandry, of occupying and enjoying the land, and cultivating its fruits, also. They had files for these, however. There was not only weakness as to warfare, but poverty in that which pertained to culture. And sadly descriptive is this of the lack of enjoyment and comfort for the soul, in the truth of God, in this day. Every thing betokens lowness, in those, who, according to the purpose of God, have been blessed with

all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, the full, complete revelation of the hidden things of God, enjoyed by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the common portion and dignity of those born of God.

Chap. xiv. But faith has weapons. No condition is too low for the action of faith; and where this is, there must be victory. "Jonathan said unto the young man that bare his armor, come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison that is on the other side." This is grandly bold, and shows him worthy of bearing armor. "But he told not his father." There is no fellowship between them. "Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree;" and Ahiah was with him wearing an ephod, but alike with Saul, ignorant of Jonathan's absence. The secret of Jehovah was not with either king or priest.

But faith must be itself, in the face of difficulties, insurmountable to any thing else. The Philistines were in a garrison peculiarly inaccessible. But Jonathan sees them only as "uncircumcised," the enemies of God, and without His help, and circumstances are unnoticed. "For there is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few." "And his armor-bearer said unto him, do all that is in thine heart; turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart." And in these days of "little strength," it is blessed to remember that "if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." We see too, the reality of faith in these two men "discovering themselves unto the garrison," what would have seemed recklessness in courting death, to man. But Jonathan was not thinking of himself. "Jehovah hath delivered them into the hand of *Israel*." This is precious. It was, at that supreme moment, seeing the whole of Israel in their place according to God's appointment. It *was* the mind of God, and genuine faith gathers that, and acts upon it. And they that take the true place of conflict, maintaining the truth of God as to His church now, will confess to nothing less than the unity of the body. If they overcome, it shall be on the ground that belongs to all saints.

It is a quiet, humble place, that Jonathan takes, without boasting, for the thing is preposterous, of two men, only one of them armed, taking an army. And faith never takes in self. Its expectation is from God, and it witnesses for God. And God not only used the man of faith, but He took up the matter independently of them. There was first the slaughter which Jonathan and his armor-bearer made, of about twenty men, "and there was trembling in all the host, in the field, and among all the people; the garrison and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked; so it was a very great trembling."

And God is ready to do His own work, to manifest Himself now. "Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ, that ye stand fast *in one spirit*, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God." (Phil. i. 27, 28.) What a priceless gift is faith! It is precious to God as the fruit of His own love in the heart.

Saul knows nothing of all this, though he sees the multitude melting away. He is obliged to number the people (his feeble six hundred) to find out who had gone from them; and then turns to the Ark for directions. What a difference between faith and superstitious fear! But there is no satisfactory answer. Yet the battle went on, every man's sword against his fellow.

And now the *Hebrews* "turned to be with the Israelites," and the fugitives of Israel who had hid themselves in Mount Ephraim, also "followed hard after them in the battle." All are glad to share in the victory, now that it is accomplished. We see that the Holy Ghost can call the feeblest and most fearful, who stay in the land, "*Israel*," while those who forsake it are "*Hebrews*." God is ever pitiful and gracious.

Our attention is still directed to Saul, who spoils the triumph, by his meddling. He knows nothing of God's ways, which are clear to faith, and his poor counterfeit, thinking only of *his* enemies, proves only an impertinence, as flesh always gets in the way. He had adjured the people, saying, "cursed is the man that eateth any food until evening." But Jonathan, too busily occupied

with the true work of Jehovah, was a stranger to all this folly, by which his father "troubled the land." He was in this, not under Saul, but a higher than Saul. How could the king direct that which was so greatly beyond his thoughts? Saul's way was a miserable asceticism; that counted nothing on God, knew nothing of His preparing a table in the presence of the enemy, or of the confidence and leisure and strength that come from abiding in His presence; while Jonathan was partaking of that which was the expression of the fatness of the land that "flowed with milk and honey," an entering by a foretaste, anew, into the real, happy, abundant possession of that which had been held by the enemy. How much better "if haply the people had eaten freely to-day of the spoil of their enemies which they found, for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?" Yes, for this fasting became the occasion of that which was offensive to Jehovah, eating blood. Thus, he had cursed him who was in the secret of God, and brought the people into open sin. Fleshly piety can do that!

And now he builds at last, his first altar unto Jehovah, and affects to observe His ordinances, all the forms of religion being with him, the priest, the ark, and the altar. He consults God, but gets no answer in regard to his going down after the Philistines. No judgment of self, no brokenness, but the ordinances of God used as if to force God to be for him, or to have Him go on with that which was not of Himself; how could He be used? And then, as if it had been only some hidden sin, as in Achan's case, which hindered the answer, he calls all the chiefs of the people, to see wherein this was. God, who is righteous, gave the knowledge of the one who had sinned against the oath, for it was before Him, and the king is to be obeyed. But it only exposes, in the end, the thoroughly unhappy state of Saul, and the exceeding folly of the oath, before all Israel, who enter more really into the purpose of God through this grand deliverance, than does their king, whose authority is now broken. How ruin is coming to him who is altogether apart from God, for it will be noticed that his priest is of the house of Eli, rejected by God. In short, rebellion is in all he does. "He went up from following the Philistines."

LOVE.

It is on my heart to address a few words to my brethren in the Lord (especially those who are passing through great trial), on three aspects of love, love to the saint, presented to us in God's word.

The first is that presented in 1 John iv. 16. "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." This precious truth is prefaced by the statement, "We have known and believed the love that God hath for us," showing that it is God's love that is contemplated here. If we were living in a country where wild beasts prowled about, night and day, one would desire, or would rejoice in having, a dwelling-place where one would be quite secure from the attacks of all such animals. Now, is it not a marvel, that although we, who are surrounded by enemies, and whom the devil, as a roaring lion, seeks to devour, have such a secure dwelling-place, so few of us dwell there?

There is quite a difference between visiting a friend's house now and then, and *dwelling* there. Every child of God has "known and believed the love that God hath to us;" but the point here is, does he dwell there? Do you, my brother? Have you retired from all cares, and worries, and possible dangers, by making His love your abode? If not, why not?

Is there some dark cloud looming up on your horizon that brings a depression over your soul? Do you not know that He who regards a sparrow's fall has said, "There shall not a hair of your head perish?" And further, your horizon is not God's horizon. Your horizon is the point where *your* gaze meets the surface; He can see beyond that, for He gazes from a loftier altitude. "Perfect love casts out fear." How can I fear, if I am abiding in God's over-shadowing, all-enveloping love? "There is no fear in love;" "he that feareth is not made perfect in love." He has not realized that God *is* love, and *all* His dealings with us proceed from a heart that retains no wrath; that yearns over us with an unceasing, unquenchable affection, and whose *only* object is our being brought more into fellowship with Him; our being brought to *dwell* in love.

There is another aspect of love—the love of Christ—which we have unfolded very sweetly in Solomon's Song. Do you wish to find *rest* for your weary heart? Do you wish for repose, peace and refreshment? Oh, then, come and lie on the bed which he has made.

“King Solomon made himself a bed (marg.) of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being *paved with love*, for the daughters of Jerusalem.” (iii. 9–10.) The cedar wood showing durability, the pillars of silver typical of redemption (“He loved the church and gave Himself for it”), the bottom thereof of gold signifying that all rests on the divine counsels, the covering of purple showing royalty, which, as being partner of His throne, we share in; but the midst thereof is paved with something which cannot be typical; that immeasurable, unsearchable thing—love; “the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.”

How sweet to find all our repose on the bosom of Jesus, when wearied with service, to retire apart into a desert place *with Him*. (Mark vi. 30, 31.) The Lord would have us find our all in Himself; He would have us rest, *satisfied*, on the bed of His love, realizing that *every* need of the heart is met.

And the other aspect of His love to which I refer, is one which, though enjoyed and realized now, reaches beyond this wilderness scene into that day of supreme bliss—the marriage supper of the Lamb. “He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was love.” (Canticles ii. 4.) The banqueting house, or house of wine, sets forth joy; and our supreme joy in being there is, to know that it is His *love* which brought us there. “His banner over me was love.” It floats above my head, rejoicing over me as a trophy of that love. And it is His joy to have me feasting there in the full enjoyment of that position.

In the first chapter we read, “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth, for Thy love is better than wine.” Better than all the joy of salvation is it, to know that He saved me because He loved me. And in that day of perfected bliss, when all the saints shall be gathered at the marriage supper of the Lamb, I suppose that we shall not be so much occupied with being there, as with the love

that brought us there and now waves its banner over us. In Eph. ii., we are very sweetly told that God's purpose in saving us is, "that in the ages to come He might shew forth the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

In these three aspects of love we have, then, provided for us, every thing that the heart may need. Are you fearful? *Dwell* in His love! Are you weary? Cast yourself, in all your weariness, on that never-failing love! Are you seeking for deeper joy? Find it in the fact that He waves His banner of love over your head, as esteeming you the richest trophy of His grace, and so entering into the joy of *His love*, your soul cannot but rejoice with "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Safety, rest and joy in His love! C. H. B.

SOME NOTES OF A BIBLE READING WITH J. N. D.

2 Cor. iii.

The christian is an epistle of Christ, known and read of all men. Just as the ten commandments could be read by any one, so with the christian. True, the letters may get filled up so as to be nearly illegible, but he *is* that, and should be a *manifestation* of *Christ*, Christ being written on his heart by the Spirit.

The law was a ministration of death, because it *could not* give life (as in Rom. vii.) Law is good, but unable to produce any thing but death, because of the weakness of the flesh. But *where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty*. Liberty from the bondage of sin, liberty to enter into the holiest; so that we all, looking with unveiled face, are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory; *i. e.*, more and more like Christ, morally, down here; which likeness will be perfected when we see Him. And the agency is "even as by the Lord the Spirit." An unquickened soul may feel uncondemned before the law, (and when the conscience is reached, without the operation of the Spirit, the effect is either despair, as in the case of Judas, or hatred, as in the case of the murderers of Stephen,) so Paul could say "as touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless;" *i. e.*, he had not done murder, theft, &c.; but when the Spirit had quickened him, he says, "when the com-

mandment came, sin revived and I died." He had not broken the law as regards his acts, but when he saw the spirituality of the law, when he saw "thou shalt not *lust*," not have a *desire*, he died; and the commandment which was for life was found as to him, itself to be unto death.

The law says "Thou shalt love God," but gives no reason why (unless to escape from death); it gives no object of love. The law neither gives *power*, nor *life*, nor an *object of love*. The Spirit gives *all*. God is light and God is love; these are the two essential attributes of God; and where the Spirit of God is at work, these two qualities are brought out. Light discovers the sin but love draws the sinner. The woman that was a sinner was drawn to weep at the feet of Jesus; she had confidence in Him. Although the light exposed her sin, there was something in Him that inspired confidence; so, "If I perish, I'll perish at the cross," is a right feeling; of course they can't perish there.

"If the ministry of condemnation be glory (it was *introduced* in glory, *not* glorious in its *effects*; see verses 7 and 8); much rather the ministration of righteousness abounds in glory." In xvi. of John it is said that the Spirit "shall bring demonstration to the world of righteousness because I go to my Father." The fact of Christ being *there*, is a demonstration of God's righteousness, He having *borne* the penalty of sin, having been made sin. In the cross was shown God's righteousness as regards "by no means clearing the guilty," and Christ being in heaven, proves God's righteousness as regards Christ personally, because He was spotless. Where did Christ bear my sins? On the cross! Is He there now? No! He is at God's right hand! Can Christ be there with sin on Him? No! Where are my sin then? Gone! If God had swept Adam off the face of the earth where would have been *love*? If He had forgiven every thing right straight down, where would have been *righteousness*? In the ministration of the Spirit I get *both* these.

If I have learned, ever so feebly, the scope and purpose of the Gospel, I am anxious not only to keep clear of sins, but to keep clear of the flesh itself, the nature which produced the sins, and all that to which the flesh would respond.

THOUGHTS UPON THE XXII. PSALM.

This beautiful psalm at once opens up to us a scene, which, to every Christian, must be especially precious, viz., "the cross." But then, it is the cross in connection with the awful question of sin-bearing, and the consequent forsaking of Christ, on the part of God. There are several ways in which we can look at the cross and the Blessed One that hung there: ways which tell out the fulness of that scene, which can never be forgotten, in time or eternity. At the time of its transaction, though the face of Heaven was turned from that Holy Sufferer; yet, the thought of Heaven was concentrated there. Would that we knew how to tread while gazing at such a scene; and as we meditate upon this portion of the Psalms, may we do it in that spirit which becomes those who are absolutely dependent upon it for salvation.

I have said that there are various ways in which we can look at the cross, and the Blessed Lord in connection therewith. At the least, there are five ways in which we can view the cross. In the first place, then, we see the expression of human guilt in the crucifying of the Lord Jesus Christ. From man's stand-point we see it to be but the unfolding of the human heart: the terrible disclosure of the contents of that heart—desperate wickedness! It is viewing the cross thus, we see the true state of ourselves naturally. It tells me what I am, as a part of that old creation, that failed to appreciate the Holy Son of God when down here in perfect grace and love. It expressed its thoughts of God's Christ, by putting Him on the cross as a malefactor. Oh! how awful is this disclosure of man: this expression of the state of his heart. It is here we see that not only is the fruit of the tree corrupt, but the tree itself. Man is that tree—a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit!

When the representatives of the human family raised up the Son of God upon the cross, saying, "we will not have this man to reign over us," the trial of man was finished, and the verdict of Heaven was returned—"the whole world standeth guilty before God." He now sees the first Adam creation an utterly ruined thing, under condemnation. The Lord in view of the cross had de-

cided this, when He said: "Now is the judgment of this world." (John xii. 31.)

Secondly, we may view the cross as the scene of the expression of Satan's hatred and seeming triumph. There it was he bruised the heel of the seed of the woman; but his seeming triumph was to return upon his own head in everlasting defeat. If the judgment of the first Adam race was expressed there, the ground of Satan's defeat, and his being banished from God's domains for ever, was found there also. Christ had said in view of the cross, the scene of His conflict with death, and Him who had the power of death: "Now shall the Prince of this world be cast out." (John xii. 31.) Ah! yes, the head of the serpent was bruised even at the time of his "seeming triumph." Blessed be God, all the powers of darkness were foiled—yea, every foe of God and man was conquered when that Holy One gave His brow to the thorns, His hands to the nails, His side to the spear, and bowed His head and died! On the third day He stands in resurrection—the proof of His having vanquished all. All praise be to His peerless name!

Thirdly, in Christ's going to the cross we see His perfect love and obedience to the Father expressed. How this is told out in the two following scriptures: "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that 'I love the Father,' and as the Father 'gave me commandment,' even so I do. Arise, let us go hence." (John xiv. 30, 31.) "Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, sacrifice and offering Thou wouldst not, but a body hast Thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come, (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do Thy will, O God." (Heb. x. 5-7.) From the manger to the cross we see in the Blessed Lord Jesus one continuous display of perfect love and obedience to the Father. He was in life a "whole meat offering," (Lev. ii.) and in death—that death viewed as the expression of His love and obedience to God—a perfect burnt offering, "an offering of a sweet savor unto the Lord." (Lev. i.) Redolent with frankincense was that sacrifice, and appreciated by God, the Father, with an infinite appreciation. The cross, viewed

in this way, was the culminating point of Christ's love and obedience to God. He could go no farther down in the path of self-surrender—He had reached the lowest possible point—the lowest possible depth! And all this, as a matter of love and obedience; that the world might know that "He loved the Father;" and the heart of the Father might be satisfied—refreshed by such expression of love and obedience in man. The first Adam had failed in love and obedience: here was a recompense for it all, in the last Adam. God is satisfied: "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth: And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father." (Phil. ii. 9-11.) This is the glorious answer of God to the love and obedience of His dear Son. He went down to the lowest depth; now He is raised to the highest possible height. Shall not our hearts exclaim, He is worthy! He is worthy!

Fourthly, in looking at the cross we view it as the infinite expression of God's love to a guilty world. As it is written: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) Here God makes known to a guilty world the fact that He loves it. He gives them to see His heart! Precious display of God! Blessed making known the love of His heart!

Unasked for, and undeserved; yet, it is seen exhibiting itself—flowing out in the gift of His Son. Unworthy man is the object toward which this love is shown—toward which it flowed in all its mighty fulness.

"Could I with ink the ocean fill,
 Were every blade of grass a quill,
 Were the whole world of parchment made,
 And every man a scribe by trade,
 To write the love of God above,
 Would drain the ocean dry;
 Nor would the scroll contain the whole,
 Though stretched from sky to sky."

Creation might display His power and wisdom, and Providence the beneficence of His being toward His

creatures ; but it is in the gift of His only begotten Son, we learn the fulness of His love towards man—guilty, lost, and undone man ! God, standing upon the lofty height of His throne, viewed man in his ruin and misery ; and, He loved him. His dear Son was given up to express that love, so infinite and so boundless. God's delight from all eternity, was given up as proof of that love. The Father would give that bosom companion up, that poor sinners might know that He loved them. Oh ! how overwhelming is the thought of all this ; this display of pure, infinite, and undeserved love, on the part of an offended God. May we know its blessed actuating power in our souls ; may it constrain us to yield ourselves unreservedly to Him who loved us even unto death !

Fifthly, we view the cross where the great question of sin was settled between God and Christ, the sinner's substitute. It is viewing the cross in that light we are brought back to the twenty-second psalm, where we see the Blessed Lord in the circumstances of a "sin-bearer." How solemn are the opening words : "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me ? why art Thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring ? O, my God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not ; and in the night season, and am not silent." Could any thing be more solemn ? From all eternity up to this moment there had been not a single bit of distance between God and His dear Son ; but here, all was changed. It was, "why hast Thou forsaken me ?" and, "Thou hearest me not." Why this change ? Had the Son faltered ? Had the Father's complacency in His Son diminished ? Neither. What then ? Sin was in question. Christ had taken the sinner's place ; sins and iniquities were laid upon Him ; He must be treated as the sinner (substitutionally) ; and until God was glorified about sin, there could be no communion between Him and the Holy Sufferer.

Let none for a moment suppose that God's delight in His Son had lessened in the least degree, that could never be ; but rather, while sin was upon His Son, the very holiness of His nature demanded a suspension of communion, and a distance between them. It is here we learn the true nature and deserts of sin : what it is in itself, and what was needed to put it away.

When we speak of distance coming in between God and the blessed Lord on the cross, it was not that there was anything in Him personally to cause that distance. No, He was emphatically "the Holy One and the Just." *He knew no sin, personally.* It was that sin was imputed to Him, and iniquities laid upon Him, which caused the distance between the Father and the Son. He voluntarily took the place of infinite moral distance, which belonged to the sinner; and, there became subject to the wrath and judgment of God due to the sinner, and which He endured as made sin for Him.

This is the subject of the twenty-second psalm; not that man is not seen, but God is referred to throughout—all is received as from Him. Bulls may beset Him, and dogs may encompass Him, but He receives death at God's hands: "*And Thou hast brought me into the dust of death.*" Man did his worst with God's Lamb; but as to atonement, man was not in the scene save as a spectator, then with no power to comprehend what was passing. He might behold the physical eruptions at the time, but was perfectly incapacitated to enter into the moral force of all that was going on in that place of infinite distance, between a Holy God and the sinner's substitute. In those three hours of darkness, none can tell, but God and the One who suffered, what was endured.

This was what the Blessed Lord was contemplating when prostrated in the Garden of Gethsemane. He there was anticipating what He here is seen enduring. There the dark shadow of the cross, and the outlines of that cup passed before Him, which brought Him into agony of soul; but here, He is overwhelmed in the horrors of the judgment and wrath found in that bitter cup. Alone, at infinite distance from God, and enwrapped in impenetrable darkness, He experienced the unutterable woes of the lowest pit, the darkness, and the deeps. God's wrath lay hard upon Him. He was afflicted with all His waves. The fierce wrath of a sin-hating God passed over Him. His terrors cut Him off. (Ps. lxxxviii.) Yea, it was then those words were fulfilled which said, "Deep calleth unto the deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me." (Ps. xlii. 7.) Such was God's holiness, and such was God's hatred of sin, that nothing short of all this could put it

away, and open up a way for the blessing of salvation to flow out far and near. Infinite claims needed an infinite sacrifice to meet them. This was done when the lowly Lord Jesus Christ laid himself on the sin-offering altar of Calvary. There sin was perfectly atoned for and put away, the curse of a broken law was borne, the justice of God was satisfied, the throne, majesty and glory of God were all vindicated; yea, in a word, God was infinitely glorified about sin, man's need perfectly met, and the ground laid for the righteous carrying out of all the purposes and counsels of God.

Now the Holy sufferer and forsaken One is heard from the horns of the unicorns: "Save me from the lion's mouth: for Thou has heard me from the horns of the unicorns." (Ver. 21.) And so it was, the work being finished, redemption accomplished, Satan vanquished, death robbed of its sting, and the grave of its victory, God raises the Blessed One up from among the dead; and then, that mighty conqueror began immediately to dispense the spoils of the victory: "I will declare Thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." This was literally fulfilled when Jesus said to Mary after He arose, "Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." (John xx. 17.) Raised up from the low depths of that death, and standing in resurrection, it was His great joy to bring His people into a new relationship with Himself, and declare the Father's name in a way that it had never been declared before. Blessed family oneness, expressed in those words: "my Father, and your Father; my God, and your God." He is not ashamed to call us brethren, saying, "I will declare Thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee." (Heb. ii. 12.)

Is there not something inconceivably precious in the thought that this was the first act after He arose from the dead: to declare the Father's name to His brethren, and to make them acquainted with the fact of their new place before God in family association with Himself? Hitherto His disciples had been members of a nation brought into outward nearness to God, individually the

people of God, (it was what characterized the people of God before the resurrection of Christ,) but now they are brought into corporate family oneness with the risen Lord Himself. Not now isolated people of God, members of a favored nation, or of the nations; but constituted one common brotherhood of which the risen Jesus was the elder Brother. How precious to know Jesus thus, and also to know Him as the leader of our praises in the assembly. How acceptable must be those praises to our God, that are tuned by His ever blessed Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Would that we remembered this on every occasion when gathered together to celebrate His praise; how high and holy our strains would be, and how sweet would be the flowing forth of that which God delights to accept from grateful hearts.

But, it is not the province of our psalm to introduce us into all the glories belonging to the church, and the calling and privileges of the same. In fact the church is not the subject of the psalm; it simply states in the twenty-second verse, Christ speaking prophetically of Himself, that He would declare the Father's name to His brethren, and sing praises in the midst of the congregation, which is interpreted as the church (Heb. ii. 12;) and then passes on with what the psalm is occupied with, viz: Israel's restoration and blessing; and the nation's and the earth's blessing in the millennial period yet to come, "When there shall be one king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." (Zech. xiv. 9.) When it shall be said, "Ye that fear the Lord, praise Him; all ye, the seed of Jacob, glorify Him; and fear Him, all ye, the seed of Israel." (Ps. xxii. 23.) This evidently takes us into the "age to come;" not into eternity, for nationalities cease there; but into the "age to come," when Christ shall have taken away the joint heirs to glory, and have returned with them to judge the living, restored Israel, and those saved of the nations; when Satan shall be bound, and the "knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

It is this that our psalm points to, from verse 23 to the end. And how interesting to know that this present sin-blighted scene shall be so relieved and refreshed under the righteous sway of its rightful King. Not only

will God bring the now scattered tribes of Israel from the north and the south, from the east and the west, (Isaiah xiii. 5, 6,) and establish them in their own land, and make Jerusalem the joy of the whole earth; He will also bless the saved nations, and cause them to serve and worship the King—the Lord of Hosts that reigneth in Mount Zion. “All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee. For the kingdom is the Lord’s: and he is the Governor among the nations.” And what then? “My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation. I will pay my vows before them that fear Him.” Not now the church, as in verse 22, but the mighty millennial gatherings, when the centre of the nation’s and Israel’s gatherings shall be “Zion the city of the Great King,” and the King Himself the object of universal adoration. Blessed time! Blessed release from Satan’s power and trail!

Then shall the waves of blessing roll forth from the grand centre, and which shall not expend themselves until they have reached the utmost limits of the King’s vast domains. His Kingdom shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; and the tide of blessing shall wash the utmost limits. Not then the waves of demoralizing evil, but those of wondrous, ennobling and exalting blessing, which shall result in the acknowledgment of the supremacy and worthiness of the then reigning One.

Blessed are the purposes of God! He will not stay until all is found in blessed acknowledgment of that once lowly Lord Jesus; for it is the mystery of His will that He has so graciously made known to us, “That, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in Him.” (Eph. i. 10.) God has purposed that His dear Son, the once rejected and cast-out Jesus, should be the grand centre of heavenly and earthly glory, that every nation of the earth should worship Him (Zech. xiv. 16), and that the angels of God should be ascending and descending upon Him. (John i. 51.) Thus will God honor the One who honored Him even to death!

But in contemplating this vast scene of future and

coming glory, we do well to remember that it is the fruit of that death of the cross that God's blessed Son endured. All is based upon and flows from that death, and the atonement made by it. There can be no blessing for the fallen race and a sin-blighted creation, apart from the cross. That must be endured first, with the cup-draining, and forsaking; and then blessings infinite and universal can flow forth without a hindrance; yea, the whole scene shall exult in blessing under the righteous sceptre of the King of kings.

Thus does this wonderful Psalm introduce us to not only the ground of blessing, viz.: the forsaking and the wrath-drinking of Christ upon the cross; but it also spreads before us the whole scene of future millennial blessing and glory, the precious fruit of that cross endured by Him. Then, not only shall the heavens adore and worship Him, but every thing beneath the sun shall bow down before Him, and own Him Lord of all.

O, Lord Jesus Christ, thou once rejected, but now enthroned One, thou art worthy, thou art worthy of all!

“Hark! the sound of Jubilee
 Loud as mighty thunders roar,
 Or the fulness of the sea
 When it breaks upon the shore!
 Hallelujah for the Lord
 God omnipotent shall reign:
 Hallelujah! let the word
 Echo round the earth and main.” E. A.

ON THE WAY.

I'm weary; for the wilderness
 Is ev'ry ling'ring hour more dreary,
 And but distress.

Oft weeping, as I pass the night,
 My wakeful, eager watch still keeping,
 As child of light.

Yet, singing, 'mid the troubled waste,
 Each moment but the nearer bringing
 Those feet that haste.

His staying in the heavens above,
 Although, at times, it seems delaying—
 I know is love,

And reckon all, for Him, as dross,
And, for th' eternal joys that beckon,
Bear, now, the cross.

There's nothing, for one born of God,
But—in this bitter scene of loathing—
The path He trod.

His gracious words, alone, are balm ;
Himself, the Lord, above all precious,
Assureth calm.

And nearer as I draw toward home,
The wondrous things of Christ grow dearer
That are to come.

And steady holds the gaze that way
Whence comes the gleam, which, now already,
Foretells the day.

So watching, it may be the case,
The next thing that the eye'll be catching,
Shall be His face!

Oh vision! burden of each sigh,
The heart, for Thee, 'midst all derision,
Sends forth its cry.

Oh glory, of unmixed delight!
Oh Christ! the sum of all God's story,
Dawn on my sight!

Ah, surely, then, shall all be set
In clearest light, that shone obscurely;
All longings met.

Forever, will forgotten be
All pain, and Satan's deep endeavor ;
When once with Thee.

Enchanting, all, to heart and eye,
Rebuking fears, and nothing wanting
Eternally!

Thus strengthened richly, I press on,
Whether the way be short or lengthened ;
Nor feel alone ;

Well knowing I am called to share,
Th' inheritance He has been showing,
With Christ up there ;

And wonder that it e'er seemed long,
And is not, with such prospects yonder,
Filled up with song.

OCCASIONAL NOTES ON JOHN.

Chapters i.-iii. 16.

Every one must see as we open this precious book, that we are introduced to glories of a very special character. It is the presentation of the same Person as in the other "Gospels," but preserving the lofty characteristics of its own special line of truth concerning Him. (xx. 31.) It seems to be a store-house of the fullest and deepest things that we have learned, and has its own vocabulary of terms and phrases, the most profound.

The opening verses (i. 1-18) introduce the subject of the book, in a way reaching out beyond all our highest thought. Who are we, that we should be told such things? We are taken back to "the beginning," when the Everlasting Word was with God, Himself God.

And then what He is, the varied essential characteristics of His person, are told. He is Life, Light, the Word, for this must be made manifest that, if God has need to be revealed, there shall be One set forth, able to do it worthily.

He is the origin of all things, the Maker of every creature whether in heaven or earth; and without Him, as being of and for Him, was not any thing made. Could man have written that, concerning Him, who was down here, with not a place to lay His head, that He had formed all being and all things?

In Matthew and Luke, there is given a genealogy of our Lord, according to the purpose of each book. In Mark, none, as we do not seek the genealogy of a servant, but that he do his work faithfully. But in John, we go back, before all things, and HE WAS.

And not only these things, but relative things, are told. Somebody else is thought of; He was the Light, for others, for us. In Him was life, and the life was the light of *men*, and the light *shineth* in darkness. It was suited to man. He is the only light; man has none in himself. God did not make him to have it in himself, but to have it from Him. But "the darkness comprehended it not." Man's deepest need is considered according to God, and His resources are drawn upon; Himself comes forth to man; but man receives not from Him.

Then we are told (v. 6) that adequate pains were taken

to get man's attention; one, a man, was sent from God to announce Him, to bear witness of the Light, that all men might believe. Infinite mercy and love! Thus the great thing, is man's blessing. It opens and closes the book "that ye might believe, and believing might have life in His name." (i. 7, xx. 31.)

And that to which he bore witness was the true Light that addresses itself to all, that "lighteth every man that cometh into the world," as we say the sun lights every body, though there may be hundreds of blind men that never have seen it, nor the light. This is seen in chap. ix.

"He was in the world, and the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not"—a summary of the result as set forth in *Luke*, where Christ is seen as Son of Man, going out to the whole world; as the next sentence, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not," gives the verdict in regard to the Jews, as shown in *Matthew*. This closes up man's account, and man's mouth. This gospel starts upon that, all is decided. Man is a ruin, and needs every thing.

Then grace supplies, and according to itself, as flowing out unhindered, giving standing, dignity, glory. "As many as received *Him*, to them gave He power (title) to become children of God." This is the peculiarity of the blessing. It brings into relationship, as members of His family. It is "children," now—if having to do with Him at all; nothing less near, or dear. And it was a new nature in those that received. They "were *born*—not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

And how did He come to man? "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." And here, He was Himself, though veiled in flesh, "full of grace and truth," and this was His glory and the distinctive glory of the Father, He being the only begotten, and in the bosom of the Father, and like Him. And this glory, unknown then, was recorded as "beheld," when the veil was taken away, and the "Spirit of truth" was given to the disciples.

And then we find that Judaism is set aside, for there was the law which came by Moses. But it could never give *life*, though it promised it on obedience, thus putting it out of the question. But He gave it, for "truth" disclosing all that was in man, "grace" meets all, and

grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. "And of His fulness have we all received, and grace upon grace." So He declared the Father, for in all that had gone before, no man had seen God. It needed to be told that He loved, and here it was disclosed in the deepest ways.

These are some of the things of these introductory words, giving a glance into the subject of the whole book as to its doctrine.

The remainder of this chapter and down to near the end of the second chapter is introductory in another sense, and then in the third chapter man's need is definitely taken up and met, not by his acting or being told to "come," but by the whole matter being *brought to him and given*.

Verses 19-34, give the testimony of John, a testimony from one whose heart and eye are wholly occupied with the glory of the Son of God, and who, first (19-25), in answer to the Pharisees, has simply to say he is not the Christ, but only a "voice," who does not speak of Him now as Messiah to them, but only of Him relatively, as in deep abasement he confesses he is not worthy even to unloose His shoe latchet.

Then (29-34) to his disciples, he tells who He is, the Lamb of God, who is preferred before him, for He was before him. As Lamb of God, His work extends to the world, He "takes away the *sin* of the world," giving a ground on which God can justify him who believeth in Jesus, from all things now, and which, in the new heavens and new earth, will be fully accomplished; for therein dwelleth righteousness.

He it is that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost, that which followed His death and ascension to heaven. If so, then John's ministry in "the way of righteousness" is over.

Accordingly, in 35-42, we have his disciples turned over to Him who is the Son of God. And this marks the first day of our Lord, as the beginning of a series, ending with the "third day" of chap. ii. Here is a precious picture of the present time, in which believers gathered to Him, who is the Lamb of God, as having suffered, they who first trust in Christ (Ephes. i. 12), have first to do with Him, are with Him apart from view, hidden, but dwelling with Him through the night which follows the day. It is Christ and the Church, the great mystery. It is well

to notice as specially of this section, the interpreting of the Hebrew words into the language of the Gentiles, as indicating the wide Gentile character of that time, which had to do with the gathering of the Church.

The "day following" (43-51) takes us beyond the day of Christianity, to the day of "the remnant" in Israel, a people gathered out to wait for the day of His coming to reign over them, and in the confession of Nathaniel we have the double glories in which they shall know Him, according to Ps. ii., as Son of God and king of Israel, in that day when they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced, and who was rejected as both of these before the high priest, and before Pilate.

Chap. ii. "The third day" He manifested forth His glory. It is resurrection joy, and a marriage, Israel's restoration and millennial gladness. Marriage is a frequent figure in the prophets, as expressive of this. (Jer. iii. 14; Hosea ii. 14-16, 19, 20). "It shall be in that day saith the Lord that thou shalt call me Ishi (my husband) and I will betroth thee unto me forever," &c.

It was the bridegroom's place to provide the wine which He does here. And He does it by having the empty pots filled with water, emblem of purification, first. For Israel's iniquity is to be put away through the blood of Him they pierced, and then shall the joy be complete, as set forth in this best wine which comes at the end, that "which cheereth God and man." (Judges ix. 13.) That which is established in Him, and which shall be manifested at His coming, is alone that which can please God or really gladden man. Every feature of this beginning of miracles is beautifully exact to the spirit and intent of the prophecies concerning that day."

Another thing connected with the same time is found in v. 13, cleansing the temple, which is His prerogative as the risen One. And then He said, "Destroy this temple and in three days will I raise it up," meaning His body.

If the Jew with all his pre-eminent advantages, and all his active religiousness, is thus wanting in himself, shown in the wine being out at his feast; or so thoroughly lost to all that belongs to God, as shown in making His house a house of merchandise, is there not a complete exposure of man made by the presence of Him who is

the truth? But there is still another element in this exposure. It might be said, did not many believe on Him at Jerusalem? Yes, but it was "when they saw the miracles which He did." And is this faith? Faith does not erect a standard of its own by which to test Christ, and if He comes up to that, accept Him. This is reasoning, Faith links with Him—believes Him, because He speaks, takes Him on His own authority. Man is a poor, lost, helpless thing, and he thinks to take up things intellectually, adding to what he has, but having this accredited. But this will not do; he must be born anew.

In chapter iii. we find one of those who had seen the miracles which the Lord did, and being a master in Israel, as to the law blameless, would know something more from Jesus, taking his place as one to be *taught*. And is not that amiable, and in a certain way humble? But is it an acknowledgment of the truth? Does "the old man," want *teaching* to make him what he ought to be, or is there need to be *another man altogether*?

So Christ meets him at once: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." There is, doubtless, some measure of faith in Nicodemus, as shown in coming to Jesus at all. And he was told promptly, that all that he was, and all that he had done, was nothing to the purpose, it but making the best of Adam. Is that the man that goes to heaven? Or is this man that has been tried by all methods and been found utterly wanting, to be the ground on which "the kingdom" is to be established here, "the earthly thing?" To take him, would be to go over all the sad history again, to come to the same end. But man has already been proved.

Nor is it man with a new chance, or new principles, or new motives and feelings; but a new creation, a new man formed. The question of Nicodemus looked to this, should he go back and be a child over again? But still he would be a child of Adam, the natural man that which is of the flesh.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "Water" is used for cleansing, and is used as the symbol of the Word of God. (See Ps. cxix. 9; Jno. xv. 3; Ephes. v. 26. Compare also Jno. i. 13; 1 Pet. i. 23, and also, Ezek. xxxvi. 25; Zech. xii. 1

for the earthly things.) It is the Spirit in connection with the Word, not any thing springing from ourselves, not something of man's application, but which God alone sends by the Spirit. He imparts the new life. We can know the effect, as the blowing of the wind comes to us, but the thing itself is from God.

"How can these things be?" is still the difficulty. And the answer is called out, in its completeness. It is true of the earthly kingdom, which God will establish, in iniquity thoroughly purged through death and resurrection, and a people so made anew that they shall not depart any more from Him; and surely so in the heavenly things. As to this, *no man hath ascended into heaven.* The first man was not made for heaven. What man goes there then? He that comes down from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven. It is another man, the heavenly man, through whom this life comes.

But how? When Israel were bitten by the serpents, ensuring death to all, their thought was to have the cause removed, the serpents taken away. But would that have healed them? A new serpent, one of brass, expressive to us of the judgment of God, must be lifted up. And that brought life to them, while the *serpents still remained.* And this intimates to us that it was another life, not to be injured by the serpents, which was not true of that which they had in themselves. But they looked at the serpent of brass, as dead to the old life.

"Even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." It is God's counsel to have men in heaven; they must have life, a new life, not their own, but from the man who is in heaven. If so they must take their place as dead, and they get the new life in Him. This is the record that God hath *given* unto us *eternal life*, and this life is in His Son.

But we have the double facts of God, the "must be" in regard to Christ, as put to death, in judgment, and lifted up for our life; and the *love* which met the need. God so *loved* the world that He *gave* His only begotten Son, that "whosoever *believeth* in Him, should not perish, but *have* everlasting life." Love in God, (for God is Love) is commended toward us, in that while we were sinners Christ died for us. His love gave, we believing, *have* all.

OCCASIONAL NOTES ON JOHN.

Chapters iv.—viii.

When they came to John the Baptist and told him that Jesus baptized, and all men came to Him, he gave them to understand that this was his joy, "He must increase, but I decrease. He that cometh from above is above all." Thus he retired, He having been made manifest to Israel, who in all things must have pre-eminence. "He whom God hath sent, speaketh the word of God, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure."

Accordingly, in chapter iv., this "gift of God" is the subject. And here we see the action of the Lord upon this same report from the Pharisees, that He made and baptized more disciples than John. They fail to stir up rivalry in the heart of the *servant*, and, through his words, and the Lord's action, are made to know that His work is entirely of a different character, a heavenly ministry. He will not stay to receive honor of men, but leaves Judea, the earthly religious ground, and goes out into Galilee, the despised place.

This stranger going out to the place that most fittingly set forth His rejection, on His way finds an object the most desolate and wretched, and lost; "He must needs go through Samaria," a place whose whole history speaks of defilement and badness. He is full of grace, and declares the Father, and what, confessedly, so much needs grace as Samaria?

And He was "wearied." What could have wearied the Son of God so much as the self-sufficient religiousness of Judea that wanted nothing of Him, with whom was the fountain of life?

In the heat and dust of the world's day, this full One whom nobody wanted, sat on the well (or spring) of Jacob. The word "spring" given here and in verse 14, is in striking contrast with the word the woman uses in verse 11, where it is but a well or *cistern*, that might easily run dry, and which, to her, was "deep," already failing, and to be drawn *from*, rather than flowing and overflowing, springing up of itself. She tells out the emptiness and desolateness of her heart in this word. But fulness can meet emptiness, and richly supply it.

This spring was upon the piece of ground which Jacob gave to his *son* Joseph—type of the Risen Christ, the

Son of God. It was the portion above his brethren, secured first by purchase, and then taken by his sword and bow (Gen. xxxiii. 18, 19; xlviii. 22), while yet the Amorites held the land, a fit expression of the Holy Ghost "who is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession."

All is in character, and rich meaning, on His side. And so on the side of her who came "to draw water." Little knowing what she was to receive, she comes in the middle of the day, parched with heat, to labor for her own supply. How unlike the repose of one, who, in fellowship with God, sat in his tent door, in the heat of the day (Gen. xviii. 1; Isa. iv. 6), and could refresh others. But she shall learn this yet, and be able to sing in spirit with Isa. xlix. 10, "They shall not hunger nor thirst neither shall the heat nor sun smite them; for He that hath mercy on them, shall lead them; even by the springs of water shall he guide them." And how? By the gift of God, which He proffers.

But first he would have her know that He would be refreshed by her, "Give me to drink." Ah, she has not even the "cup of cold water" to give. There is no fellowship and she expresses it in her question, wondering at His addressing her at all. She knows the taint in nature which separates the Samaritan from the Jew; is there not something in herself that separates her from her own people and makes her come alone and at an unusual hour to draw water?

Giving is not on her side. It is not on the side of the sinner, though men sometimes speak that way, nor is asking in the power of the sinner, while the gift of God is unknown. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and (unlike her treatment of His request) He would have given thee living water." It is the Holy Ghost given by the Son of God, freely to those who know Him. But the woman has no mind for this, though interested, thinking only of her physical want.

So the conscience must be reached. He therefore probes her by the word in regard to her husband, and she is made to confess that God spoke by Him, "I perceive," comes as the first indication of light and intelligence, in this darkness; though it is not all the truth.

She attempts to escape the searching of the light by her questions, as if to lead Him away from herself; but the true Shepherd seeks till He *finds*, and He follows her devious path to take her, there.

And this leads to the third thing of the chapter, that God is seeking worshippers; and therefore it is by gift, and not by works of man. But not until the revelation of Himself is made, "I that speak to thee am He," is she ready to leave her water-pot—sign of her own want—being now perfectly supplied by Him, who, being all this, had sat by her side inviting her confidence, knowing all that she was. And worship comes from this, that we have been brought into the light, into the holiest, and have found God's own satisfaction satisfying us. For worship is telling Him of this, taking of His own and showing it unto Him.

And who can intermeddle with this, or ask any questions? The disciples challenge neither party. God, and the sinner exposed and saved, thus forever brought together, the wondrous result is the sufficient answer to, "What seekest thou?" and, "Why talkest thou with her?" Both have been refreshed, and both manifest it. Can any thing else be the ground or substance of worship?

And her testimony of having been exposed, leads the Samaritans to a hearty confession, when they saw and heard Him, of their own satisfaction, indeed worship. "He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness. He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water springs." (Ps. cvi. 9, 35.)

It is beautiful to observe that this first chapter after the introductory ones, tells out the deepest longing of God for us, that we should be worshippers

The latter part of the chapter shows us our Lord in Galilee. And there in Cana, He performs a second miracle, setting forth His present ministry as given more fully in the other "Gospels," as the former one manifested His future millennial glory. Here His word is enough.

Chapter v. Our Lord is in Jerusalem, and there is a "feast of the Jews." No longer are there "the feasts of Jehovah," but in every case throughout these following chapters, the feasts are judged, and their barrenness and failure of blessing disclosed, and God's own feast out-

side of all systems of men—the glory of, and with, His Son—is brought to notice, in contrast. Thus it is that Christ is often found at Jerusalem, the city of solemn assemblies, and at the time of these hollow mockeries. For it is peculiar that at the time of the presence of the Son of God here, there was not the slightest sign of idolatry, nor of the “high places,” but, on the contrary, all the feasts and the sabbaths kept. There were the priests and the sacrifices, and every thing which He had wanted them to have, in former years when He dwelt among them, and they would not. But though Jerusalem was the place where they gathered to worship it was man’s centre, not God’s. These religious things, were but the tokens of their rebellion.

Here the Son of God is seen in contrast with the law. The pool at Bethesda, though moved by an angel, could do nothing for the impotent man, for he could not get into it. So the law which was “by the disposition of angels,” was not kept, as Stephen charges the Jews (Acts vii. 53). It could do nothing for them, “in that it was weak through the flesh.” Holy, just and good itself, it could not heal helpless man who had no good in him, for it asked him to DO something.

But infinite grace is there according to the truth, to meet the need, and he who had lain thirty and eight years, (the time in which Israel in the wilderness had proved their own helplessness and ruin) has all done for him, in one moment, and goes forth as a conqueror, carrying the badge and symbol of his bondage and impotence—his bed. It had held him; now he holds it. “What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.” Yet the law was ordained to life, as this pool was for blessing, a token of kindness, named by them Bethesda, “the house of mercy.” That is man’s idea of mercy, helping you, if you help yourself. How blessed to take the ground of utter weakness, (without strength) thereby learning that Christ died for the *ungodly*.

But this was on the Sabbath. Now the Sabbath was the sign of their relationship to Jehovah as His people, and of their blessing. But what was it now? Yet they

were content to go on with the outside show, keeping that as though there were blessing in it. "My Father worketh hitherto and *I work*," was His story of all their Sabbaths. Their need had kept God working, rather than resting. The shadow therefore, was nothing, the substance now having come.

But they despised the offer, and for this sought to kill Him. He had truly shown whose Son He was, by entering into work with the Father, but they knew neither the Father nor the Son.

Besides, as the *Son of God* He quickened whom He would; and life, in Himself, is the real want of man. He is dead; and law, ordinances, means, angelic or otherwise, could not give life, but the Son, only. In Him was, and is, life. He that hears His word, believing on Him that sent Him, *has* everlasting life, and shall not enter into judgment, but is passed out of death into life. God has meant to have this very clear, and Christ is to be taken as He has sent Him. It is of faith, that it might be of grace.

As *Son of Man* He will judge; He has authority to execute judgment, *because* He is Son of Man. Thus does God give Him honor whom man despises. Every thing is put into His hands. His Godhead and His manhood are fully set forth here. The law left men dead, they should hear the voice of the Son of God and live. The hour is coming when they that are in their graves shall come forth at the voice of the Son of Man, at the two resurrections, of life, and unto judgment.

In the remainder of this chapter, there is given a four fold testimony to Him as Son of God, and Son of Man, so that there could be no excuse. There is the testimony of John the Baptist, in ver. 33, of His own works in ver. 36, of the Father in ver. 37, and of the Scriptures in ver. 39. And they would not come unto Him that they might have life. Tested by all these it was found that they had not the love of God in their hearts. They would receive another coming in his own name—Anti-christ. Such is man; such is religious man, seeking the honor of man and not that of God.

Chapter vi., Jesus goes out of Jerusalem over the sea of Galilee. They follow Him only because they saw the miracles, and this, which is not faith, He does not stay

with, but goes up into a mountain with His disciples. And while it is thus with the world, speculating concerning Him, and even following Him, in their fleshly wondering way, His own find their place sitting with Him, above and apart. Blessed scene of fellowship!

But while the multitude do not know Him, His heart is on them in kindness, and He feeds them, fulfilling the word concerning Him in Ps. cxxxii., and is owned as Prophet by the people. But their desire to make Him King over them as they were, showed the utter ignorance of God's mind. The kingdom must be received from God (Ps. cxxxii. 17, 18; ii. 6-9). So He goes up into the mountain alone.

From this He comes down to the poor disciples, who, without Him are tossed upon the sea. Thus will He come, having received His kingdom, to the Jewish remnant, whose souls will be melted because of trouble, among the sea of the nations (Ps. cvii. 23-31).

In the following portion of the chapter, He would lead the people away from their own thoughts of the bread which He had supplied, and of making Him King, to the deeper thing, wherein He meets their real need. They have labored for the food in coming after Him; but they must labor for that food which endures to everlasting life, and this labor is receiving Him as God sets Him forth, to do every thing for them, to be all unto them, and to us, and that by death. The real bread is Himself come down from heaven, giving life unto the world. It is His own person in incarnation first, and then, in answer to the murmurs of the Jews, in redemption—His flesh given to be eaten, His blood to be drank.

As "bread" was given to Israel in the wilderness, as the people of God, taken out of Egypt, on the ground of redemption, so is He now given. But the Jews by their murmuring show that they are on no such ground, and have to be taught anew of God. It is then that Jesus tells them of redemption, through His death. Thus instead of manna in the wilderness, they must have the Passover. They could not take Christ as God's people already: they must be made His, first, by blood. So for us, our association with Christ is not in His incarnation, but His death. And we feed upon Him, now, as His own, as having been put to death. The bread which He

gives, is His flesh, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise Him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."

And then follows *fellowship*, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him." There is an entering into His death for ourselves, knowing, if He died, we are dead henceforth. We live upon Him, the dead One as to the world; we are crucified with Him.

But this was a testing word, a hard saying; who could hear it? Surely not dull ears of flesh. But must He withhold the full truth, according to God? They had invited it all, by acknowledging Him as Prophet, by desiring to make Him King. Could they bear the light from God on this subject, involving too, as living by Him, death? But it is not all told. What if they should see Him, the Son of Man, ascend up where He was before? What wonders have we here, that the Lord Jesus should take humanity into the glory, with the Father!

The twelve drawn to Him, by such a word, and yet unable to take it all in, could only see themselves cut off from every thing else, and hang on the word, "To whom shall we go? Thou only hast the words of eternal life." Here was the test, just what He was. And they that have not life, go away, while those who stay are drawn by the Father, to Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God.

In chapter vii. another "feast of the Jews" is judged. All that they had, only rejected the Son of God, and how could He go up to their feasts? As the One amidst all the scene, faithful to God, He must stay away, for the world hated God. It could not hate those who were part of it, and flattered its religious movements.

Yet the feast of Tabernacles, as given by Jehovah, was the expression of the pure grace of God leading on to glory. Belonging distinctly to the land, on the ground of the accomplishment of all He had set His heart upon doing for them, it was peculiarly linked with the millennial glory, and was "all of God."

How little they were in the spirit of this is very apparent by the way they inquire concerning Christ, when He did go up about the middle of the feast, and teach in the

temple—"How knoweth this man letters having never learned?" It was looking only to human learning, not to *any thing* of God. The feast to have any meaning, must be wholly of God (Lev. xxiii. 40). And human ability had no place.

If they had desired to do the will of God, they would have known of the doctrine. They were looking to human resources and human exaltation. He that speaks of himself seeks his own glory, but He who seeks the glory of Him who sent Him, is true. They were professing regard for Moses, and he gave the law, but there, at the feast, they were having murder in their hearts, and that towards Him who had healed a man in love. Their judgment was altogether unrighteous, displaying their total estrangement from God. And this is further shown in their blind reasoning as to His work, and who He was.

So, in the last great day of the feast, which ought to have been the best, Jesus stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink" (ver. 37). It was a dry and thirsty land where no water was. But the Rock is provided by God, "Let him come unto *Me*." Truth and grace are manifested. The Jewish things are being blotted out, and He is to take the place of every thing. Besides, there is the power of the Holy Ghost which they should receive, who believe on Him, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Thirsting, we receive every thing from Him, and then there is the flowing forth of the power of the Spirit in blessing and refreshing to others. This brings us into resurrection ground, that which was shadowed forth in the eighth day of the feast; He being entered into heaven on the ground of redemption through death, bestows the Holy Ghost.

In chapter iii. it was the Holy Spirit giving a new nature; in chapter iv. the Holy Spirit given as the power of worship; in this chapter the Holy Spirit within us, giving rivers of living water flowing out, as the result of Christ being in the glory. It is not bringing in the glory of Judaism, not restoring the kingdom to Israel, which must bide its time, but being endued with power from on high, for which believers were yet to tarry (Acts i.).

But what a contrast is their state, tossed with questions, uncertain as to any thing that He had said, or of the

things of God. And so the chapter leaves them. Each one goes to his own house, still away from Christ, and having no fellowship with His thoughts or doings, and not coming unto Him. He therefore goes up on the mountain, an act frequent in this book, and characteristic of His place as "above all," and a stranger here.

Chapter viii. But He is ready to come down in grace. And so, early in the morning He is found in the temple teaching the people. And now, as in all these chapters, there is shown a special connection between the incident that introduces them, and the teaching that follows; so here. It has been their religious observances heretofore; now it is their apparent care for the law of Moses. But do they care for it enough to be subject to it? He lets them have the force of it upon themselves by a single word, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." No one stayed to cast it! And yet they properly quoted the law, and He did not say they should not do it.

What a gleam and glow of light was here, making manifest what they were. The law had been dulled in its edge by them, till they had become the greatest transgressors. He touches it, and its sharpness of edge is restored, and they felt it. Instead of taking Him by their guile, they were convicted in their own consciences; and—the oldest sinner first, and then according to age—went out. None felt he could take up the stone. In harmony with the subject, Christ as the *light* of the world, His answer to the woman is not that she was forgiven, but "Go, and sin no more," the sin not concealed nor covered, but recognized.

As the Light He makes manifest every thing, showing the Pharisees their ignorance in every respect. They neither knew Him nor His Father. They could receive nothing from Him, although He and the Father bore witness, He and the Father were one in all the things He said. But they had no spiritual perceptions, knew not whence He came, and whither He was going, and they could not come thither. His words throughout are with increasing plainness and solemnity. They should die in their sins, Himself and His words being rejected. All was over, they were from beneath; He from above. What a wide separation, now fully demonstrated, His

word being the test. And by this they should be judged in the last day, dying in their sins, "if ye believe not that I am He."

He was absolutely the truth, Himself. This is the meaning of His answer to their question, "who art thou?" "Altogether (or absolutely,) that which I am speaking to you." I am what I say, thoroughly, and in the principle of it. Could other lips have spoken such a word? Of none other on earth could it ever be said. The child of God may be light in the Lord, but he could not say, his word is the expression of what he is. This is Jesus, the Son of God, as the Light judging all things, the rejected One.

And this will be the more so, with every disclosure of Himself, because man is man; he is enmity to God. When they lift up the Son of Man, they shall know that Jesus is He, and that He did *nothing* of Himself, but as His Father taught Him, so He spoke these things. In rejecting Him, they declared themselves enemies of God. And He had come in grace doing always the thing that pleased the Father. Continuing in His word, is therefore to be true disciples, and knowing the truth, they should, by that, be made free indeed.

But they were "Abraham's seed and never in bondage!" Were they not servants of sin? His word is every thing, and it shows them slaves. His letting in the law upon them had demonstrated this, and they had left the house. The servant abideth not in the house forever. In the presence of Him, the Son of God, they could not stay when convicted. They were slaves, really; while the seed of Abraham, children of the devil, doing his works.

Children of Abraham, indeed? Abraham had rejoiced in His day (the day of His glory), would they? They were in nothing like him. They are convicted more and more by every word He speaks, and their answer is, taking up stones to cast at Him. He *was* God, and He must always be Himself. There was need for God to be down here, in the absolute ruin of man. If He spoke He must speak the words of God, and they received them not. If we have the truth of Christ, we know Him as God, and there is our joy and security.

Turned upon thus by their full malice, He "passed by."

THE FOUR BRIDES OF GENESIS.

The thought that Eve, Rebekah, Rachel and Asenath, are each typical of the Church as the Bride of Christ, is not new; has been dwelt upon in this periodical, and is familiar, no doubt, to most of its readers. All I desire here is simply to call attention to the oneness of the four types; *i. e.*, that although each is complete in itself, and sets forth perfectly the special aspect of the church thereby typified, yet the whole four have a connection, and only by taking the whole, do we get the complete type of what the Church is in, God's counsels.

In the way by which Adam becomes possessed of Eve, we have a beautiful type of how the Church has been begotten, *i. e.*, in death, and of the oneness His Bride has with Himself, being, indeed, "bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh." We are told of the death of Adam but not of that of Eve. The reason is obvious: Christ dies for the Church; the Church never dies, because, though bought by death, she is linked in life with the Risen One.

The name of Noah's wife is not mentioned, because he is a type of the Jewish remnant saved through (not out of) the great tribulation. Sarah is a type of the Jewish nation even as the woman of Rev. xii.

The second type; Rebekah, shows us the Church as the gift of the Father to the Son, and is brought to Him by the power of the Holy Spirit, and here, therefore, we are told of Rebekah's willingness in receiving the message, and undertaking the journey. There is not a word about Eve's willingness.

Of Rachel, the third type, we are not told whether she was willing or not; but the first thing in the meeting of Jacob with Rachel is, that he kissed her, *then* served the seven years for her. So also Christ "loved the Church and (then) gave Himself for it." There is another beautiful dissimilarity between Rachel's and Rebekah's history. Rebekah gives Eliezer to drink and waters his camels, but Jacob waters the flocks of Rachel's father. As the one who serves the object of his love, *Christ does all*. He rolled away the great stone and permitted the water of life to flow forth. But as those who are the objects of the Holy Spirit's "calling," we are the ones who

open our hearts to the husband, and by so doing, give joy to God, as so beautifully shown in the wonderful request of Christ of the poor Samaritan woman, "Give me to drink." Is it indeed true that *we* can give *Him* to drink? Ah, yes! wonderful as it is, we can refresh the soul of Him whose heart is set upon us, by simply opening our hearts to His teaching, and sitting, like Mary, at His feet.

Likewise in the fourth type, Asenath, we have nothing about her feelings nor her beauty. We are told of the beauty of Rachel and Rebekah, but nothing of the personal qualities of either Eve or Asenath. This is very striking. As the one who is the gift of the Father by the calling out of the Spirit, the Church has personal beauty; for speaking of the Father's election, we are told that "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. 4.) And Paul as a minister, a vessel of the Holy Ghost, speaks of presenting the Church "as a chaste virgin to Christ." (2 Cor. xi. 2.) In accordance with this, also, we are told that Rebekah was "a virgin, neither had known any man;" we are not told the same of any of the other three. And likewise when the Church is spoken of in the Rachel aspect it is "that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." (Eph. v. 27.)

But, as "the Church which is His body," the beauty is necessarily all of Himself. "Ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power: *in whom* also ye are circumcised . . . buried *with Him* in baptism, wherein also ye are risen *with Him*," &c. (Col. ii. 11, 12.) And likewise in the Asenath aspect, the glory is all of Himself; for it is *His* throne we shall sit on, *His* glory we shall share. "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold *my glory*, which Thou hast given me: for Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. (John xvii. 24.)

So in the four types conjunctively we have, therefore: The Church, begotten through death, linked with the Risen One and made His body; called out by the Holy Spirit from the world and all earthly ties, conducted by

the Comforter to the Lord Jesus and made His bride *by the Father's choice*; purchased by the price and service of the Lord Jesus Himself, being also the bride of *His choice*; and finally, brought to share His throne as He reigns in glory over a regenerated earth.

Ah, beloved! well indeed, may we echo, "I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

C. H. B.

THE CHRISTIAN'S PEDIGREES.

Christianity brings to light fully what a Christian is. It reveals the blessed fact that he is set in Christ in the heavenlies, the most blessed place a saint can have. The mightiest and most glorious archangel holds not such a place; he is not set in Christ, the glorified man in heaven. The archangels and angels stand and gaze at the exalted Jesus and worship at his feet, obeying His word as ministering spirits; but not one can say, "I am a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." Ah, no; that remains the blessed and exclusive portion of *sinner's saved by sovereign grace*.

But this being in Christ involves a great deal; it involves the fact that we have ceased to have a pedigree in the first or old creation, and that God, according to His own blessed purpose, has given us a new pedigree in that which Scripture speaks of as the new creation of God. If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, or more properly, a new creation. (2 Cor. v. 17.) With him old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.

Let us look a little more closely at his pedigree in the old creation, where it began, and where it closed.

Now, there were no children born of the innocent man in the garden of Eden. Not until the government of God had driven out the fallen, guilty pair, did the woman bring forth her first-born. Let our eyes alight upon that guilty pair, clothed with coats of skins (to cover their nakedness, a badge of their shame), driven by the hand of God's government from Paradise; and as we gaze upon them, let us learn and deeply feel the solemn fact, that it was at that time our *pedigree in the first creation*,

commenced. Oh! how crushing is this fact to all the vainglory of this present evil age. It compels a blush of shame to come over the face of the whole. Oh, vain world, behold thy origin! Wherefore boastest thou? Thou art but the posterity of a guilty, outcast, skin-clad pair. Let thy glorying cease forever. Be you kings, dukes, lords, squires, servants or beggars, you are but descendants of the fallen Adam.

This, then, was the starting-point in the old Adam creation. Now, from that moment up to the Cross of Christ, what a scene is displayed before our eyes: a scene the most revolting and contrary to God; a scene as morally dark as the darkness in Egypt, when it could be felt. The cross was that eventful scene which closed up the existence of the first creation, morally, before God, and which was that which closed the pedigree of the Christian in that same creation. He died out of it in the death of Christ. It is of the greatest importance that every Christian should know, not only the career of the first Adam creation, where it commenced and where it ended, but that he does not belong to it; that he has actually died out of it before God, that he no longer exists in that state of things; but that "he was crucified with Christ; nevertheless, he lives;" but with a new life, the life of Another, that of a risen Christ.

Christ having accomplished redemption, vanquished Satan, and glorified God about sin, rises again. But as what? The glorious Head of the new creation of God.

"And with Him all the ransomed seed,
To reign in endless day."

The opened grave, and a risen, ascended, glorified Christ, is the commencement of the Christian's pedigree in the new creation, and this according to God's blessed purpose of grace and love. And when shall it cease? It is as eternal as God! The rolling ages of eternity shall display this new creation whereof we speak, in all the perfection, brightness and glory of Christ Himself. All things, there, are of God. Every thing, there, is suited to his nature, character and glory.

If, as we look at what we were, in the old creation, we can only blush; we can, as we think of what we are in the new, through rich mercy and great love, rejoice with a

great and exceeding joy, and while we have nothing to glory in as touching what we were in the flesh, we can, as those dead and risen with Christ, glory in Him as our Head, and all in all.

E. A.

“JUDGE NOT THAT YE BE NOT JUDGED.”

Matt. vii. 1.

These words are often employed to hinder a sound judgment as to the plain paths of right and wrong. If a person is walking in that which I know by the word of God to be *wrong*, I must judge that he is walking wrong, or give up my judgment of right and wrong. I may trust that he may be misled, or that difficulties and temptations may have overcome him, and consider myself, lest I also be tempted—think the best I can of him—but I cannot put evil for good, and good for evil. There can be no right motive to do what is wrong—to do what is contrary to God's will. There may be ignorance, want of light in the conscience, and I may and ought to take all this into account, but I cannot say that the person is not doing wrong.

Woe be to me, if for any personal consideration, I enfeeble my own sense that a wrong path *is* a wrong one. The saint must be very careful not to allow any sophistry to modify any submission of heart and conscience to God's judgment of good and evil. As regards the Church of God, the Scriptures plainly declare we are to judge “them that are within; them that are without, God judgeth.”

There is the imputation of motives to persons, or habit of forming an opinion on other's conduct, which is an evil habit. This is what the Lord guards us against in Matt. vii. 1. But the duty of not allowing evil in the house of God—it is positively commanded to us not to allow it.

Again, many apply this to judge whether people are Christians. But this is founded on a fundamental mistake. It is assumed that people are supposed to be Christians unless proved to the contrary. If the faith of the soul be a personal thing and I value Christ, this cannot be. I am not called upon to be volunteering to pass judgment on the point, whether such and such an

one is a Christian; *the person who blames me for saying such an one is a Christian, is judging that he is a Christian of course, which is quite false.* The apostle says, "the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, *then were all dead.*" Believing, then, it is a joy to believe that any one has passed from death unto life. That is not a judgment, through the rejoicing of the heart, that faith in that person has brought him into the blessed place of the child of God. It is a most horrible principle that we cannot know who are God's children, Christ's disciples. *It destroys all godly affections.* If the children of a family were told that they could not know, and ought not to judge who are their brothers and sisters, what would become of family affection? The Lord has said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." How can this be if I do not know who are disciples, and towards whom their love is to be exercised? we must know each other as children of God to "love as brethren." He who objects to judging that such and such are God's children, objects to the love of the brethren. He is rejecting the spiritual affections on which the Lord and Scripture so much insist.

There is a wrong spirit of judgment. If I occupy myself needlessly in thinking of others, and expressing an opinion of them. If in questionable cases I ascribe, even in my mind, wrong motives—nay, if I do not hope in such cases that a right motive is at the bottom, I am in the spirit of judgment, and away from God. If severity of judgment with a person when I am bound to judge he is faulty, possesses my soul—this is not the Spirit of God. But to weaken the plain, unequivocal, and avowed estimate of right and wrong, under pretence of not judging—to deny the knowledge of one another and mutual love amongst the saints, under pretence that we have not a right to judge, is of the enemy, and a mere cover to a man's conscience, to avoid the conscious pressure of that judgment on himself. If saints maintain a divine standard of right and wrong, I must judge them who do wrong to be doing so. I am not always called to occupy myself about them—then, if unhindered, the spirit of judgment comes in—but if I am, I must judge according to the word of God. If I am to love the dis-

ciples of Jesus, the saints of God, "the brotherhood" (1 Pet. ii.), I must know who they are. If there is a disposition to mistrust or to impute motives, then the spirit of judgment is at work, which is not the Spirit of God.—*Extract.*

THE WILDERNESS.

Read Heb. iv. 7, to the end.

We find here, not the Lord Jesus primarily, but a very solemn warning to those to whom the epistle speaks. The question is raised about His people down here; pointed to by Israel as they journeyed through the wilderness; whose difficulties, on the one hand, brought to light their want of faith and power, because the flesh was not judged, and on the other, the correction of the Lord, because they were found practically connected with Satan and not with Himself. Then there is a turn, (ver. 12,) and the soul is cast into heavenly association with Christ, who is there analyzing every thought of the heart, saying, "I will not let a single *thought* pass." (See verses 12, 13.)

The question with regard to Israel was about the unity of the kingdom that *God* had taken up. He went down and took up a nation of slaves, and said, "These are my people." He prepared a tabernacle, and was to be among them. The question at issue was of unity with God's work. It was no wonder when God said, "I am King," that in effect He said also, I will settle all these questions. I will show who I am. I will show Pharaoh who is King of Israel—who this Jehovah is whom he does not know." And He lets Pharaoh go on to show out all the power of Satan. *He* brings the people, and they come out with a high hand. But the sea is in the way, and stops them. Well, *whose* are they? He will now see whether the people know where their centre is, and whether their hearts could really answer Pihahiroth (i.e., the opening of liberty) to all the difficulties. Then He traces their path—the water opens—a wall on either side for them. Israel goes down into the bottom of the sea, and their enemies pursue after them. The waters that stood on either side for Israel came together irresistibly upon Egypt, and Egypt is destroyed. But God and Israel are on the other side.

God, and God *alone*, was able to bring them through. He could have taken them into the land in a few days. But how many *years* did it take them to get to Canaan? Very many. But in the long wilderness path they learned to have to do with *God alone*. He would have the question put home to the people, whether they were the people of the living God—whether they had any spring in themselves, or whether all was flowing from Him. There was *no* spring in one of them. There might be a fulness of blessing into which God led Israel in the land of Canaan; but, as far as they were concerned, they were to *prove* there was not an Israelite that got one single drop of water as flowing from himself: God, and God alone, was able to supply them. *He* takes them through the wilderness.

It was the place of blessing for them: and it was the wisest place; because He could there make them all feel, not only that God could people Canaan, but that He was occupying Himself individually with them. And hence, they must have done with circumstances, and be satisfied with God, and nothing but *God*.

God took them up, and revealed to them certain types and *shadows* in connection with what He was doing for them, and what they were—the whole *substance* of which has been accomplished now. Responsibility in connection with the substance may have been put into man's hand, and man *failed* in it; still, God began with the truth that Christ is risen and set down at God's right hand. Responsibility thus came in, that every thing to be done on earth should be done in the light of the tabernacle which *God* had pitched.

The question which began on the day of Pentecost, and has continued through the 1800 years since, and in this our day cannot be evaded, and cannot be limited so as to shut out the bearing of it on individuals, is a question of real *unity* with the thing that God has wrought—a question of vital and also practical fellowship with Him.

From the moment the Glory of God has been shown to me, until I see His face in glory, the question is still of practical fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ—a fellowship growing out of vital union with Him who is alive from the dead. This question I cannot evade in

any one thing, circumstance, or action! *All must* have reference to that practical *unity*.

Having settled the whole question about the clearing of His people from all that was against them—their acceptance before God, and the character of that acceptance, He settles we are all to be in the wilderness. Christ is, in patience, sitting at the right hand of God; but you and I are in the wilderness.

But because we are enabled to say that the judgment of all sin is behind us, and enabled to see that we are dead *with* Christ, have we nothing to do practically with dying daily? You are *not taken* out of your body: the law of sin is in your members. The question is, How far are we, practically, through faith, able to *live* as those that have died and are risen? How far can we be vessels of this individually? The grace of Christ has extended to us just where we were. Are we, then, vessels in whom the power of faith has made good *all* the blessings in Christ Jesus—vessels in whom He can work with this practical conformity to *His* life, death, and resurrection, in this wilderness? If *His life* had not been brought in, there never could have been this question; it never could have taken this shape. But in the wilderness, where we are, it is realized.

When the last dispensation has been brought in, and, spite of blessing, it has been *proved* that man can hold nothing, but is like melted gold poured into a vessel unfit to hold it, the precious weight of the metal smashing it into shivers; when it has been proved that man has *entirely failed*, the world got its power, and Satan the direction of things here below, all our rest, all our repose must be found in the simple recognition of the entire failure of man and the unfailingness of God.

But why has the wilderness this power over the Christian?

We have got Satan behind, as to judgment, it is clear. But then what a long experience has he had of the heart of man! How skilled he is in seeing the suitability of the things he has set up! He has seen what man's heart was beguiled by—how skilled he is in using all that!

But what is the secret of his power with regard to us? What leaves us exposed to feel all the weariness of the

wilderness—one foot dragging behind the other, scarcely able to drag up our ankles after us? The secret is just what came out with Israel. It had to learn itself in the wilderness, and we have to learn ourselves there. But what gives freshness to the heart in the recognition of all failure? The heart having *individually* to do with Christ, what comes out here is, the heart having to do with Christ, who can read to us individually what is in us, and be the applicer to us individually of the remedy? What is to enable the saint to have *in the wilderness* a fresh heart and never to be puzzled? Verses 12 and 13 of this chapter give the answer. The practical experience of the truth presented may differ very much; for it must be different in those who, instead of learning by failure—by following their own hearts in their walk through the wilderness, follow this and that vanity because their hearts are *not* connected with God—and those who turn to Jesus and follow Him always! Peter's experience was different from Paul's, Abraham's from Jacob's. But Abraham had far less knowledge of *self* than Jacob. Abraham took God's word for it and went on *with Him*. He trusted God and had clean done with himself. Jacob had to realize the force of these two verses. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." But if He knows every thing in me, and knows it by contrast to what He, the perfect Son of man is, I do not *want* to hide my face as to the evil in me. I do not *need* to get a bit of Peter's ways or a bit of Jacob's ways coming out from me.

Christ suffered as my Substitute once, and received at the hand of God the whole judgment due to me. That Christ who has blessed me is the Person with whom I have got to do, and a part of whose glory is set forth in these verses. The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any *two-edged* sword. The Son of man with His sword in His mouth, as presented to us in the Revelation, is the Person with whom you and I

have to do. I do not *want* to know myself as Jacob did. I do not want to detect a bit of Peter in myself. If I put myself in His hand and read all down what He knows of me—knows of me as I am in contrast with Himself—I hide my face *in Him*, for He knows it all.

Have we then cultivated thoughts, not about ourselves, but about acquaintance with the heart-searching Son of man in heaven, who sees right down to the very bottom—the very thoughts and intents of your soul, and who sees and divides between them? Has your soul been before Him that He may discover the first buddings of everything—that He may put His hand in and stop them? Some deceive themselves by the *intentions* of their own hearts; others by their *thoughts*. His eye goes right down and discovers all. How far in my soul; (not for a sinner, for His priesthood has not to do with such;) but how far does He find in *us* that we are vessels, in whom the Spirit of God abiding, there is this power of His death through the knowledge of His resurrection? His eye comes right down. He is never deceived. That is the first element to my own soul of having a fresh heart in the midst of apostacy in the wilderness. If there were a corner in my heart—the least corner—that Christ had not searched and probed—if there were the least atom undetected by Him, I am undone. I could have *no* peace. Would I like to hide *any* thing from Christ? If it is Christ I have got to deal with, would I like to blind Christ? *No! I would not!* In desperate illness to *blind* a physician would be death! I cannot *afford* to blind Christ to my state, if I *could* do so. Would I not like Him to know every thing—every intention, every thought in me, down to the bottom, that He, who alone can, may bring in the remedy?

In my practical walk through the wilderness, I would rather have Christ searching out my weakness—pointing out what has to be corrected—than friends praising me for what is not praiseworthy before God! Who am I; that He should search me out, and give me to know where the springs of God should flow into me—should give me to see just where there is any thing that chokes the inflowing? Who are *we*, that God should deal with us after such sort? God wants there to be more fresh-

ness in us. You cannot have it if you do not understand, not merely that man has utterly failed in the responsibility that has been put into his hands, but that as Christ looks at us, individually, he says, I cannot put any confidence *here*. It may be very fair before man, but will not do for God—as a *seeming* fair parchment—but all shriveled when you want to use it. We must have *done* with self.

Just see practically the difference of a soul that is in that state before Christ, and knows that the Christ, who has apprehended it for the glory, has marked every thing for us in connection with that glory: it will never stand for a moment questioning the sufficiency of *His* work. Mark, too, the *effect* upon a soul that has thus individually to do with Christ. *It* is on earth—Christ is in heaven. True, but it has got to do with Him who is the antagonist of Satan, and so get practically under another power.

Christ is above, reading every thing for you; in every thing He lets all the affections of His heart flow out upon you in the difficulties of the place where you are—and we do not *give* up, for we have a great High Priest, passed into heaven, touched with the feeling of our infirmities!

But what is the real cause of the little going forward in unearthliness? Why has there been any turning back? Why has there not been a *going on* in that holy, perfect Nazariteship? Why am I practically less heavenly than I was? I believe the answer to be this: The heart not abiding in the light of the *searching eye of Christ in heaven*; making its experience down here, instead of reading the whole volume in the light of Christ: being *before God* in every thing. There is no power of blessing but what begins with Christ, and goes on with Christ.

G. of T.

FRAGMENTS.

Satan is always defeated. He is the willing instrument of destroying the flesh; but that destruction is the saving of the spirit (Cor. v. 25).

He most gladly receives one that is delivered over to him; but all that ends in such an one learning not to blaspheme (1 Tim. i. 20).

1 SAMUEL.

Chapter xv.

The last verses of chapter xiv. give the connected history of the reign of Saul to its close. "There was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul; and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him." But he never subdued the enemy for which God had raised him up, and we have seen how slow he was to face them at all. Having nothing of God from the beginning, he never learned any thing of His mind, nor accomplished any thing for His glory. He was only king of the Hebrew nation as Agag was king of the Amalekites, a king among kings, a man among men. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh, and so it remains to the end. Saul learns nothing, gets no better, acts out only himself.

Chapter xv. And now God gives him occasion to show what he is, that He may cast him off. He sends him to smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that belonged to him. Amalek was an old enemy of God and Israel, and Jehovah had declared that He would have war with Amalek from generation to generation (Ex. xvi. 14-16). And it was committed to Israel as a specific charge, that they should blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven (Deut. xxv. 19). In Numb. xxiv. 21 it is said he shall perish for ever.

Saul had been anointed by the command of God, to be king over Israel; therefore it was his business to take up this quarrel and utterly destroy this old enemy. Jehovah speaks of remembering what was done to Israel by this enemy, and if Saul had a heart for Jehovah and Israel, he would remember too, as told him. Taking him on this ground, the command given, as expressing the mind of Jehovah, is, "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy *all* that they have, and *spare not*; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." These are very simple and clear directions. They needed but an obedient spirit to carry them out. But where is there any obedience, till there is an utterly broken will?

Obedience is not doing what God says, as far as we like it, or what falls within the line of our own judgment. It was, doubtless, an easy thing for Saul to go against

the Amalekites, as far as his own disposition was concerned, and so we learn that he gathered his army, and came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley. His army was two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah, and the Amalekites, were defeated. God had sent him to do this, but more than this; and his doing it was in just such a way as to leave out precisely what God proposed. It was not in His way and was therefore rebellion, while seeming obedience.

And there is need of looking into this matter, among those who are God's professed people now. The flesh can do many a religious thing, show much zeal, observe many a duty and be very boastful of its activities, things too, in many cases which ought to be done. And if it be proposed to look into them, the question is asked, "But is it not right to do this, does not the bible tell us thus and so?" Yes, but if we are going to do *what* the word of God says, we must do it *as* it says. It is not obedience to take up God's things in our way. In whatever it lacks being exactly what He has said, it shows our own will. The little point of divergence is the very test of the whole state of Saul, and of us.

"But Saul and the people saved Agag and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings and the lambs, and all that was *good*, and *would not* utterly destroy them; but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly." Had not God seen these that were "good," and "the vile and refuse?" It is a total ignoring of God in the case. How our hearts are disclosed in these reservations! It is to be feared that many of us live at a distance from God, lest fellowship with Him might involve the cutting off of some of the things that we esteem "good," and not to be spared. Nothing is "good," that God does not want.

"Then came the word of Jehovah unto Samuel saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments." This is Jehovah's verdict upon that in which Saul boasted. "And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto Jehovah all night." He could not remedy it, but he could take sides with God and enter into His grief. This is precious, and quite in keeping with his promise to pray for Israel, when they would

have a king. Whether it be their wilfulness, or the obduracy and rebellion of their king, he enters into God's mind over the moral ruin indicated, and the judgment that is threatened.

So, the Apostle of the Church, at the appearance of evil, in slipping away from the Head, among the Colossians, speaks of filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, for the church, which is His body.

And here alone is the ground on which we can properly judge any thing evil, by first grieving over it before the Lord; otherwise we shall act in the flesh. Samuel rose early to meet Saul. Sad as was his message, he is Jehovah's servant, and he goes at it at once.

And Saul is found at Gilgal! What did he know of its meaning? It is putting on a semblance of piety. Accordingly, his first greeting of Samuel is, "Blessed be thou of Jehovah; I have performed the commandment of Jehovah." And how many of us may take this to heart, as to stupidity of conscience in regard to God's mind. There was a gathering of forces, a great stir, a battle, and an alertness in doing this, but there was not obedience. There can be none without a heart for God, without living in His presence. Nothing was done, and yet this is the account of it.

Well may we hide our heads, with grief, over the reports of the religious doings of this day, in view of this testing scene, so fruitful in admonition.

"And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? And Saul said they have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice to Jehovah, thy God; and the rest have we utterly destroyed. He answers as though it were all right, and he expected commendation. What a glossing of the matter this was, about saving the best for sacrifices to God! As if He would take that which was the fruit of disobedience! And, then, "the people" did it! And was he not to control the people, and not they him? It is one of the devices of Satan to make man very devout in connection with his rebellion. He turns away from God solely for God's sake, he disobeys his word to serve Him. What

an excuse! And then, it is because of others, *their* opinion, their leading.

And yet we are but reading a familiar tale of our own condition, if the ear be not open to the word of God.

"Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what *Jehovah hath said* to me this night, and he said, Say on." Evidently he was expecting praise and a reward. "And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and Jehovah anointed thee king over Israel. And Jehovah sent thee on a journey and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners of the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of Jehovah, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of Jehovah? And Saul said, Yea, I have obeyed." Of course there could be no perception of the truth. It is utter wilfulness and self-delusion. And the end of that mystery of iniquity which is *now* working (2 Thess. ii.) is, to be given up to a strong delusion, to believe a lie. *Man's religion* will be his ruin.

"And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, *to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams*. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft." And *he* had put away all witchcraft in his zeal. Here he is classed with those who practised it.

But what a thorough letting in of light there is here for us, and well may we ponder it. But still more sharply does Samuel characterize his failure, "And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." He is not taking up a case of weakness, or a man being overtaken by a fault, through lust, what we speak of generally as sins of the flesh, and defilement; but of the will purposely against God, making "iniquity," "rebellion" and "stubbornness." These mark the full apostacy of the last days, and are now active, bringing on that, God can bear with weakness and failure and imperfection; He can meet defilement with cleansing; but presumption and wilfulness are a purpose of heart and mind in opposition to Him, oftentimes shielded by an appearance of great piety, and attention to ritual and law and services.

And for these there is no remedy. Their end is, to be rejected by God, to be "cut off." "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." (Heb. x. 26.)

Saul had tried to dissipate the responsibility of this disobedience, by dividing it with "the people." But Samuel answers, "Because *thou* hast rejected the word of Jehovah, He hath also rejected thee from being king." It is always a most blessed relief to the heart, to find that, however unfaithful man may be, or however forgetful of God's word, *He* always abides by it, with wonderful jealousy; He will not give up a syllable of it. It is a comfort, too, to us, when we are judged by it and broken, to see this, in regard to His dealings with ourselves.

The world, ecclesiastically and politically, is fast ripening for the full development of man's king, the lawless one, of whom Saul is a type, who will be cut off, in the hour of his most sacrilegious and high-handed rebellion, God standing to every word He has spoken, with reference to Israel, the Church, and the world. He will make thorough work of it, and bring forth to the light every jot and tittle of His word. Saul had thought to oppose the righteous and divine character of it, by seeming to obey it; as it is *now* handled deceitfully, while boasted in, as possessed; but God saw, and rejected him, as he had rejected the word.

"And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned." But it was not till he had been told that he was rejected, nor was it a real justifying of God in the matter, but only seeing the consequences on himself, and a desire to be honored before the people. And how little he really repented, is seen by his haste to "worship Jehovah." Can God be mocked? It is shoving off with haste, all sense of distance from God, and trying to cover up the iniquity; making God a party to it besides. It is wholesome for us to know, when we have sinned, that it has broken communion with God, and if we truly judge ourselves according to His light, we shall let Him restore the soul to fellowship, truly. He is earnest and quick to do it, but it is His prerogative, and must be done righteously.

There is a looseness, oftentimes, in this matter, and so in regard to restoration to fellowship with the assembly.

If sin is not thoroughly judged, there will be an anxiety to be restored to preserve our own honor and name, or for our own sake, in some way. But if we really judge evil in ourselves, we shall be so broken, that we shall be occupied with the Lord's honor rather than ours. While none should be held back from fellowship for any legal or personal reason; there should be a wise discernment of what is due to the Lord, in every case. The name of the Lord is in question, in this day; the whole testimony turns upon that.

But Saul wanted to be honored before the people, the very ones that he charges with complicity with him in sparing Agag, and the spoil. There is no conscience in the case.

"And as Samuel turned about to go away, he (Saul) laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. And Samuel said unto him, Jehovah hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine that is better than thou." God sees no repentance in Saul's words, and *He* repents not, "Also the strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for He is not a man that He should repent." How gracious in such an hour! He is thinking of poor Israel with this man of their choice, ruined, and allied in sin with him. But He will take up their case, ridding them of Saul, and establishing His purpose of grace in glory in the "neighbor" who will perform all His will. "Samuel turned again after Saul, and Saul worshipped Jehovah." But it was to no purpose, Samuel has to put Agag to death, taking up the honor of Jehovah now, for Saul was judged, and could do nothing, could not be used for God.

All is over with Saul, as to God; and Samuel, being with God, separates entirely from him, coming no more to see him as long as he lived. "Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and Jehovah repented that He had made Saul king over Israel. Henceforth the history turns to the "neighbor," David, the man after God's own heart. It is Christ, in type, upon the casting down of Antichrist. Saul is mentioned only in connection with David, really in opposition and hatred to him.

May we, with simple heart, learning both the origin and the end of man's king, heed the lesson, by departing from all iniquity.

OCCASIONAL NOTES ON JOHN.

Chapters ix.-xii.

Chap. ix. It is still Christ rejected, here in His *work*, as in the former chapter, in His *word*.

In thorough hatred of Him "they took up stones to cast at Him, but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple (their house is left desolate), going through the midst of them, and so passed by." What a telling out of every thing, in a few words; the physical inability to see Him, but expressive of the deeper spiritual blindness and insensibility of heart, that did not know Him, as He went through the midst of them. "And He passed by." It is a sad record. Grace, scorned, must leave for other objects. And soon an object is found.

"As He passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth." It is a picture of man, not merely guilty, as in the last chapter, and there not condemned; but blind from his birth—lost—and thus sought out by grace, for the blind man solicited nothing of healing. Instead of the man looking to Christ, it is Christ looking on him. Indeed this is a very noted thing in John.

But, first, man's legal thoughts of this blindness must be disposed of. Did he or his parents sin, that he was born blind? It were easy to say, he or they deserved it all. But grace sees it only as the occasion for the display of itself, to "work the works of God." Not to judge but to *save*, had He come, and to give His life a ransom. "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day." None but God could make one see, that was born blind. It was wholly outside of man's resources. Thus we have the Son working, and the Father sending. They are one in grace towards man. And now while He was present it was "day." It is no question of man's deserts, but of doing that for which He is sent. The whole matter of the world's condition was settled before He came. It was a ruin, and therefore came He forth. Power to see, is to be given to one who was wholly incapable of seeing the light.

The mode of doing this, is instructive. He made clay by spitting upon the ground, and anointed the eyes of the blind man. Could He not have spoken a word, and given sight? Yes, but He was to show God's work. "In this was manifested the love of God to us, because

that God *sent* His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him." In taking the clay and anointing the eyes with it, there is the setting forth of the means by which God gives sight to us as blind, by His Son taking a human body—the Word made flesh. A body was prepared for Him; He was found in fashion as a man.

But the man did not see, when the clay was put upon his eyes. And for Christ to come down here in human form, as we see through all these chapters, seemed rather to hinder man's seeing. We must know Him as the One *sent from God*, the One in whom are all His purposes. So this man had to wash in the pool of Siloam—"sent," before he came seeing. It is the word applied, revealing Christ as the *sent One of God*. "God sent His Son to be the *propitiation* for our sins." (1 Jno. iv. 10.)

This is "the doctrine of Christ," and "we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 Jno. iv. 14). "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, even now already in the world" (1 Jno. iv. 3). Man stumbles at the Word made flesh, and will not receive Him as God. But this is the test of every thing.

Here, the healing, setting forth these things, raises questions at once, as this truth has, ever since. The blessing and doom of every one, of every thing, hangs upon the reception of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. "By *Him* to reconcile all things unto Himself, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven," is God's purpose. "We will not have *this man* to reign over us," is the reply of man's wilfulness. The proofs of what He is, are all positive and perfect. Only a Divine person could act as He did. Only He who was one with the Father could speak as He did. But man has been found dead in the very faculty that would take hold of these proofs. He is "blind from his birth." And not until he receives sight, can he look upon Him, as the Son of God, who is Himself the Light. And seeing Him, as the Son of God, he must needs worship Him, as this man does.

But first, the further testing of religious man, by this new action and manifestation of God's work, must be shown. The thoughts of many hearts are revealed, for

He is a sign that is spoken against (Luke ii. 34, 35). The man who had been healed testified to the manner of the healing, the clay and the washing, and that he knew, that, though he was blind, now he saw; and, though his intelligence went no farther than that Jesus was a prophet, he took his place with Him as a disciple, in the hour of His rejection. For He must be worthy of it all, who had done for him that which only God could do—lift him, in one moment, out of gross darkness into the marvelous light.

Many things are disclosed of the state of those who called themselves God's people—the commanding place held by the Pharisees; the fear of them in the minds of the people; the thoroughness of their opposition to Christ, that any confessing Him should be cast out of the synagogue; and their own effort to honor God at the expense of His Son who was doing His will. He is not allowed to be the author of His own work. Alas! the view is held to this day.

And he who grew in his testimony, wrought upon by grace, is cast out, only to find himself cast into the presence of Him who goes before His own sheep, whom He puts forth, for it was for His sake that he was put out. And there, learning more fully who this is of whom he has spoken according to his light, his full soul adores and worships Him as Lord. It is thus, having the eyes opened that one becomes a disciple and a worshipper.

But this scene convicts the others, and He who came not for the purpose of judging, really judges all the world, "that they which see not may see; and they which see might be made blind." What a word for these blind Pharisees! If they had seen their own condition in this poor beggar's former one, they might have rejoiced in the light as he did; but they refused to take their true place, and their sin remained.

Chapter x. continues this subject, opened by the incident of the last chapter, and shows that He has approved Himself fully according to God. Not only had He acted in faithfulness as apart from man, but as in fellowship with the heart of the Father towards men, as the true Shepherd. He was in the bosom of the Father.

What were His credentials? That He had not climbed up some other way. Any thing other than the

Father's full purpose of grace, would have been as the "thief and robber." God's grand reserve was His own and only Son. In Him all prophecies and ceremonials centred, as all rays of light proceed from, and are traced back to the sun. Time, place, circumstances of birth, peculiar condition of mother, and family line, were all according to the word that had gone before. From His appearance, until the present, each word of the Scriptures was literally fulfilled in Him. He had entered into the Divine method of grace according to righteousness, maintaining the holiness of God, yet opening out a love that was rich beyond all thought. This avowal does not come in the other Gospels, as the fulness was not told by Him, as Son of David, nor as Son of Man, nor as the Servant, perfect as He was in all these, thoroughly exhausting the meaning of these relations and titles, in His life; but here, where He is seen as SON OF GOD, the *Word*.

The "thief and robber" are thinking of themselves; He thought of the sheep, that believing we might have life. Grace empties itself. What a new principle, as seen in man down here—having a full supply to pour out for others! And this was entering through the door. To such, not only the prophets gave witness, but they who had a revelation from God, as Simeon, and Anna, in His early days, and John the Baptist, at the opening of His ministry, these wrought upon by the Holy Ghost, were prepared to open to Him. Such were "the porter."

And besides these, "the sheep hear His voice." Surely these three things will accredit Him. All the way is ordered of God, working in souls, as either precursors or objects of His call. And He knows their names, and goes before them. They are apart with Him—His own. It is not a boast of popularity; it is having sheep, who know His voice, and they follow Him. Each sentence of this parable is emphatic. The language of love, of interest in them; the heart of the One who owns them, is the attraction; they know not the voice of strangers. This healed beggar exemplifies all this. From the hour he had been met in grace, he ceased hearing other voices; they were strangers' voices. And he was led out of the Jewish fold, to be with the Shepherd, for ever.

"But they understood not what things they were,

which He spake unto them." And now the Lord tells of Himself as the door, not of the sheep-fold, but of the sheep. He had entered in by the door, into the sheep fold, the Jewish fold, and had taken out His sheep. How had they become sheep? He is the *door*, and by Him, if any man enter, he shall be *saved*; that is being a sheep. Moreover, there is liberty, he should go in and out; and find pasture, sustenance. What more is wanted? In contrast with the thief that comes to destroy, He came that they might have life, that which the saints of old possessed through Him, in whom always, was life. But now the christian blessing is to have it more abundantly, life in resurrection, in the new man. And this belongs to us, as in Him.

Again, in verse 10, He is the "Good Shepherd" giving His life for His sheep. We become His sheep by being saved, and this, through His life being laid down for us. It is not here, contrast with the robber, giving life instead of destroying; but the Shepherd standing in front of the danger and taking death, in contrast with one who is an hireling, whose own the sheep are not, who seeth the wolf coming and fleeth. "I am the Good Shepherd, and know those that are mine, and am known by mine, as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father." Wondrous intimacy! The knowledge existing between the Father and the Son, is the pattern of that between the Shepherd and His sheep. This is one style of blessing with the "life more abundantly," the resurrection life in Him, which we have, and intimates what is so richly revealed in Ephesians and elsewhere, in which the Gentile shares, —the "other sheep" which were not of this fold. And then they are to be "one *flock*"—not fold. It is the one body, joined to the Lord by one Spirit.

Here, too, we have reached the thought and purpose of the Father. Nothing short of this would do; and therefore does the Father love Him. It is according to His commandment. We are having the secret of heaven, here.

But what ears for such things to fall upon! They say, "He hath a devil, and is mad," and there was a division! The natural man receiveth not the things which are of God. And, to-day, divisions come from not receiving the *heavenly* truth. It is another "feast" in Jerusalem,

and another taking up stones to stone *Him*. And what is the occasion of these stones? In view of His death, the security of the sheep is assured, because He gives them eternal life, and because none shall pluck them out of His hand, and because He and the Father are one, and none shall be *able* to pluck them out of the Father's hand. They could not believe, because they were not His sheep. Those who are, hear His voice, and follow Him. Full, distinct, and without conditions, is this statement of the blessing of the saved ones—the sheep. He gives them eternal life, not to be withdrawn by Himself; not to be forfeited by them, for *they* shall never perish; not to be taken away by the adversary, for no one shall pluck them out of His hand; and not to be reversed or repudiated by His Father, for He is greater than all, and His *ability* is pledged for them. What a Shepherd! He has gone out to the lost ones and brought them to His own home, purely by His own power, and for His own joy, and the lost are found, the dead are for ever alive.

And, what works, to which to appeal, and for the sake of which they should believe on Him! They are the works of His Father—justifying fully the claim “I and my Father are one,” and, “the Father is in me, and I in Him.” But, again rejected, He went away beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized, and there He abode. The Jew is abandoned as finally settled in his hostility.

Chap. xi. And now God will give for Him who was then rejected, a final and clear display of His own personal glory; the grandest proof that He was the Son of God, who *quickeneth* whom He will. So we learn in Rom. i. 4, that He was “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead”—His own and others'. Who had ever looked for more, even in the Messiah, than raising up the dead in the last day? But He could say, “*I am* the Resurrection and the Life.”

He was here in absolute subjection to the will of His Father, and though there was the *human* call to one whom He loved, the time of the Father alone, must determine His going. This was His “day” in which He walked and stumbled not. In Him was nothing but perfect light. Receiving the word not from circumstances.

not from man's importunity, nor remonstrance, He says, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." If the eye be single the whole body is full of light.

Did ever one walk in such entire loneliness, as to spirit, and sequestration from the mind of man? He was going with His own mind filled with thoughts of life, to give life; and Thomas proposes to go and *die* with Him! It was devotedness, no doubt, but from one who knew not the power of God.

Then comes the interview with the sisters, characteristic of their knowledge of Him. The one who had been cumbered with much serving, on a former occasion, acknowledged that if He had been there, her brother would not have died, but she does not know *Him*, giving Him the place of one who could *ask of God* and *receive* whatsoever He asked. But upon His announcing "I am the Resurrection and the Life," she asserts her belief that He is the Christ, the Son of God, that should come into the world, and goes her way and calls her sister, who could enter more fully into fellowship with this.

And she, who had sat at His feet on that other occasion, drinking in His wonderful words, and thereby refreshing Him, rises, at once, when she learns that the Master calls for her. And she falls at His feet with the same word of confidence that Martha had uttered, only not weakening it by other words. And He, in response to this, "wept." Though Son of God, having power to quicken the dead, He enters deeply into the sense of death in its power and results here. He is the truth. He goes down into the truth of every thing, in the scene into which He came to manifest the grace of the Father, He groaned in spirit, weighing every thing in the presence of His Father. He knew that the Father heard Him always; He knew Himself as one with the Father; but He knew man. It is the perfection of sorrow, the full expression of the case according to God. Before coming to the cross, where alone expiation was made for sin, the havoc and ruin wrought by it, enter His own soul. With divine ease and naturalness, He performs miracles, but there is nothing of the trained expert in them. God *felt* man's dreadful state, and so came to us,

not to show off how superior He is to us, but to *reveal* Himself. *In Him*, was every thing for us.

And the answer from the Father comes, and they see the glory of God; Lazarus comes forth at His word. Even so, the hour is now, when the dead shall hear the same voice, and shall live. But they that come forth now, from the death in trespasses and sins, at the word of God, come not with their grave clothes on them, as Israel will, coming back to be a people on the earth still. Since that hour, Christ Himself has gone down into the grave and come up, leaving "the linen clothes and the napkin." His resurrection involves, and contains, the glory *above*; and we are raised and seated in *Him*. It is, therefore, the right thing for the believer to know, not only that he *is saved*, but *where he is*. He is in Christ. This is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life; and this life is in His Son.

And now the Pharisees take counsel concerning His death. Before, it had been individual hatred, seeking to kill Him; but resurrection-power in Christ, brings out more decidedly the hatred of Satan, him who had the power of death. The high priest gives the decisive word, as head of the people, and it is the final, full sentence. *He must die*. And God says it, too; but how differently; *for* that nation, and to gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. It is not only that He came unto His own, and His own received Him not; but they have resolutely determined His death, and the determinate counsel of God says, He must die for them. All is morally ended with them, and He goes outside. Word is given, that if any man knew where He was, he should show it, that they might take Him. It is the same people who through all their murmurings and ruin, have cast God upon the depths of His grace to meet them. He meets them still. That death shall open the way of life to them. Out of Zion shall come the Deliverer, turning away ungodliness from Jacob. God hath included them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all. "O the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! *For of Him, and through Him, and to Him*, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

Chapter xii. Yes, He must die! All circles around

that fact, now. If life is given to others, and he who had the power of death is annulled, it must be through death. What a wonderful thing is death to us! By it we are delivered from every thing that has affected us as children of Adam; and as having been raised from death, we are brought into all that is of the New Man.

Thus we see here a supper, at Bethany, and Lazarus sits at meat with Jesus. It is the place of *fellowship*. In Martha's *servicing*, now, we do not find one that is being cumbered, but something that is acceptable, as in the joy of the resurrection, the new life, unto Him who has given it all. Service is in its right place, when we have first received all from Him, and the joy of it as begotten by Himself, sweetly ministers to Him.

But that which is most dwelt upon, is the action of Mary, bearing upon His death, led by the Spirit in grace. The pound of ointment of spikenard, is "very costly," and it is all poured upon Him. He is worthy of all. He is more than all things. It is the valuing of the person of the Lord, as entering into the sense of what is about to be done; for she anoints Him for His burial! Had her faith taken hold of that? Jesus says so. The faith that values *Him* beyond all things, takes all that He is.

Here, Mary, in the sense of His glory, anoints His feet, and wipes them with her hair—her own glory—and the house is filled with the odor of the ointment. Her silent act, spreads around the savor of Christ, as the One infinitely precious, bringing out the selfishness of one who had accompanied Jesus, but cared nothing for Him, as indeed any true valuation of Christ, at any time, calls forth the hatred of those who are of Satan. Here, as how often since, professed philanthropy is the excuse for despising Christ in His death!

The chief priests plot to put Lazarus to death; for this great deed of raising him from the dead, leaves no room for indecision. They must either believe in Jesus or reject Him. What He is, is being manifested, and all actions take their meaning from that.

So Christ presents Himself as King of Israel, and was now recognized as such, the Son of David, as He had been, as Son of God. And then the Greeks desiring to see Him, expressive of the gathering of the Gentiles,

gives another ray of the glory to be manifested on the earth, when He is to possess all the kingdoms of the earth. It is the hour of the glory of the Son of Man, the title in which He will take all.

But that glory can only come through death. As Son of Man, He is to come in the clouds of heaven, and that involves dying and rising. The corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die, or abide alone. "Having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself" (Coloss. i. 20), is the way of God. It is as the Firstborn from the *dead*, that we join Him. And in that path they must follow, who would be with Him. Nothing will be built on the old creation, or the old man. We must lose life in this world.

Thus, the whole work to be done, and the need, are before Him fully. In all these chapters, they have been told out; and the burden of the new creation is upon Him. This world is judged. The Father has glorified Him at the grave of Lazarus, and will again, by raising *Him* up. All things hang upon Him, and He must be lifted up. If so, He will draw all unto *Him*.

There is a disclosure of His heart, showing that He felt the full meaning of death, but only to manifest perfect submission to the Father's will. But all this open intercourse with the Father on this most awful and profound matter, was unintelligent to the people. They explained it by natural causes—"It thundered," "an angel spoke to Him." Who is *this* Son of Man, that must be lifted up? was the query of those who knew only the voice of the law, that Christ abides for ever. It was a riddle, as Samson's, to the Philistines. By His death it looked as though Himself were cast out. It was really the prince of this world—Satan—who should be cast out.

They are warned that the Light is about going away, and darkness should come. But they believed not on Him. Judicial blindness, according to Isaiah liii. and vi., comes upon them. And now He gives testimony to *all*, as to what His coming really was, that he that believed on Him, believed on the Father that sent Him, and he that saw Him, saw the Father also. And, now, all testimony to man has closed, whether to the Jew or to the world. In the after chapters, all is to, and with, "His own" who are in the world, yet not of it.

PEACE.

Oh the riches of that word
 Of surpassing gladness ;
 Spoken by the risen Lord
 To those bowed in sadness—
 "Peace unto you," 'twas He said,
 Hands and side then showing,
 Peace, on those for whom He bled,
 Graciously bestowing.

Once before this, at His birth,
 Had the word been spoken ;
 Angels chanted "Peace on earth !"
 He the blessed token :—
 Token too, that God, in man,
 Now could have good pleasure ;
 More than this, sure, nothing can
 Tell out Love's own measure.

Peace of *conscience* by His blood
 Settled is, forever ;
 This aside from frame, or mood,
 Service, or endeavor ;
 Deeper growing, day by day,
 In its precious meaning ;
 Taking all our dread away,
 No fears intervening.

Blessed peace He makes abound
 Through this time of weeping ;
 Like a garrison around,
Heart and mind, e'er keeping ;
 This, the very peace of God,
 Passing understanding ;
 Lifting from us every load,
 Care and grief commanding.

Gathering in one grand release,
 Conscience, mind and feeling ;
 Sounding the rich depths of bliss
 Through His full revealing—
 What shall stir, when He gives rest ?
 What shall break the union
 When the God of Peace, the Blest,
 With us holds communion ?

Soon our Lord will come again
 To this scene of sorrow ;
 Come, as Prince of Peace to reign,
 Ah, the joyful morrow !
 He, the world knew not at first,
 (Ever wondrous story)—
 Soon upon their sight shall burst
 Bringing in the glory !

"NOW IS THE JUDGMENT OF THIS WORLD."

John xiii. 31.

Dear reader, will you go with me a few moments, while we look into the deep significance of these words?

And first as to this little word "*now*." Let us compare a few other passages where this little word is used, and perhaps this will help us to understand it better. (Acts xviii. 30). "And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but *now* commandeth all men every-where to repent."

Here the apostle was speaking to the men of Athens, a great centre of wealth and of pride, where liberty and scope were given for all that could please man in the flesh, whether religious, intellectual or political. Hence every man was at liberty to worship such a god as he pleased, and in such a manner as he pleased: so that there were, in Athens, what would be called in our day, many religious denominations.

But notwithstanding the lords many, and gods many, there were some who were not satisfied with any thing they saw around them. It would seem as though they hungered for something better, they knew not what. And as an expression of their feelings (for they were all heathens) they raise an altar inscribed "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD." This gives the apostle a fitting text. The very God, unknown to them, and yet ignorantly worshipped, was the very one whom he was prepared to introduce to them, through the Holy Ghost, because first of all, he had become personally and intimately acquainted with Him, himself. How very blessed this is, *to know God*, that we may introduce Him to others.

Dear reader, do you thus know Him? If not, I entreat you in the language of Eliphaz the Temanite (Job xxii. 21), "Acquaint now thyself with Him and be at peace." O, it is so blessed to know God, and to know that we are at peace with Him. To know that every question of sin is settled, once for, all by the blood of Christ.

But how happens it that Paul could speak so confidently of "Him who had made the world and all things therein?"

For an answer to this question, we go back to the ninth chapter of the Acts, and we find when this same Paul, as Saul the persecutor, was met in the way to

Damascus, by this same God, who introduces Himself thus, “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.” Here is where he first becomes acquainted with God. And he afterwards says to the Corinthians (xv. 8), “And last of all He was seen of me as one born out of due time.” And to the Galatians (i. 15, 16), “But when it pleased God . . . to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen.”

This gives us the starting-point. God had made known “His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel” (Ps. ciii. 7). He had “at sundry times and in divers manners spoken in time past unto the fathers by the prophets.” But now, He “hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son” (Heb. i. 1). Note this, God had not, in all His dealings with Israel, revealed Himself as a Person. He had spoken by angels; in visions and dreams, by the prophets; in the tempest, fire and smoke, on Mount Sinai; in the still small voice to Elijah: but not as yet had He revealed Himself as a Person; until Jesus as “the *Son of Man*” appears. Then we have “God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, *preached unto the Gentiles*, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1 Tim. iii. 16).

And this is the point from which our little word *now* begins: for, up to this time, God was seen “in the things that are made,” and known, in His eternal power and divinity, among the nations (Gentiles). Hence no one could say, “But *now* commandeth all men every-where to repent.” But since God has thus revealed Himself in person, it is no longer Israel exclusively, but the world, in question. Hence the apostle adds, “Because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world, in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all in that He hath raised Him from the dead.” Mark this one point, a day appointed (a time set) when He will judge the world (this habitable earth) in righteousness by *that Man*. The very *Man* “who came down from heaven” in light, and in love, that the world might be saved; and that very *Man* whom the world hated, rejected and crucified; is the very *Man* by whom this guilty world is to be judged: and more, the day is fixed, the time

appointed. When was it done? Judicially when Jesus went to the cross. When the world, led on by the religious Jew, judged that *Man, Christ Jesus*, and nailed Him to the cross, they sealed their own doom.

Then the sentence was pronounced and the day appointed for its execution in righteousness. This is clearly the meaning of this expression, "He will judge the world in righteousness." We get the same word used in a similar way in Acts viii. 6, "And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, saith God." And we get the same truth illustrated in the days of Noah. God had judged the world judicially, He had set a time for its execution, and gave Noah 120 years for building the ark, and the 120 years were a day of mercy, of grace, and of long-suffering on God's part before the sentence could be executed. So that the antediluvians to whom Noah preached (and the Spirit of Christ in Noah preached 1 Pet. iii. 18-20), were not on probation, but judicially judged, and waiting for the execution.

When a man is judged by the courts as guilty of murder, and is sentenced to be hanged; he is no longer on probation: his probation closed with the trial which brought him in guilty, and the time between this and the execution of his sentence, is grace, pure grace. Hence it is not a question of goodness, or power in himself, to avert the judgment, or deliver himself; but entirely outside of himself.

Just so here, if an antediluvian could be saved, it must be by what God could do; and not by what *he* could do. And this, doubtless, was what Noah preached, *judgment and grace*. Grace then, always supposes man's probation closed, and his judgment day appointed. So that when Jesus, rejected of men, is about to go to the cross, judged by the world; and to meet the judgment of God against sin; we hear Him saying, "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out." And we get the same thought in the sixteenth chapter, 11th verse, "Of judgment because the prince of this world is judged." *Is judged!* And if the prince of this world is judged, what is it, but that his whole realm is judged with him judicially?

Every thing takes the character of its head. When Adam, as the head of this lower creation went down,

every thing went down with him. So that from the hour that Adam succumbed to Satan, the scriptures recognize man (the race) as subject to Satan's power and rule. Hence, Satan is called the god of this world (2 Cor. iv. 4, compare Eph. ii. 2, 3; 1 Cor. x. 20). This gives us the state and character of every man as connected with the world. See Eph. ii. 2, "and were by nature the children of wrath." 1 John v. 19, "and the whole world lies in wickedness," (or the wicked one) the same word as in 1 John ii. 13, "because ye have overcome the wicked one," and again in verse 14, and again chap. iii. 12. And when Jesus says, "now is the judgment of this world," and then in John xvi. 11, He adds, speaking of the Holy Ghost, "He shall reprove the world"—"Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." We get the judicial standing of every man since that hour. "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead" (2 Cor. v. 14). That is, in the judgment of death which Jesus suffered on the cross, God has expressed the judicial sentence of every man. Hence Jesus could say, "he that believeth not, is condemned already," (judged already,) John iii. 18.

Dear reader, is this your standing? If unsaved it surely is, for God has said it. And do you believe that you are living in a world which is also under judgment, and hastening on to wrath; and that nothing can avert that judgment? It hastens apace. "For as in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the day when the Son of Man shall be revealed, they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all." "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot: they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded. But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them." You say, perhaps, you do not see any signs! Nether did the antediluvians, nor the Sodomites. They were saying *peace and safety*, when sudden destruction was coming upon them. Please read 2 Pet. iii., and you will find an exact picture of this time in which we are living, in the verses 3, 4, "knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days, scoffers,

walking after their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." And do you ask, "Are there not signs?" Not for the world. For the Lord said (Luke xxi. 35), "For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." It is faith alone, and faith in those who *are saved*, that can read the signs of the times.

Dear reader, are you yet unsaved? To be unsaved, is to be under the judgment of God; not on probation, for this would suppose some power for good in yourself. No, that question was settled on the cross. By the judgment of the cross, every man is weighed in the balance and found wanting; for if Jesus the holy Son of God, when He meets the question of sin for us, must die crying out in the agony of His soul, "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me," how much more you who have done the sinning? O, no! God is not now waiting in mercy, grace and long-suffering to save those who are good, but to save those who are bad; blessed be His name!

Not the righteous, *but sinners, Jesus came to call.* "Now is the judgment of this world." "Now commandeth all men, every where to repent." C. E. H.

GLIMPSES OF JUDGES I.

In Judges we find a people that have been brought (typically) into heavenly places, through resurrection, failing to hold their position.

In Joshua's dying speech (Joshua xxiii.) we have the principles laid down which are still to govern God's people in this day. The church is a body called out by God from the world unto separation to Himself. It is just in that point, viz., separation, that the church has failed. The charge against Babylon in Revelation is "fornication with the kings of the earth, and with the inhabitants thereof." And we find that that was the chief charge against apostate Israel (see Jer. and Ezek. xxiii).

In Joshua xxiii. 6-12, we have this guidance, first, "Be ye therefore very courageous." Secondly, "keep and do

all that is written in the book of the law." Thirdly, "come not among these nations, neither make mention of the name of their gods; but cleave unto Jehovah your God." There must be a *real*, practical separation from the world, above all from the world's religion; and a *real* dependence upon God; so that, "one man of you shall chase a thousand."

In Judges i. 27-36, we see how thoroughly Israel failed in all these points. They allowed the Gentiles to remain and even dwelt *amongst* them, and soon became subject to them, and worshipped their gods. This causes the anger of the Lord to rise up against them, and He withdraws His *power* from them (chap. ii. 3), but they are *not repudiated* as we find them to be in a later day (see Ezek.), and when they cry to Jehovah He vouchsafes to raise them up deliverers like Gideon, Samson, &c.

Judges then, pictures to us—individual service and faithfulness in a day of failure and weakness. And as the Lord Jesus was the only perfect servant, we may expect to find in each of the instances some type, more or less distinct, of Him.

Also we get guidance as to what *true service* in *this* day of failure is. The Church was "called out" by the Holy Ghost to be the house of God; and to be a witness for Him in a rebellious world. Called by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, endued with heavenly gifts, enriched with heavenly blessing, and made one with a heavenly Man, seated with Him in heavenly places; but left here for a short time, as a heavenly witness. Has she kept that position? Nevertheless, each individual called out by the Holy Spirit (even now) is called to that position. God does not change *His* ground. He has made no new revelation.

The first victory spoken of, that over Adoni-bezek (lord of lightning), finds its antitype in the victory of "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" over Satan, whom He saw "like lightning fall from heaven." "Adoni-bezek fled, and they (Judah) pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And Adoni-bezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table; as I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem and there he died.'

The Lord Jesus was the One, who "through death destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil," and delivered Satan's captives, those, "who through *fear of death* were all their life-time subject to bondage." And it was at Jerusalem too, just outside the gate, that Satan was conquered, and his power annulled. Judah went up at the command of, and in the presence of, and in dependence on, the Lord; the only way of victory.

The next episode speaks not only of victory but also of *reward*. "And Caleb said, he that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah, my daughter, to wife. And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it: and he gave him Achsah, his daughter, to wife. And it came to pass, when she came to him; that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted from off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, what wilt thou? And she said unto him, Give me a blessing: for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs." The prominent thing brought before us here is, not the victory accomplished, but the reward given. A father rewards the victor by the gift of his daughter. It is a sweet picture of a very happy day, that day when Christ shall receive His bride from the Father, and when she shall share all the glory of His throne. "She moved him (Othniel) to ask of her father a *field*." He did not do it. He knew her father's heart better than she did. When Jesus prayed for his "own," He did not ask the Father to give them a *field*, or any thing of earth. No, He said "they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." But what did He pray for? Just what Caleb (in type) gives her—"Father, I will (O what a blessed will) that they also, whom *Thou hast given Me*, be *with Me* where I am; that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given Me." Oh! how far above our thoughts are His thoughts. We would be satisfied with "a field." We would even stay down here, if we could get along comfortably, and He has even to afflict us to draw our hearts upward. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, *worketh for us* a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." But Caleb does not wait to be asked

of either. He meets her as "she lighted off her ass," (even as Isaac met Rebekah as she lighted off her camel) the journey was finished, she had reached *home*. What a happy day that will be:

"He and I together entering
Those bright courts above;
He and I together sharing
All the Father's love."

"And Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou? "Did she answer, "a field?" Ah! no. And I am persuaded, beloved, one sight of *home*, will banish all our low thoughts. She acknowledges her father's grace to her, "thou *hast* given me a south land;" but she wants more, she is in the presence of her father now, and she asks according to his heart; she wants the springs, the fountains. A south land is one that is favored with continuous sunshine.

And is not that just our place? The sunshine of our Father's grace to us is perpetual. But we shall bask in the full blaze of it, when we reach *home*. "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." "And Caleb gave her the upper and the nether spring." We have known what it is to drink of the river, but there we shall have the fountains, both the upper and nether springs. The upper that flows from the throne of God, for He is the source of all our blessing, "God so loved," &c., and the nether. It was Jesus that brought it *down* to us. He became the Lamb for us. "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, *proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*"

Achsah means, "adorned, bursting of the veil." What an apt title for her who is here a type of the church manifested in glory as the bride of Christ. This is under a veil now, but then "when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." Othniel signifies "the hour of God." Christ won His bride in that terrible hour when God's righteousness was vindicated on the Cross.

The capture of Luz (verse 23) speaks to us of departure—Luz means that—overcome, and made the house of God (Bethel). And as it is a victory of Joseph (who is a

type of Christ reigning in His kingdom), points, doubtless, to the restoration of Israel. "Then said God, call his name Lo-ammi; for ye are not My people, and I will not be your God. Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, then it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God." (Hos. i. 9, 10.)

So in this opening chapter we have brought before us, in type, three prominent things on the counsels of God. First, victory of Christ over the power of evil; Secondly, the union of Christ and the church; Thirdly, the restoration of Israel to their proper place as the people of God, with Christ reigning over them, as typified by Joseph. And our place is on the throne with Him, even as Joseph's bride shared his throne. We are one with Him in Death, Resurrection and Glory. C. H. B.

BRIEF REMARKS ON "AN ADDRESS FOR THE PROMOTION OF SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS."*

I have received the address of the Southern Ohio Association for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness. My simple business here is to see whether this system is based on scriptural ground. I cannot say I believe in Associations for holiness, unless it be the Church of God, but I let that pass.

Imperfection is now admitted. It is "Christian, not sinless perfection," and the Christian is "full of short-comings. An absolutely sinless life can not be realized." I wholly object to the distinction, as vaguely allowing some measure of sin, and yet speaking of perfection. It is founded on error.

My first remark is, that the system, and I beg attention

* "The Southern Ohio Association for the promotion of Scriptural Holiness does not believe, nor teach, that either by nature or through imparted grace, can an absolutely sinless life be realized on earth. Whether tried by the commandment of God which is 'exceeding broad,' or the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, the most holy human being is, through infirmity, ignorance, and faulty judgment, in God's sight, found full of short-comings and imperfections, and constantly needing the application of the Cleansing Blood. Neither do we believe that mortals ever attain to a position

to this, ignores the communication of what in itself, is sinless life, a life that can not sin, the seed of God in the soul—what is born of the Spirit, and is spirit, the new man after God created in righteousness and true holiness. It is "nature or imparted grace." A real being born again, the communication of a new life, the very starting-point of the Christian state (not standing) is supposed, and all depends on this.

Next, we are told that christians "are constantly needing the application of the cleansing blood." Now there is no such thought in scripture as a renewed application of the blood of cleansing. As to this, scripture tells us that without *shedding* of blood there is no remission, otherwise, the apostle tells us, Christ must have often suffered, but by one offering he has perfected forever (*εις το διηνεκες*) them that are sanctified. There is no re-application of the blood to cleanse, in scripture. That is, the two essential foundations of the christian's state before God, are set aside. And we must remember that we are sanctified through the truth. The system is wrong in its first principles; denies the two capital points of true Christianity.

The notion that after we come to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, we have to grow up into Him in all things, is assuredly not found in scripture, but is a simple absurdity. I am arrived at a perfect man, the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, and yet am to grow up further! I suppose they may have founded it on some mystical sense of *into*, but there is no ground for "into" instead of "unto;" it is the same word as "to" a perfect man "to" the measure.

The mere words in the second paragraph, though un-
beyond which there is no progress or improvement, for we are taught that even after the redeemed come to 'a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,' they have yet to 'grow up into Him in all things which is the head, even Christ' (Eph. iv. 13, 15), and will evermore be 'pressing forward to the mark,' and beholding the glory of the Lord, be 'changed into the same image from glory to glory.'

"We accordingly declare that the names and phrases current in connection with our work, such as the Higher Christian Life, Entire Sanctification, Perfect Love, Full Salvation, Christian Perfection, and the like, are not used in any opposite or contrary sense, but as having a meaning consistent with the truth we have just affirmed.

scriptural, I do not speak of, but they are all founded on a totally false and unscriptural notion of the new birth, or rather are really the denial of it. "Perfect love" is in God, not in us; "full salvation" is only in glory. That, as stated in paragraph third, habitual victory over known sin is found in the Lord Jesus Christ, I fully admit. "Rejoicing in the possession of pure hearts created through faith by the falling of the Holy Ghost," is an utterly unscriptural way of putting the matter, and, as far as true, is true of all christians. But it is not a definite and distinct work of the Spirit which was the promise, but His presence. It is for every one, but a person is not in the christian state without it, and by it his body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which can not be by any distinct work.

John xiv. 17, is quoted to prove that christians knew the Spirit. This is all a mistake, Christ is speaking of the Comforter not yet come (see verse 16); dwelleth with you, is the same word as abide. Christ could not abide with them; this Comforter when He was come, would, and be in them, which Christ could not then, either. But the Lord is distinctly speaking of the Comforter not yet come. He is speaking in express terms of the gift of the Comforter. I admit, and insist on the sealing as distinct from conversion and quickening. But all is confusion here. This sealing is not "revealing the Son in us." The expression refers, as Paul uses it, to Christ's making Himself known to him. He was sealed after that, through Ananias laying his hands upon him. "Strengthened with might by the Spirit" is the desire of the Apostle for those who had received Him, as the Apostle expressly declares (Eph. i. 13). "Dying and rising again," is our state in Christ, and belongs to all christians.

"This much being said to remove misapprehension and prejudice, we proceed to say that we do hold, and endeavor in humility and love to teach, that there is to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ habitual victory over known sin; whether in the grosser forms, which men can see in one another, or in the more subtle shapes of pride, envy, discontent, ambition, covetousness, animosity or selfishness which may be known only to ourselves and to God: that it is the privilege (and therefore the duty,) of each christian to say with Paul, 'I know nothing against myself' (1 Cor. iv. 4), and of all of us, to be able with him to call God and all who see us to witness how 'holily, justly, and unblamably we behave ourselves among them that believe;' with Enoch to have the testimony that

The great mistake of this system is, that it makes an extraordinary mystical condition of what scripture speaks of as the only true Christian state; and so fills with thoughts of themselves, those who think they have got it, possibly have been sealed. And further it is all man's will and heart, not grace and the power of the Holy Ghost, as is said indeed in this paper: "It is not of the mind, but a matter of the will and of the heart," but of its being a matter of the Holy Ghost's presence and power, which makes a person to be of Christ, not a thought. The body is dead because of sin, the Spirit life because of righteousness, if Christ be in us; if not, we are none of His, if even, like the prodigal, on the way.

Dead and risen with Christ, and we in Christ and Christ in us, is the Christian state, different from conversion, I admit, different from being born again, as the prodigal converted, repentant and returning, was different from the prodigal with the best robe on him, and the ring on his hand, and then only fit to go into the house. We cannot be in Christ, without Christ being in us, see John xiv. 20, and Rom. viii. 1, 9, 10. One is standing, the other is state. Romans, however, does not give rising with Christ now as a present state, for this epistle looks on the man, as an actual living man down here. Colossians does; but speaks of all christians, when it does. "Obtaining the glory of Christ." now, is a simple delusion. Our calling is above, in heaven, and, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; we shall be glorified together.

To the rest of this paragraph, I have no objection, save that it is mixing what is sober and scriptural, with what is false and illusory, and thus discrediting all.

we 'please God;' with John to have an uncondemning heart; and with Peter and the Gentiles to whom he preached, to rejoice in the possession of a pure heart, created through faith by the 'falling' of the Holy Ghost (Acts x. 44; xi. 15; xv. 8, 9).

"The particular proposition which we all, without regard to denominational connection, unite in affirming is a definite and distinct work of the Spirit in the human soul, subsequent and in addition to Regeneration or Conversion. 'The promise of the Father,' which came upon the Disciples at Pentecost, had been spoken of by the Lord Jesus in such terms as show unmistakably that it was for every one who would keep His words (John xiv. 16-23), and Peter, in explaining the Pentecostal Baptism to the

"Soul union with Jesus" is language unknown to scripture. "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit," and by that Spirit, we know we are members of His body, and in Him, and He in us. Hosea ii. 16, 19, 20, applies to Israel, and has no reference to soul union. In Rom. vii. 4, they have been betrayed by the word "married" which is not in the original; and further this should have shewn them that it is a question of the Christian state; for, till then, those spoken of, were in the flesh, not of Christ; and, it is by the Holy Ghost dwelling in them, that they are not in the flesh. (Rom. viii. 9.)

"Abiding in Christ," no christian can speak against, but it has nothing to do in John xv., with any special privilege. It was the duty of all, and applied then before the Holy Ghost was given. The same as to holiness; without it no man shall see the Lord. We are called to it; but Ezek. xxxvi. 23-29, refers first to Israel, and then, according to John iii., to the new birth; 1 Thess. v. 23, 24, to the christian's whole walk in holiness, and no special gift—"full salvation." These quotations are a general wish for all christians; and the fact that God will not let us be tempted beyond our force, a blessed truth, but common to all saints. Neither of the quotations has any thing to do with full salvation.

As to christian perfection, perfect (*τελειος*) means "full grown," translated in Heb. v., "of full age." But the passage in Phil. iii., just shows the falseness of the view. This perfection the apostle had not attained, sinless or Christian. Our strangely deluded friends may think they are beyond him; they cannot be surprised if others demur to such a pretension. But he tells us what it is, the resurrection from among the dead, and winning Christ in glory, his calling was (*ανω*) above,

wondering multitudes declared that they also might receive the same, and that the promise was to them and their children, and 'to all that were afar off, even as many as the Lord our God should call.' The Apostles were converted before this—they knew the Spirit (John xiv. 17)—and the 'gift of the Holy Ghost' was an additional privilege and blessing, given of God to be the distinguishing characteristic of Christian experience during the dispensation which then began (John vii. 39) and continues until now.

"Many of us believe that we find this truth taught in the Scriptures, not merely as the Baptism of the Holy Ghost or the coming of the Comforter, but also as the revealing of the Son in us (Gal.

heavenly glory and nothing else. And "perfect" means, when applied now, the knowledge not merely that our sins are forgiven, but that we are in Christ, have this new place with the Second Man in glory, the mystery which God ordained before the world to our glory, as is expressly said, 1 Cor. ii., 7.

"Heart purity," I have not a word to say against, only that there is nothing peculiar in it; but it is attributed to receiving the truth, to faith, or to all faithful christians, in the decay of the church. What is said of the "peace of God" is a mere blunder. It is of the peace in which God is, Himself. The passage speaks in respect of our cares, which we bring to Him, and it keeps our hearts, not our hearts keep it. It is a direction to all christians.

The "anointing which abideth," presented as a special experience, is expressly and with purpose, spoken of babes in Christ, in contrast with advanced christians, to encourage them against seducers. "Being filled with the Spirit," is an exhortation addressed to all christians, because they all had it. If they had not, they were none of Christ's (Rom. viii., 9). And this I would press, for this is the grand and mischievous mistake of all these christians, they give as extraordinary, and an acquisition of their own, what scripture teaches as the only true christian place of any. I admit the low state of the Christian church has given occasion to this, but, our bodies being the temple of the Holy Ghost, is given as a motive for the avoidance of the lowest and grossest sin.

"Life more abundantly" is again a true and blessed thing, but, the only true christian life. I do not deny that multitudes do not realize it, and that insisting on this is most profitable. My objection here is not to the fact, but to its being mixed with false pretensions and

iii. 26; iv. 19; i. 16; John xiv. 20); the Mighty Strengthening of the Spirit (Eph. iii. 14, et seq.); Dying and Rising again (Rom. vi. 35; viii. 11, 13; vii. 4; Col. ii. 12; iii. 3); Obtaining the Glory of Christ (John xvii. 22, 23; 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14); Overcoming (Rev. ii. 17; iii. 12; 1 John ii. 13, 14; Gen. xxxii. 28); the Sealing of the Spirit (Acts xix. 2, 3, 6; Eph. i. 13, 14; 2 Cor. i. 21, 22); and in type in the Old Testament, as the Crossing of the River Jordan.

"The state into which souls are introduced by this experience many of us believe we find described in connection with such ideas as Soul Union with Jesus (Hos. ii. 16, 19, 20; Rom. vii. 4); Abiding in Christ (John xv. 4, 5-9); Sanctification or Holiness

errors which discredit it. So of "following fully," the duty clearly of all christians. Christ is all, and they should walk as He walked, do this one thing, have no other motive for anything. John vii. 33, 39 is stated of all believers, characterizing the dispensation of the Spirit, if I may so call it. John iii. gives birth by the Spirit; iv. communion in the power of eternal life; vii. its flowing out in spiritual blessing to others, in contrast with Christ's presence in the world.

"Risen with Christ" is clearly of all christians. Press its realization; you can not do better. The "life of faith" is the only christian life. The "rest of faith" is all a delusion; we are in the fight and labor of faith, now, told in the passage referred to, that there *remains* a rest, and that we must labor to enter into it. It is the object of the passage to shew that christians are *not* in it. It is said that believers are those who enter in, but not that they are entered. Life in the land shows the absurdity of it, for our land is heaven, and we are not there. And the passage insists on those in the land not having the promised rest.

The citation in Heb. iv. though wrong, they may be excused; for many take it falsely thus, but to quote iii. is too bad. "The riches of full assurance," might be passed over too, only that it marks the excessively careless and unintelligent use of scripture. In Col. ii. 2, it is the "full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery" &c., and refers only to being guarded from philosophy and vain deceit, by sound, divinely given, knowledge. There are full assurance of faith, and hope, Heb. x. 22; vi. 11; on this they may rightly insist. What they quote has nothing to do with the matter. Deliverance, (Rom. vii.,) is all right. It is

(Eze. xxxvi. 23-29; 1 Thess. v. 23, 24); Full Salvation (2 Thess. iii. 3; 1 Cor. x. 13); Christian (not sinless) Perfection (Phil. iii. 12, 15; 1 Cor. ii. 6; Prov. xi. 5; 2 Chron. xvi. 9; 1 Kings xv. 14); Heart Purity (Acts xv. 8, 9; 1 Peter i. 22; 2 Tim. ii. 22); The Peace of God, as distinguished from Peace with God (Phil. iv. 6, 7); The Anointing which Abideth (1 John ii. 27); Being filled with the Spirit (Eph. v. 18, 20); The Life more Abundant (John x. 10; John vii. 38, 39); Following Fully (Numbers xiv. 24; Rev. xiv. 4); Risen with Christ (Col. ii. 12; iii. 1, 3); The Life of Faith (Gal. ii. 20; Heb. xi. 8, 13, 27); The Rest of Faith, or Life in the Land (Heb. iii. 17, 19; iv. 8, 10, 11); The Riches of Full Assurance (Col. ii. 2); Deliverance (Rom. vii. 24, 25; 1 Cor. xv. 57);

what is the real truth of the high pretensions made by them, and mysticised. "Dwelling in love" is all right, only though it may be more or less realized, a matter of real importance, it is expressly said of every one who confesses that Jesus is the Son of God. "The fulness of the blessing of the gospel," is the character of Paul's visit to Romé. The rest are all well, but the duty and privilege of every christian. I have omitted "life in heavenly places"—Eph. i. 3, ii. 6. Both places refer to the Christian position as such. The first says nothing of how far it is realized; it is simply God's thoughts about christians, in contrast with Jews: christians are blessed in that way. The second is a careful statement of the position of all christians, whether Jews or Gentiles.

The use of "apprehension" taken from Phil. iii., shews only a mixture of ignorance and carelessness. Apprehension is just laying hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of us; that is, heavenly glory, resurrection from among the dead, the changing of our vile body. So Paul tells us that he had not attained it. The present state was, "conversation in heaven;" the unattained was "the calling above." There were professors who had their mind on earthly things, but their end, as such, was destruction. It is utterly false, that what he was pressing after was any thing down here. Paul states the contrary, and it is the folly of mysticism to pretend it has apprehended what Paul had not. The addition of "apprehended of Christ," ought to have shown them that the word could not have any spiritual signification. Was Paul spiritually apprehended by Christ?

The passage in Eph. i. 18, 19, is falsely quoted, and,

Gal. v. 16); Life in Heavenly Places (Eph. i. 3; ii. 6); Dwelling in Love (1 John iv. 16; iv. 12); The Fulness of the Blessing of the Gospel of Christ (Rom. xv. 29; xv. 13); Walking with and Pleasing God, or Fellowship and Communion (Col. i. 10; Heb. xi. 5; 1 John iii. 22; Prov. xvi. 7; Ps. cxlvii. 11; 1 John i. 3-7; Heb. xiii. 20, 21).

"It will of course be understood that in this we are referring not so much to what God has done *for* us, as to what the Spirit does *in* us; not so much to *standing* as to *state*. As to the former, all God's children are heirs of His, and 'joint heirs with Christ,' and 'blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places.' All are 'complete in Him,' and by Christ's one offering are 'perfected

only so, can be misapplied. It is *God's* calling and *God's* inheritance, an inheritance which the chapter expressly declares we have not yet got. The Spirit is the earnest of it. God's calling is in verses 3, 4, 5. How far it is realized in spirit now, actually when we are in the state to which we are called by God, is not touched on. It is simply what the calling is, which he desires they may all know.

It is really a weariness to discuss quotations made with no attention to the mind of God, and applied nearly all of them falsely to what they in no way refer to in the text. Knowledge is not every thing; but when persons set about to teach, they ought to have respect for, and acquaintance with God's word. I reject their views. There is a setting aside of the true Christian *state* (not standing) which I believe most mischievous, to turn what God states of it into an experience of which they can boast; an art they have learned, an expression they specially approve of. I believe christians are in a low state; but they hinder the deliverance, by connecting it with error, and the abuse of scripture taken apart from the context, and the mind of Christ revealed in it. Receiving the divine mind from the word of God is not theory, or calling any thing by a right or wrong name. Theory is neglecting it for men's experience.

I have thought the best, most useful, thing to do, was to analyze briefly their use of scripture, and see, thus far, what their statements are worth. They substitute a work of the Spirit and their experience according to a low human theology, for the presence of the Holy Ghost, and the revealed state of christians according to the word. According to scripture a man is in the flesh, if the Holy Spirit does not dwell in him. This gives the deliverance they speak of; and christian universal responsibility flows from it.

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forever: ' but the *realization* is another thing, and it is of this that we speak. The least little one in the host of Israel was as truly in the Land as Caleb and Joshua, but in a most important sense the little one did not enter into possession. We are speaking of the 'apprehension of that for which we are apprehended' (Phil. iii. 12); the working of the spirit by which we 'may know what is the hope of Christ's calling; the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints, and the exceeding greatness of His power to us ward who believe' (Eph. i. 18, 10). "

OCCASIONAL NOTES ON JOHN.

Chapters xiii.-xvi.

We here enter upon a new section of this precious book, a section remarkably separated from what has gone before. In chapter i., we find these two things stated: that He came unto His own, the Jewish nation, and His own received Him not. And this has been demonstrated in the following chapters, especially v.-xii. The second thing was, as many as received Him, and *do* receive Him, the rejected One, the heavenly stranger, are brought into the position of sons (children) of God.

So we see Him alone with those gathered out of the world unto Him, tracing out their peculiar portion and privileges. It was entirely new to them, they having been of the Jewish fold, the earthly thing which is now given up. And though these things are told them here, they do not enter into them until the Holy Spirit is given to dwell in them. The blessed Lord is still with them, knowing every thing that would befall them, and the full value of the work He has done for them on the earth. He knew what they were, what evil was in them; but He could not fail. He "loved His own which were in the world even unto the end."

It is Christ still down here, ready to go, and saying these things on the ground of being absent, getting them ready for that place, and that new life. It is something of the nature of the book of Deuteronomy to Israel, a bringing out the things of the land while they are yet encamped near the Jordan, ready to go, and to be made familiar with the principles and the glories of the land.

And first, having by His blood brought them, as children, into the Father's house, they must be suitable to that house. They must be kept clean in their habits, their feet, their ways. And He who knows the ways of the house, turns servant for them. He alone introduces them by His blood; He alone can keep them from defilement there. They are in the world yet, and will need this, though they might be, without His office, ignorant or unconscious of how much they need. But He knows the occasion, though what He does, they "know not now." The "hereafter" has come to us, now that He has ascended, and the Holy Ghost has come. And we dis-

cern in this significant act, the Advocate and the advocacy. It is what He is doing now for us, when we sin. As High Priest in intercession before God, He is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, not sins; but *when we sin*, He becomes Advocate. And the result of His advocacy is that we are brought to confess our sins, and thus fellowship is restored. Thus Peter learned what he needed, by seeing Christ with the water and the towel, at his feet.

And we may learn with him the two things he was taught. First, that we cannot say, that we have not sin, but having it, He must wash us by the word (Eph. v. 26); and secondly, that having been once bathed, (by the blood) we do not need cleansing all over, but only the feet, the walk contracting defilement by the way, down here.

The priest at his consecration was washed all over, and as such, never again. But every time he went into the presence of the Lord, he had to wash his feet. He was not to be the judge as to whether they needed it or not, not to say he had walked a day or hour without defilement; but to wash. Thus fellowship, the enjoyment of the presence of God, having part *with* Christ, is on the ground of sins forgiven, and unrighteousness all cleansed, and alone by Him.

But then, no believer is to say when he has sinned that he is a "miserable sinner;" for that is the title of the unbeliever, the enemy of God, the unsaved, needing the washing all over. Rather, let him know that he is a son, having an Advocate with the *Father*, and upon confession, all is settled. Otherwise he would be making the blood of Christ, but as the blood of bulls and goats, that had to be repeated.

Only in heaven, when the saints are there (Rev. iv. 4, 6), do we see the "sea of glass" showing a no further need of washing by the water, when the walk down here is over. But till then, the laver is filled with *water*, to meet the constant need.

But though we may not wash our own feet, we may in fellowship with the Lord, wash one another's feet. We may apply the word to the heart and conscience of the defiled brother, in the same gracious and lowly way, as servants. And so ought we to wash one another's feet, not go round exposing one another to others. How

needful the lesson, when we are so apt to be lifting up the skirts of a brother, and saying, "see there, how filthy he has become," rather than going to him alone with the sense of how dishonoring it is to the Lord.

But, conduct cleansed is not salvation. And Judas, who was a devil, though his feet were washed, was not clean. How grave the lesson to those who would try to build up a life by the moral precepts of the word, without first knowing death, and salvation through the cross. Christ cannot be used by us, till we have known Him as Saviour, as the One who must needs have died.

And now the Lord having disclosed the sad fact that *one of them* should betray Him, and pointed out who it was, to him who leaned on His bosom, Judas passes out, and *it is night!* The going away of Judas closed His association with the world. "Now is the Son of Man glorified." His death is before Him in this. He was to meet God in judgment for sin, in death, and thus glorify God who would also glorify Him in Himself, and that straightway. This is being done now on high.

In all this, Christ was alone. But Peter in fleshly confidence would fain follow Him, not knowing the meaning of these things. And he has to be told his true place, and not only that, but his utter failure to stand where he was. The Ark had, in going over Jordan, to be separated from the camp of Israel, for they had not passed this way before, so He must go before, and alone, in death. And, blessed fact! He meets the full judgment of God, and the full power of Satan there, and for us, who follow, there is no condemnation, and no fear.

Chapter xiv. And now these have been taken out of the world unto Himself, and He will lead them into what they have in Him. He is altogether theirs and for them. He is going away, and they are to be with Him. The new position and the new place are theirs forever, in and with Him. What wonders! For us, as we learn the exceeding riches of God's grace toward us, in Ephesians, the prayer is that we may be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith; that we be rooted and grounded in love, in order to comprehend, and to know the love of Christ. And they were the first heirs of all this, cut off to Him, to share His fortunes here and in the glory.

And what was their *state* of soul? They knew nothing yet: they were sorrowful with the thought of His betrayal to *death*, and by one of them; and their own infirmity was laid bare, in the answer to Peter, that he should *deny* their Lord, thrice!

They were with Him. On a former day they had said, "to whom shall we go? *Thou* hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God." But they had thought of Him as down here. They had thought of heaven as the place of God, from whom He had come, and He was to abide forever. Their thoughts were not of the heavenly, but of the earthly kingdom. But He loved them unto the end, and though they cannot *know*, until the Holy Ghost comes, yet He displays before them the things that are to be their comfort.

"Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." He was henceforth to be unseen. What a way of divesting the words, "ye shall seek me, and whither I go ye cannot come," of their sad meaning, to place Himself in the same attitude as God to them, the object of faith. Were they afraid of God? He had brought down His love to them. But that was not all; they were to go to Him. "In my Father's house are many mansions." This was already true; but a special people, in a risen Christ, must have a special place. "I go to prepare a *place for you*." The new thing was to take place, man brought into heaven! Henceforth the earth was nothing but a waiting-place.

These three things, then, are given in this chapter, 1. That He is going away from them to His Father. 2. That He is coming again to receive them unto Himself, and 3. That till He should come, the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, should come, sent of the Father in His name, and He should abide with them forever.

And these are the three, prime facts that constitute the truth, now—that the risen Man belongs in heaven, the Head already there; that He shall come to take us there; and that the Holy Ghost fills the whole time, down here, making true to us the things of Christ. Alas! they are all forgotten, so generally.

And now, ought it to be hard to stay here, if such be His will, for the little while, since He Himself is coming so soon, and then, "*ever with the Lord?*" With such a

prospect can we not wait? Besides, since He has given the Holy Ghost to lead us perfectly, to bring the things of Christ to us; to comfort, to instruct; should we turn aside to man's thoughts, or the world's comfort, or the culture of the old man, or the making of things better down here? And since He has left the world, will we not leave it too? It should be no place for us, since the new place has been brought to view.

Much of the chapter is taken up with the questions of the disciples, bringing out the extent of their knowledge, seeing only the earthly things; and the answers leading them graciously into the heavenly. How thoroughly they furnish reason that they should not let their hearts be troubled. Indeed, there would be large occasion to be troubled, were we left here, having nothing here, and knew not the infinite riches into which we have come. But we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are unseen are eternal.

Chap. xv. In the two preceding chapters there are given what our Lord is and is doing for His own, while away, as Advocate, and preparing a place for them; and the further provision of the Comforter to abide with them till He comes. We turn, in this, to their side, meanwhile, what they and we are to be for Him. In the former chapters it is grace in its fullness; in this chapter, it is responsibility, fruit-bearing. And here it is all in their association with Himself. They had all been of the vine that had proved false—Israel. It is now ended to them. "Rise, let us go hence," was the summons to leave every thing of the world, and of nature. "*I am* the true vine," is the only thing for them henceforth. All they would be, was to be in connection with Him and the Father. "My father is the husbandman."

While He was down here, He had been the only object of delight to the Father, who had repeatedly testified His good pleasure in Him, His good pleasure in Man! It was the only time in all the sad history of the world when such was true. Now they were to take that place. His death, His resurrection, would bring them into a condition in which they could walk and please God; an impossibility in the old condition, as demonstrated all through this gospel. The Father was to partake of the

fruits, to be glorified, the very things *He* has done on the earth.

The Father would be looking for fruit. Every branch that did not produce, would be taken away, and every branch that bore fruit would be purged that it might bear more. As to them, they were already clean, by the word which He had spoken to them. Saved, and cleansed by the washing of the word, they were to abide in Him.

The subject is not obtaining nor losing *life*, nor is it *service*; but fruit-bearing, as necessarily flowing out from life, of course, and distinct from service. It is walk, conduct, the peace, joy, love, patience, gentleness, meekness, unworldliness, that were in Christ, a sweet savor unto God; not the fleshly imitations of them, the product of the selfishness of the natural heart.

How could fruit be brought forth? Only by abiding in Him, having the heart occupied entirely with Him. That which flows out from Himself in us, suits the Father, refreshes Him. They, and we, are the branches of the Vine, Christ, and nothing that is not Christ will be acceptable to God.

Apart from Christ they could *do* nothing. It is not believing, but doing. If a man abide not in Him, he is cast forth *as a branch*. It is counted nothing, and judgment comes, men gather them and burn them. Christ becomes the test for every thing, since Christianity is not a revelation of certain propositions, a creed, or formula, but of a Person. And if Christ be not every thing with those who have by profession come out to Him, how soon it will shew itself in attention to ritual, religious frames and feelings, legality, a return to the old and false vine, and not any thing of the True; for Judaism had all these.

Thus, abiding in Him, they take His place here before the Father. He did always the things that pleased His Father; they bear much fruit (v. 5). He was always heard when He prayed; they by having His words abiding in them, ask what they will and it shall be done unto them (v. 7). He glorified the Father on the earth; they do the same in bearing much fruit (v. 8). He was loved of the Father, abode in His love; they do the same, keeping *His* commandments (v. 9, 10). He had continual joy; they are to have *His* joy in them, and their joy to be full (v. 11). He had, by laying down His life,

given the fullest expression of love; they were to love one another *as* He loved them (v. 12, 13). He was in the mind and counsels of the Father; they are henceforth *friends*, knowing what He does, if they do what He commands. For all this they had been chosen and appointed, to bear much fruit, and that it might remain, and that they should be heard always. He had been hated, all the way through; they got the same, as not being of the world (v. 18-22). He had borne testimony to the truth down here; they should testify of Him (v. 27).

Surely, a cluster of fruits, one may say. It were worth while for Him to have been down here, to bring all these to the Husbandman! But His being down here, proved that it was all over with the world. They had both seen and hated, both Him and His Father, and that, "without cause."

Chapter xvi. They were to be hated, the very religion of the world being brought to bear against them. He that killed them would think he was serving God. This might be a means of stumbling, to those who had been Jews, for of old, a righteous Jew was to expect honor, and riches: but the new position as associated with One gone to the Father, instead of reigning on the earth, involves the hatred that fell to Him. These things He told them, therefore, that they should not be scandalized. They were entirely with Him in all this. The world did not know Him, nor the Father, and they must expect this.

But in spirit they were not yet entered into this. It would be real to them when He had gone, and the Holy Ghost came. As yet, sorrow filled their hearts, occupied rather with what they were losing, than what was to be their wonderful standing. Nevertheless He told them the truth. The whole matter of their new place depended on His going away, and the Comforter coming to bring all to their minds.

He would not make things better to them, in the world; He would demonstrate the whole state of the case, His coming was because Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, whom the Father had sent. The world had not received Him, but had crucified Him, and God entered His verdict, in regard to Him and them, by

raising Him up, and taking Him to heaven. Momentous facts! The Holy Ghost must be here for *His* sake, and for the Father's testimony.

But what must He do to the world? Tell out these three things. They had not believed on Him. This was their *sin*. The Father had vindicated Him in righteousness, by taking Him to the glory. This is God's *righteousness*. But if so, *judgment* had passed on the prince of this world, and upon it. Satan has been manifested as this prince, by leading men to do all against Christ. All testing of this world has ceased; there is no more probation, "*Last of all, He sent His Son,*" and what will He do with those that cast Him out and put Him to death? "He will miserably destroy."

It is not "reprove," or "convict" the world, as the world may not listen, and take home these things; it is rather, make a display of this, as the state of things. If I take the truth of God from the Spirit, believe the testimony, I am convicted. I take these three facts for myself, and in taking the place in accordance with these, I am met by the full virtue of the cross according to His grace, and saved.

But while the Holy Ghost down here was thus toward the world, He should be *with* the disciples, guiding into all truth, speaking the things of Christ, glorifying Him; not speaking separately and independently, as from Himself. Thus believers would be kept filled with joy while here, and in a little while, see the Lord again, He coming to take them to Himself. The world might be glad they were rid of Christ; but *their* joy would be in Him.

More than this, they should draw near to the Father, *in His name*. It is not merely asking for His *sake*, but really as standing *in Him*, having the same nearness, the same access to the Father as He, through Him alone. What could there be more rich than this? "Let us therefore come *boldly* to the throne of grace."

We see at the end of this chapter how feebly they followed all these things, answering only, "we believe that thou camest forth from God;" but we know that when the Comforter came all was made real. Their ignorance is no excuse for us who live in the day of *His* testimony. Yet how are we rebuked!

LOVE, THE TEST OF PROFESSION AND SERVICE.

“And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace. And it came to pass when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest thou not with me, Mephibosheth? And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant is lame. And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king is as an angel of God: do therefore what is good in thine eyes. For all of my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king; yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king? And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land. And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house.” 2 Sam. xix. 24-30.

In the whole history of David's flight from, and return to, Jerusalem, we have, looking at it historically, just the acting of a poor weak old man. And yet, taking it simply as the recorded life of a man of faith, there is much that is exceedingly profitable in it. What brokenness of spirit; what humbling under the mighty hand of God: what meekness and forbearance, leaving vengeance in the hands of God; do we find in David's conduct in his affliction! (Chapters xv. 30; xvi. 10-12).

But, taking David as a type of the Lord Jesus in His personal relationship with the believer, we find many a lesson calculated to arouse energy and to quicken affection.

We find, in this history, that what constituted the value of anything in David's eyes was the motive that actuated it. And so will it be found in that day when we, as servants of our David, our Beloved, shall render an account before Him when He returns from His rejection and takes His throne again. It will not be, What *amount* of service did you do? or, What position did you take? but, What did you do *to me*? What position did you take *for me*?

In just glancing over the history of David one cannot fail to see the prominent position that Joab occupies, the leader in David's battles. And yet he comes in for no reward, and his name is not even mentioned in the list of

David's mighty men (see chap. xxiii.) Why is this? What he did, was not done for the love of David! He shewed a perfect recklessness as regards David's affections. He slew Abner, Absalom and Amasa, contrary to the expressed wishes of David.

In contrast with this we find Barzillai who did nothing for David but simply ministering to him in his affliction, rewarded with a kiss from David, and a place at the table with Solomon (chap. xix. 31-40, and 1 Kings ii. 7). Oh what a blessed reward for a little ministry done by those who recognize the Lord Jesus in His members, even though they be in rejection, and the objects of affliction! A kiss of affection from Him who was rejected, a place at meat with Him who shall reign in glory! Man looks upon the outward appearance; God looks upon the heart. Man would have judged Joab to be the worthy one, but the Lord judges such as Joab only objects of judgment (1 Kings ii. 6); while the ministers of cups of cold water, have a place in the glory. "The love of Christ constraineth us," must ever be the true motive to service; and, that love constraining me, I shall be just as eager to minister to the wants of any poor despised servant of *His*, as to preach to twenty thousand people. Barzillai's service was done to "David and the people that were with him" (xvii. 29); while Joab thought only of himself and Israel. (xix. 5, 6). And so in the case of Mephibosheth, though here it is not service that is brought before us, but position.

The question that David put to Mephibosheth should go to the heart of every one who loves the Lord Jesus Christ: "Wherefore wentest thou not with me, Mephibosheth?" He had not said to Shimei (v' 16), Wherefore cursedst thou me, Shimei? He cared not for Shimei's curses. But Mephibosheth was one whom David loved, and from whom David expected love; he was one to whom David had shewn grace, and therefore he asks an explanation of the seeming coldness. It was like the Lord's question to Peter, "Lovest thou Me more than these?"

Mephibosheth's reply proves to us the solemn fact that there may be position without affection; while, on the other hand, there may be a wrong position, and yet true affection. "My lord, O king, my servant deceived me . .

and he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king." Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth had been one of the very first to follow the king out of Jerusalem, and also to minister to his wants; and yet he did it not for David's sake, but for covetousness (chap. xvi. 1-4). And on the king's return we find him in company with the man who had cursed and thrown dirt at David and his servants (xix. 17). So little heart was there for David, even though there was a great show of service. While Mephibosheth, though forced by lameness to remain in the place occupied by the usurper, had nevertheless dared to mourn for his absent lord. He "had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace."

May there not be, rather, are there not, those who, although, through weakness and through deception by those to whom they look for guidance and assistance, remaining in a place where Jesus has not His place as Lord, yet having *more* affection for Him really, than many who, like Ziba, are forward in coming out, and forward in professions of service? Better to hold a simple truth with the heart, than to have the head full of knowledge that has no power over the affections. "The Lord looketh upon the heart." Oh what a solemn thing for such as Ziba! Oh what a blessed thing for such as Mephibosheth!

And then, contrast the language of Ziba with that of Mephibosheth. Ziba's is that of much profession and offers of service; Mephibosheth's of one who has taken his true place before God, and rejoices only in His grace. "Do therefore what is good in thine eyes. For all of my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king." Surely we can say that Mephibosheth had come to an end of himself. He saw that all he *deserved* from David was *death*, he owns that all he *got* was *grace*. "Yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat meat at thine own table."

Ah, Mephibosheth! you are ahead of many of even God's true children in this day; for you unmistakably have *peace*, while they have not. *You* have accepted the sentence of death in yourself, while they have not. And *because* they have not, they never have real settled peace, and they never can have, and they never will have, until

they do as you have done. For though they would at once repudiate the thought of *deserving* any thing from God, they are nevertheless always occupied with their *undeserving*; while they admit the truth that "in me, (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing," they yet are disappointed in not finding the flesh grow better; while admitting that "the wages of sin is death," they fail to own that all *they* deserved was *death*, and that all they *deserved they got*, by the substitutionary work of Jesus on the cross. Praised be God for that fact; that I deserved death and I got death, and now I ("me, my flesh") having been hung on the tree, (the sentence of the law having been fully executed, not one jot or tittle of it failing, but having been magnified and made honorable,) have been buried. And I find that although Jesus our Lord "was *delivered* for our offenses," He was "raised again for our justification." And now being justified on the principle of faith, and having peace with God, my standing is no longer what I deserved, but *grace* "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." So, giving God the glory, I own with Mephibosheth, that *all I deserved was death*, but *all I got was grace*. And grace gives me a place at the king's own table; grace clothes me with the best robe; grace brings me into favor in the Beloved.

Rejoicing in grace, my heart is no longer on the inheritance, but on the Beloved. "And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house." Ziba's heart was on the inheritance; Mephibosheth's heart was on David.

When He, "who searcheth the reins and hearts" and gives "unto every man according to his works," shall "come again in peace," the Joabs and the Zibas will be unmentioned, while the feeble Barzillais and the lame Mephibosheths whose hearts have been on the Beloved, will be waited on by the Lord Himself. "He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." (Luke xii. 35).

And yet, while we rejoice in such grace shown to those whose hearts are true, even though their position is false, we would ask them to ponder David's question, "Wherefore wentest thou not with me, Mephibosheth?" Are you

where the Lord is, "outside the camp," in reproach, in the midst of the "little flock?" Or, are you with "the vessels to dishonor," who own not His Lordship, and His only? Are you with the twos and threes gathered round the Person of the Lord Jesus? Or, are you with the many "having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof?" Be not like Joab, caring only for Israel, neither like Ziba, caring only for the inheritance. In other words, think not of your usefulness where you are, nor care only for your inheritance in heaven, but let your heart be fixed on that Beloved, who Himself bore the sentence of death for you, that you being saved by grace, might be of those unto whom it will be His delight to minister, and with whom He will share His honor in the glory. Covet, O covet that kiss from the Beloved which He will openly give to all those who have been faithful to Him in the time of His rejection.

One word more in conclusion. Beloved brethren, are we who profess to "wait for the Son from heaven," in any measure sharing in this world's joys; or are we, like Mephibosheth *in mourning* for our absent Lord? "The days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days." Nothing is further from my thoughts, than to induce a sickly sentimentalism, but one does covet, both for one's self and his brethren, a more thorough devotion to Him for whom we profess to wait. I do not ask whether we believe these things, but do we show it? Do our drawing-rooms show it? Does the attiring of our persons show it? How sad it is to find those who profess that every thing that linked them with the world, has been severed by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, denying it, practically, by filling their parlors and covering their persons with those things which but minister to "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," which "is *not* of the Father, but is of the world."

"I beseech you brethren, suffer the word of exhortation," "In which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance; that ye may *be mindful* of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of the apostles of the Lord and Saviour."

C. H. B.

"THAT YE MAY KNOW HOW YE OUGHT TO ANSWER EVERY MAN." (COL. IV. 5, 6.)

It is most instructive to see the various ways in which our Lord met and answered different inquirers. "The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright." (Prov. xv. 2). He never answered a question simply *as* a question, but according to the state of soul of him who put it. For example, the two cases in Matt. xix. 16-22 and Luke x. 25-28, whom the Lord meets upon their own ground, that of creature strength and goodness.

It is just here, that in reading His answers people make such great mistakes. They take, often, the question simply *as* a question, and no more; and thus, if a man come, for instance, asking, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do (indeed what *can* you do?) that I may have eternal life?" and hear Him reply, "What is written in the law? . . . this do and thou shalt live," they put it down as needing no further argument, that the way of eternal life, for man, is by the keeping of the law.

But the same word of God says, "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse" (Gal. iii. 19). Is that a way of life? What then about the Lord's answer? Scripture solves the difficulty very simply. For if, "by the law is the knowledge of sin," (Rom. iii. 20; also v. 20, and that is what Paul says—For "I had not known sin but by the law," (Rom. vii. 7.) and what it says, it says, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God" (Rom. iii. 19), then it is clear how the Lord in answer to His questioner is seeking to give *him* the knowledge of sins, and by it *i. e.*, the law, slay him." For this, He uses the law with one whom, when he takes the ground of human goodness, He assures "There is *none* good (see Rom. iii. 9-19) but One, that is, God."

The second case was that of "A certain lawyer who stood up and *tempted* Him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The question is the same as in the former case, but there, there was a real inquirer, however self-deceived; here, one tempting Him, as ever seeking "to catch Him in His words;" "that they might have to accuse Him."

Moses, "they provoked, so that he spake unadvisedly

with his lips" (Ps. cvi. 32, 33), but not so the Lord; though they sought "to provoke Him," and "to catch something out of His mouth" (Luke xi. 53, 54). All they could ever get from Him, the great Antitype, was "grace and truth." "Never man spake like this man." The Lord again appeals to the law, "What is written in the law? How readest thou? And he, answering, said— (see Luke x. 27). And He said unto him, Thou hast answered right, this do (if you can, you that are 'without strength') and thou shalt live."

Even so, it is all simple enough, dear reader; and the gospel does not in any wise contradict the Lord's sayings. If "this do and thou shalt live" satisfies you, and you are assured of standing well "before God," (which scriptures assure "*not*," Rom. iv. 2, for if so thou wouldst have "whereof to glory"—Eph. ii. 9 thus contradicting a further statement, "That no flesh shall glory in His presence") upon the ground of loving Him with this all-absorbing love, and your neighbor, too, just as well as yourself; none will say that God will not accept that. Only remember, it is, "do THIS," not half or a quarter this, or as much of it as you can. "*Do this*" are the Lord's words; "*as well as you can*" is Satan's interpretation of it, for which you will find no scripture warrant.

But you say, "Of course we do not pretend to do it altogether." Then, if you go on that ground, you are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them" (comp. Gal. iii. 10, James ii. 10). And moreover, that is not merely what the Old Testament said, but what the New Testament says, and for that very reason it adds that, "As many as are of the works of the law are UNDER THE CURSE."

But, again, if you would "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you," by turning to Luke xx. 20-26 we get another example, where "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." How well "He knew what was in man," He knowing their hypocrisy. We cannot fail here to observe the penetration that marked Him in judgment, "the discerning of spirits." They say unto Him, "Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or no?" But He perceived their craftiness,

and said unto them, "Why tempt ye me?" They had come not to have a difficulty solved, but to lay a snare. But as the sequel shows, how beautifully He escapes the snare of the fowler. "Shew me a penny," said He, "Whose image and superscription hath it?" They answered and said, "Cæsar's." Very well, if Cæsar's, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's" (see Rom. xiii. 7). Thus their mouths were shut again, they could not take hold of His words, indeed, "They marvelled at His answer, and held their peace." And so also those "disputing with Stephen, were not able to resist the *wisdom* and the *spirit* by which *he* spake."

But, respecting our great Exemplar—

As wisdom is His titled name,
So is He justified in all His ways;
And in His speech it is the same,
Grace is seasoned in all He says.

Thus it is, beloved, we are to grow in grace and in knowledge, thereby being filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (comp. Col. i. 9, 10; Phil. i. 9, 10), "And this I pray, that your love may abound, yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, that ye may try things that differ." That is, having our senses exercised to discern both good and evil; "He that is spiritual discerneth all things."

If such is our moral condition we will be found not "unskilful in the word," but, "*rightly* dividing the word of truth;" such, use knowledge aright, and that is what it is to "walk in wisdom toward them that are without," "warning every man in all wisdom," as is enjoined on us elsewhere, and among ourselves, "in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another." What a word in season is this to him "who saith he abideth in Him," for he ought himself also so to walk, *even as He walked* (1 John i. 6).

Brethren, "let your speech be always with grace, *seasoned with salt*, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." (Col. iv. 5, 6). E. F. B.

Human amiability is often enmity with God.

THE DIVINE APPOINTMENT ; AND HOW IT WAS MET.

The divine appointment was "that all men must die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27). Sin having been introduced into God's creation, it could not have been otherwise. The divine appointment was, simply and solemnly, the declaration of the holiness of God. Sin and holiness are total and everlasting strangers. God cannot shake hands with man's sin, He cannot compromise with human guilt. There must be an eternal separation. The wages of sin is death. All have sinned, and consequently all are under death, all must die. But more: "After this the judgment." Not only the present moral state and death, the solemn result of sin ; but the future clouded with the awful thought of judgment. Such is man's state naturally. It is the fruit of sin being introduced : "the divine appointment."

Men grumble at this ; but if the appointment was not thus, what of God's government ? Could He possibly be, as described to be, infinitely holy ? Impossible ! If He is God, and "light" as well as "love," there must undoubtedly be the judgment of sin in the persons of those who commit it. God must uphold His moral government. But, to treat sin with indifference, that is, not to judge it, would be to tarnish His glory as the moral governor of the universe, and bring a stain upon His character. To admit of sin going unpunished would not be love in its essence. Much less would it be holiness. It would simply be a corruption, and perversion of every thing. God is right, then, and man is wrong. God's appointment is perfectly just, and man's murmurings flow from a depraved mind and corrupted heart. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment," is perfectly just, and simply the establishment of the claims of God's moral government.

Human will is "lawless" and revolts against God ; and objects to God's claims and ways. But it cannot blot out from the page of inspiration the solemn record of the "divine appointment." There it stands in all its awful significance, and confronts the murmurer, the infidel, and atheist. It knows no yielding ; its awful majesty is inflexible. It is simply the accumulation of all that God is, and all that His moral government is, against sin.

A right mind could look for nothing less. A thrice holy God could issue no appointment less rigorous. His nature, glory, and character, demand it.

Has the reader of these lines thought of this; has he laid them to heart? The "divine appointment" affects him, and all who have sinned. Has your heart realized the tremendous force of this "appointment?" It sets before you, three solemn realities, viz., sin, death, and judgment. Could any thing be more solemn? It is the solemn condition of man naturally; of all men.

Looking at man as he is, and only considering man, there can be no such thing as deliverance; for the divine appointment is given because of what man is, and what he has done. Sin brought out the appointment from the God of holiness. Man, as far as himself is concerned, is shut up in irremediable ruin and condemnation.

But blessed be God, man is not left thus to himself, to perish eternally without hope. Another has come to meet the appointment, one not involved in the ruin of the fall; He who had no sin. God's bosom furnished that One! His love gave Him up to die, the death of the cross! And, hence, we read: "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 28). Man's extremity was God's opportunity to exhibit His grace. The divine appointment pointed the sinner to judgment. God has interposed; now, to escape the judgment, the sinner is pointed to the cross. It was there the appointment was met; it was there that sins were borne, and the cup of woe, their desert, was drained to the very dregs. It is from these, that infinite justice has received a perfect satisfaction for sin, and God has been glorified about it. God has raised the One up, who rendered that satisfaction, and given Him glory. And now it is not death and judgment looked for, but, "unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

What a change is here! From looking at death with its dread sting, and judgment following that, to be looking up for the One who is coming again to take His people from this scene, and introduce them to the Father, and the place where He now is. Christ has met the

appointment on the cross: He there settled the whole question of sin; and hence, when He appears the second time, it will not be to settle the question of sin, but to take His people out of this world of trial! not to judge them; but to introduce them to the glory. No christian should be looking for the judgment; but for the coming of the Lord to be introduced to the glory.

“ God will not payment twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand—
And then again at mine.”

No never! for the Christian mind to be filled with dark forbodings of judgment, is to plead ignorance of the cross and its grand results. Why the cross, the sinbearing, the curse enduring, the wrath drinking, the forsaking, if judgment still awaits the people of God who are justified from all things? Why the words, “they shall not come into judgment” (John v. 24), if it yet awaits them? Is man wiser than God? One would imagine so, by hearing the strange sounds of the present day.

Can you tell me why you will bring a justified man into judgment? It may be man's way, but surely not God's. Will God judge those whom He has justified, for what He has justified them from? The scriptures declare that the believer is justified from “all things” (Acts xiii. 29), Christ, then, as we have said before, has “met the appointment;” and hence, the course is clear of judgment, for the christian. It is now “a looking for Him to come a second time” to take them home. It is rejoicing in hope of the glory of God (Rom v. 3). It is as the Lord has said, “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John xiv. 3). There is no thought of judgment here, but the reverse, the meeting of the Lord and being for ever with him. Happy thought! Happy prospect for the people of God! Not the judgment; but the glory, and companionship with Christ for ever!

This is not clearly seen by many of God's children; they are looking to be judged, If so, who shall stand in the judgment? None. All must be lost. It is Satan's work, not the teaching of the bible. He seeks to cloud the glory of the cross, and the work performed there. For a christian to be looking to be judged according to

his works, is a denial of the fact that the "divine appointment" has been met by Jesus on the cross; yea, it is a denial of the cross entirely. Human theories have perverted the gospel. We need to get back to God's truth. There I learn, as a believer, that all that I had done, and was, have been judged and set aside in the death of my substitute. He drained the cup for me; and, for me, not a dreg remains. God has been glorified about my sin, in its being atoned for, and put away, for ever. Christ is risen again, my life and righteousness before God. I am crucified with Christ, and now, He is my life. I have "eternal life" in Him, I am a part of God's new creation in Him. Can God judge Christ again, can He enter into judgment with the new creation? Utterly impossible! The thing that deserved judgment is gone, at the cross, for ever—sin, sins, guilt—all gone, and gone for ever. Now the believer stands beyond the reach of judgment. Accepted in the Beloved; and, as a pilgrim here, looks for Christ to come, to take him home to glory. E. A.

"HIM DECLARE I UNTO YOU."

Acts xvii. 23.

How very blessed it is to know God, that we may introduce Him to others. Dear reader, do you thus know Him? Have you, by the Holy Ghost, been brought into God's presence, to know Him in child-like simplicity? Now this is the blessed privilege of every believer; to know God, with as much confidence, as he knows his best friends.

This question was once put to a little boy, "Who is your father?" The little fellow looked up with a very happy smile on his face and said, "Why, don't you know my father? I know him, just as easy!" A most beautiful answer; sure enough; why should not a boy know his father? And it was so easy to him, that he thought it strange that every body did not know him as well.

Now this illustrates the truth which I have upon my heart, for every dear one who may read these lines. Why should it be thought a strange thing that the child of God can speak with confidence, any more than the child of nature. It is *known relationship*, which gives confidence in either case.

The child of nature never, for one moment, doubts the intimacy of his relationship. Why should the child of God? “That which is born of the flesh is flesh” (John iii. 6). This gives the natural relationship, and nobody doubts it: “God is a Spirit” (John iv. 24), and “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” And is it humility to doubt it? How ridiculous! How easy it is for people to apologize for their own darling sins!

Instead of judging themselves, with all their sins and folly and unbelief, and coming directly to the fountain of life in Christ’s most precious blood, and there finding a perfect answer before God for it all, now and forever; they make a “*voluntary humility*” of their doubts, and insult God by lightly esteeming the blood of His Son. I beg your pardon, my dear reader: but this is serious business. And I beg you will consider what you are doing in this matter. How can you but doubt, while you reject the *very ground of relationship* with God? This is indeed the secret of all your difficulties.

But you will say, perhaps, I do not reject the blood of Christ, I believe it has a place, and an important place in the faith of every christian. Well, what is that place? Let us go to the bottom of this matter, for the salvation of your soul may be hanging on this one vastly important point.

Do you acknowledge the blood of Christ as the only, and alone, ground of relationship between yourself and God? Is it *THE link*? Or must there be two links; and you must needs forge one to complete the connection? Now this is the question first to be settled: And, may the writer have wisdom to present, and the reader faith to receive, the truth of God’s word, while we look therein for an answer.

And first let us inquire, what was the ground, or basis, of relationship between God and Israel. Was it not redemption by blood? Was it not “*the blood*,” on the lintel and door-post of every house of the Hebrews, which protected them? And it was no question of what they thought of the blood, or what they did with it: but it was simply a question of what *God had chosen* and *God had given*. What they thought about it, and what they did with it, were only results which came out afterwards: and had nothing whatever to do with the ground

of relationship. Please turn with me to Exodus xii. and read carefully verse 3, "Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house." Verse 6, "And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and shall strike it on the two side-posts, and on the upper door-post of the houses wherein they shall eat it." Verse 12, "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt both man and beast." Verse 13, "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and *when I see the blood I will pass over you.*"

Now let me call your attention to a few points; First: The lamb was not a thing that Israel had chosen, much less was it a thing which Moses had recommended: but it was *God's choice*.

Second. The killing of the lamb, and the sprinkling of the side-posts, was by God's appointment, *and a result of His choice*.

Third. Egypt was under judgment; God was to execute judgment on *every house not protected by the blood*.

Fourth. The judgment was death, "death because of sin," and the blood on the lintel was a token, or sign, of judgment already executed on the lamb slain: which God in His own wisdom chooses to accept in lieu of judgment on the Hebrews.

Fifth. And this is redemption by blood, deliverance from judgment already pronounced, already decreed against Israel, just as much as against the Egyptians; for they were all in Egypt; and the judgment was against the whole land of Egypt, and they were all sinners and idolaters.

Sixth. The blood of the paschal lamb then, was the basis, or ground of all God's dealings with Israel; or better, *the ground of relationship*.

But you may ask, had not God chosen them long before? Quite true, He had chosen them in Abraham *for an earthly people*; but He had not redeemed them, and

He could not bring them to Himself until He had redeemed them. Redemption by blood is the first thing, and this proved that God was for them, and the result is that He will bring them out of Egypt to Himself. And this is salvation, which they sing, immediately they are across the Red Sea, and *out of* Egypt (Exod. xv).

This, we know, was all typical of what God *has chosen, and given* to redeem us, who believe; even Jesus His own beloved Son. Across the Red Sea, and they are a redeemed and saved people; *redeemed by blood* from judgment, *saved by power* from their enemies. Now then, the very first step that faith can take according to scripture, is to own this one great central truth, and I might say, this first truth of all. For indeed what has man to say to God, until God on His own part has opened the way? When God invites Moses to come into His presence, what is it, but that He has a sovereign right to do so? And yet the Angel of the bush forbade his coming near, and commanded him to put off his shoes from off his feet, for the place was holy ground (Exod. iii). But after redemption is accomplished we read that, "The Lord spake unto Moses face to face, *as a man speaketh unto his friend*" (Exod. xxxiii. 11).

And, before Aaron can come into God's presence as an officiating priest, though, like the rest, redeemed by blood in Egypt, he must be washed, cleansed, clothed, and sprinkled with blood. Please read Exodus xxix. and note particularly verse 20. And every time Aaron went into the Holy of Holies, he must offer sacrifices for himself and for the people, and sprinkle his way in with blood seven times (Lev. xvi. 1-15). But I have no need to enlarge upon this point. To quote the scriptures bearing upon it, would occupy many pages.

Now, this Passover was to be kept as a yearly feast, as a memorial in all their generations (Exod. xii. 24-27). And all this was typical, yet real and actual. It was the redemption of an earthly people. And yet where was the Israelite who ever doubted it? On the contrary, they believed it so thoroughly, that they carried it altogether too far, and were ready to say, "We know that God spake unto Moses (John ix. 29), as for this fellow, we know not who He is."

And how could they ever doubt it? They lusted to

get back again into Egypt. Quite true; but this only proves that they were out of it; and that they knew, with a divine certainty, that they were out. Now, Egypt was a type of the world; the paschal lamb a type of Christ. Have you been redeemed out of the world? Not literally, for that would include a glorified body like unto "His most glorious body;" and this is what we hope for, "For hope which is seen is not hope; but if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. viii. 24). To be redeemed out of the world, is first of all, redemption by blood, and this gives the salvation of the soul as a present thing, and this is the earnest of our hope, the salvation of the body; both of which are brought to view in Rom. viii. 23, 24, and 1 Pet. i. 5-9, "Receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls." The believer who has got this, has got redemption by blood, as in Eph. i. 7, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace" (Col. i. 14, Rom. v. 9).

This, then, is the present standing before God of every believer, according to scripture. To doubt it, is unbelief of the truth which declares it; and is sin. To doubt it, is to impugn the word of God, and lightly esteem the suffering, blood-shedding, and death of Christ.

And now, just once more, will you look with me at 1 Cor. xv., and mark carefully the second verse, where the apostle, speaking of the gospel which he had preached to them, he says, "By which also *ye are saved*, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, *unless ye have believed in vain.*" The point is this, they *were saved persons*, or, they had believed in vain. And this, my dear reader, is true of you now, if you do, or ever have believed at all: you are saved, or you have believed in vain. And now just mark this expression, "if *ye keep in memory.*" How singular is this! He does not say, if you have been converted: or, if you feel happy, or if you have a good experience, nor yet, if you continue faithful, and never fall back: but he says, "*ye are saved, if ye keep in memory*" what I preached. Well, Paul, what did you preach? "For I delivered unto you *first of all* (FIRST OF ALL), that which I also received, how that

Christ DIED FOR OUR SINS, according to the scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the scriptures." And with this thought I want to close this letter: and O may the blessed Lord Himself, give it to you as a nail in a sure place. Are you saved? Or have you believed in vain? Which will you take? O which will you take? Dear reader, which will you take? There is no middle ground here. There can be none. Saved! or Lost! Saved! or Lost!

Now do not bring in your own thoughts, feelings or experiences, here! Remember that all these are results which come afterwards. But the salvation of your soul now, and the salvation of your body when the Lord Jesus comes to receive His saints, depends entirely on your having *heard, believed and keeping in memory*, "how that *Christ died for our sins* according to the scriptures, and was buried and rose again the third day according to the scriptures." Redemption by blood; and redemption by power. Forgiveness of sins, and justification from all things. "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee." C. E. H.

UP AND AWAY.

Sudden and swift the call that bade me rise,
To meet the Saviour in the glowing skies,
Up and away as bird escaped the snare,
I leave behind a world of sin and care,
So swift the change has come, no time for thought—
A glad surprise; a wondrous change is wrought!

Free of the earth, its dullness and its clod,
I own and feel the life of Christ in God;
The sense of time is past, Eternity
In all its height, and depth, ennobleth me.
Made like to Him, I wake, I live, I glow,
Life, light, and love, through all my being flow.

Not one alone, but thousand thousands more,
That summons have obeyed, from earth's far shore,
From time's remotest bounds they come, and greet,
The blood-washed saint just snatched to Jesus' feet,
For all are there, the babe in Christ, and they
Who 've borne the heat, and burden of the day.

Yes, all are there, the ransomed hosts untold,
Of kindreds, tongues, and peoples manifold,
Vast glitt'ring ranks, immortal praises bring,

And far and wide, loud hallelujahs ring,
For all the Christ behold, arrayed in light,
In grace, and love, incomparably bright.

Oh, blessed lot! with new-found pow'rs to stand,
And join glad voices with that happy band,
As gazing on that now resplendent face,
The Father's glory in the Son we trace,
Then with one mind before the presence fall,
And worship Him who filleth all in all.

No joy like His, amid that joyous throng,
No voice like His, who leads that wondrous song,
No praise like His ascending to the throne,
No glory there like His, He stands alone,
The dazzling centre of that glory, He!
Who was, and is, and evermore shall be.

J. T.

KEEPING HIS WORDS.

John xiv.

I think I can say, I love a personal breathing after Jesus, and the consciousness of His nearness to us. If we did but ponder it duly, what a precious mystery it would be in our esteem, that before we go to His place to be with Him, He comes to our place to be with us. The Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, has come, and now dwells in us, manifesting the Father and the Son—and soon we shall go to the Lord, to dwell with Him, and see Him as He is. And this is more than visiting; it is dwelling and abiding—He with us now—we with Him ere long—and both of these dwellings or abidings are declared to be “for ever.”

These manifestations of the Father and the Son, through the Spirit, are but poorly enjoyed by us, if one may speak for others. We want a *closer* dealing of the soul with Christ. A more real, vivid, personal communion. The enjoyment of these manifestations the Lord connects with a *keeping of His words* (John xiv. 21-23), and I think I have seen *that* in some souls. For there is a generation of true, fervent, simple spirits, who greatly outrun the most of us. It is not that they are so much in the *study of the Bible*. No; it is not that. But they have *His words* stored up in the memory of their hearts, and they draw them thence for varied, living, affectionate use through the day. They know Christ, and in a way far beyond what the constant mere study of the Bible would give them. Indeed, such study, if alone,

is not in the divine sense a keeping of His words; and has no manifest action of Him accompanying it. And, again, this having of the words of Christ, is something beyond the *obeying of precepts*.

These words or sayings (see John xiv. 23, 24) may be, and more properly are, *revelations of Himself*, than *enunciations of His will*. More telling us what *He is*—that what *we ought to be*.

A proof that the disciples were wanting in this, comes out in the same chapter, John xiv. The Lord had been telling them of His going away. Had they heard Him as they should, they would have kept this saying of His, and they would have rejoiced (verse 28). Even among ourselves, we may say, this keeping of sayings or words is the proof of love. It tells another that *He is in the memory of our hearts*.

J. G. B.

IS "CONSCIENCE" OR "THE LORD" THE STANDARD?

Many Christians think they have nearness to the Lord and spiritual happiness, who very little, if at all, understand the one or the other. It is quite possible for a soul to rest satisfied with a certain degree of happiness (let us call it), and to know a certain quietude, and be in a degree devoted and devotional, who is not near the Lord. I believe the *conscience* is its referee, and *not the Lord*. Now, we know that it is quite possible to go on in great darkness with a good conscience. I now speak of Christians; their good works, and more frequently their good reputation, stand them in good stead, and they go on without much distress, save now and again when they feel they have fallen below their own standard.

I dare say Peter did not feel any disturbance in his conscience when he went a-fishing, nor Paul when he went into the Temple at the instigation of James; but I need hardly say that if either had been walking very near the Lord, he had not done so. The conscience is no criterion unless I am daily enlightening it by the Word of God; the wonders and power of God never touch you like the still, small voice. Your feet are washed by Christ's words to your soul, and the soul that trembleth at His word is the one that is really near Him: walking in the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom.

You will always find that there is more reverence and fear of the Lord from the soul that is walking near Him, than the one that feels less evil within, and therefore concludes, and with some grounds assumes, that he is happy and in a place of nearness to the Lord, which in truth he is not. The reverence and value for the Word of God would be the external test to me, and I believe one by which I should be seldom mistaken in any one. One christian knows in a moment how much the other reveres the Word of God, not merely as a marvelous revelation, but in relation individually to himself; not a word quoted of it but sends a "ring" (if I am before the Lord) to my soul, of its quality and metal.

But there is another test of the soul's standing which is its internal test, if I may so say. If you tell me what your soul is occupied with, I could tell your standing, and of course in the same way you could tell your own. I believe a soul is often very well satisfied with itself for a good long prayer. Again, for visiting some needy one; and again, because one has acquitted oneself to the approbation of others. Still more insidious, and because so specious, is the state of souls when they are occupied with their own failures. How often does the soul think very well of itself because it has raked up all its evil—only the kind it feels most. True—most true—it must see its evil when entering into the light; but it is not enjoying the Lord until the clouds of failure have been removed by His word declaring His grace to the confessing soul. I believe the godly devotional souls one regrets so to see in a false position, are like the worshippers in Israel, who were greatly, and deeply it may be, occupied with the offering of the victim, but had not their souls carried on to the full end of the offering.

I have noticed what would prove a soul was *not* near the Lord. I would add now that the one great expressive mark that a soul *is* near the Lord is, that such a one is surely receiving light and instruction from Him. Such a one could never be *in statu quo*; or even only improved, or good, as men say. You may find souls very good and proper, but they are really losing ground in light and truth, and probably if you knew them well, you would find that they are in some shape or form thinking more of themselves than of the Lord.—*Words of Truth.*

OCCASIONAL NOTES ON JOHN.

Chapters xvii.—xix.

Chapter xvii. The Lord ceases speaking to His disciples, and now they (and we) are listeners to His own recital to the Father, of the work He has done while here. It is, at once, giving them the place of friends. Knowing what their Lord doeth, they shall know the thoughts of God about that work.

We notice that He does not mention His death; and yet all that He has done involves His death. There is nothing without it, but the Father's counsels take in the infinitely profound results of the death. The will of God was looking to His glory where He had been utterly dishonored; and also to our being brought to Him, perfected forever. And He came to do that will. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ." (Heb. x. 10.)

Our own estimate of His work here would be that He died that we might be saved; though often men's idea of salvation is simply forgiveness of sins. That is not even mentioned here. No; but we are in the audience of the Father and the Son, learning the high and wondrous intercourse concerning that work which gave Him sons according to the purpose before the ages, that we should be holy and without blame before Him, in love. Bringing many souls to glory, was His object.

Besides this, it is the opening out of His heart in behalf of those whom He has brought into this position. He had been telling some of His thoughts concerning them, to themselves, but they could not understand. Now He can pour out these desires and purposes into the ears of One who does understand, and is one with Him in all. What *were* those thoughts in the past glory, when (Himself ever the delight of the Father in the scene of Prov. viii.) His delights were with the souls of men?

We are not left in ignorance of them. Can *we* receive them any better than they who first stood as listeners? We ought to do so, since "we have received the Spirit, which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given us of God."

He "lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may

also glorify Thee." The first thought was always the Father's glory, and He had glorified the Father as the Son down here, doing only that which the Father had told Him. And now He asks to be taken to the glory above, that He may still show out the glory of the Father. It is as the obedient One, who is to be declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the spirit of holiness which He has manifested, by resurrection from the dead. It is a new glory, the glory connected with His work here as man. In that work He had done the will of God. He had revealed the grace of God, made known the Father. He is still to do it; but the richer revelation of the Father and the Son flows down to us, through His being on high, and the Holy Ghost here. But what a delight to our souls that He acquires a special glory for having come for us, and redeemed us to God!

Authority had been given Him to give eternal life to all that the Father had given Him, and in making known the Father, He had given that which is eternal life, the knowledge of the Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He had sent. This is connected with the petition, "Glorify Thy Son." He had a glory with the Father before the world was, and this He asked for also, for He had emptied Himself to come down to us. He must have all back again, beside the glory as the just reward of His work here. In all His work and humiliation, in the path of reproach and shame in which He had walked here, and the obedience unto death, and in death, He had lost nothing, and the Father had lost nothing. They had really gained, and this must be manifested.

In asking, then, to be glorified, He is asking the judgment of God on His work. And God begins the judgment of works by judging Christ's. In raising Him up, and seating Him in the glory, He declares His perfect satisfaction with His work. And He declares His own righteousness, also. The Holy Ghost, sent of the Father, here demonstrates that God was righteous in raising Him up and giving Him this glory. And, in having us there, He the more glorifies the Father. And now, such is God's judgment of Christ's work, that the moment one takes the place of a lost sinner, pleading

His work, God justifies him from all things. This was His request.

And now what of His disciples? They take a new place, henceforth, as being taken "out of the world," having been given to Him by the Father. He had (v. 6) manifested the Father's *name* unto them. And, then, what a tender word for them! "They have kept Thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me, are of Thee." In the world He had glorified the Father, but here were results; they had "known," and "kept."

He had (v. 8) given them the *words* which the Father gave Him, which were for their own blessing, and they had received them, and known that He came out from the Father, and believed that the Father sent Him. And this brings them into a place of special interest, as distinct from the world, and prayed for as such. They are committed to the Father as *holy*. What a wonderful fact, that we are in the keeping of One that is not only gracious and strong and tender and thoughtful, but *holy*. We are cast into His company, who cannot allow an atom of evil. Are you glad for this? If not, you have not peace. You have not heard and *received His words*. For He says, "He that heareth my words and believeth in Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life." As belonging to the Father and to the Son, they were to be kept in the Father's name, in *unity*, "that they may be one, *as we are*." This unity is moral, having one aim, one life, one mind, the Holy Spirit being the bond. It is the reality of the place into which they are brought, having one life in Christ.

While He was in the world (v. 12), He had *kept* them, as given by the Father, as owned by Himself, according to the Father's will (John vi. 39). With regard to Judas, it was the fulfillment of Scripture. And now, He was leaving them, and these things were spoken in their hearing, that they might have His joy fulfilled in themselves. And what infinitely wonderful things they are! Nothing less than that these poor, feeble, failing men (and we, like them and with them), are in Him brought to the Father according to His purpose, and are *as He is*, in this world, henceforth.

These things are His joy. There was a joy set before Him, for which He endured the cross, the joy of meeting the counsels, the will of God, and bringing to Him what He so yearned for, sons in Himself.

He had (v. 14) given them the *word* of the Father, and the world hated them. Not for themselves, for the world loves its own; but the Word is a testimony against the world, and they that have it must needs be hated. And they are not of the world, even as He is not of the world. Here it is as having the same testimony, and as a general fact. In v. 16, it is as those that are in the midst of evil and to be kept by the truth. He was Himself the Word, the very thing that He said unto them every where. This could not be said of them. But that truth, God's Word, must separate them from the evil. It is knowing the power of it over work and life, thus being sanctified, cut off, by the truth.

And then they (v. 18) are *sent* into the world by Him. How needful that we should know that we have first been taken out of the world by His death and resurrection, and our own, in Him; and then *sent* into the world. We are here only as sent. We are not *of* the world; as having died out of it, we are not *in* it in the same way we were before. We have no links with it, as He had none. We are such as He was. Do we know this? Then we are not to improve the world, not to go on with its systems of religion, and politics, and social life, and pleasure. We are, henceforth, here for His purposes, alone. With one stroke every thing is cut off. We are of no nation, no party, but to stand out of it, lifting others out of it. We need not be careful to answer those who call this selfish. It is not for self, but Christ. We see the world lying in the wicked one, and under condemnation—a judged thing. How can we join any thing in it? What power for service to Christ only, there should be in that word, "sent into the world." I find my presence here and my errand, explained thereby.

"And for their sakes I *sanctify* myself, that they also might be sanctified." (v. 19). He has set Himself apart from the world up in heaven, in resurrection, though in the world for the present, that we may be! What a verdict on the world to-day, Christ having nothing to do with its finest movements! Sending His

children into it, to take others out as fast as possible! And only that! While such are prayed for, the world is not prayed for, no movements of philanthropy, no "cause" for general advancement. He stands to the truth, and we are sanctified through the truth.

Then, as having our place with Him, the *glory* which is given Him (v. 22) is given us. Oh! how humbling to the heart is such boundless love! He makes us like Himself in the full measure and meaning of it all. It is what the Father meant, and it is done. "Whom He justified, them He also glorified." What a drawing aside the veil, and a rich showing of the family in its oneness! "I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in One." This looks on to the manifestation of the glory, for then through us the world shall believe that He was sent of the Father. That He really has a people in the glory, before the Father, according to the yearning of His heart, and has taken them out from among men, will be the proof. But is that all? "The praise of the glory of His grace," is the ultimate purpose, the final cause of all; "that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness to us." And the world is thus to know that the Father has loved us, as He loves Christ. Can any thing go farther than this?

Yes! for this is display. But there is something for our own heart in that which is asked for last, or rather demanded, for the word is different here (v. 24) from the word "pray," used previously. It is ($\theta\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega$) I will, not ($\epsilon\rho\omega\tau\omega$) request, comporting with the dignity of that glory that He speaks of, and the authority that was His. "I will that they whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which Thou gavest Me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." Which shall be the more precious to our hearts, to be ourselves manifested with Him for His sake, in the eyes of the universe, or to see Him *as He is*, all glorious, with the well-earned glory that is conferred upon Him by the Father's hand for all He suffered here, and the glory He had before the foundation of the world? Surely, we know how thoroughly He has probed to the very depths of our souls, and named the desire of desires in this. And it shall be.

Such is the *manner* of God's love. Beloved, now are we children of God, and it doth not 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. Such is our portion, such our hope in Him! Now for the result practically. Now for the purifying ourselves even as He is pure!

Throughout the chapter, the world has been kept separate from the children. Now (v. 25) He declares, "the world hath not known Thee!" leaving them in the hand of the Righteous Father, as "His own" are committed to the Holy Father.

To the last, the swelling fountain of His heart sends up still richer desires for us that the love that the Son had and enjoyed from the Father might be in us, and He in us. This, for the stay down here, during the "little while" we await His coming. It is enough! But the chapter, as the love that is in it, is exhaustless.

Taking it as the account of His work to the Father, upon which He is to be exalted to His right hand, we have found these seven things:

- 1 (v. 4), He had glorified Him on the earth.
- 2 (v. 6), He had manifested His name to the disciples.
- 3 (v. 8), He had given them His words.
- 4 (v. 12), He had kept them as a shepherd.
- 5 (v. 14), He had given them His word.
- 6 (v. 16), He had sent them into the world.
- 7 (v. 18), He had set Himself apart, that they might be.

As a declaration of what He had brought them into, in association with Himself, we may notice the use of the word "as," seven times.

1 (v. 2), He gives them the same life as His, eternal life. 2 (v. 11), their union is "as we are," in purpose, object, love, every thing. 3 (v. 14), the same separation from the world. 4 (v. 18), sent into the world, as He was sent. 5 (v. 21), the same actual unity as the Father and the Son. 6 (v. 22), the same glory as He has. 7 (v. 24), the same love!

Surely this is being "as He is." Here is perfection; and well may we rejoice with the fulness of joy.

Then as to His desires for the glory of the Father, and the rich blessing of His own, we have already glanced at them.

Chapters xviii. xix., give the incidents of the trial and crucifixion of our Lord, but in a way consonant with the main purpose of the Holy Spirit, in this gospel, wherein Christ is shown as the SON OF GOD. There is the garden here, but no agony in it. Did not John know of this? Most assuredly, as he was one of the three that were especially near Christ on that occasion. But those who were used to write these books, did not give according to their own selection, the facts of Christ's life and ministry, but as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, who in each one had His peculiar design. And this design, in Matthew, is to set Him forth as the Messiah, Son of David and Son of Abraham, suffering according to the prophets and the Psalms, yet fulfilling them completely as to His coming, and His offer to the Jews; in Mark, as the rejected Servant and Prophet of God; in Luke, as the perfect Son of Man. And each of these characteristics is carried forward to the cross and the resurrection, and the interviews with His disciples afterwards.

Instead of the agony, we have the glory and dignity of God's own Son, in the soldiers falling upon the earth. They did not take Him. If none had power to take His life, but He laid it down of Himself, none had power to arrest Him, but He gave Himself up. Matthew must have known personally of this, but the Holy Spirit does not give it by him.

The iniquity of Judas, and the foolish act of Peter in using the sword, as well as his subsequent denial of the Lord, have a vivid setting, in view of what He is who is thus betrayed, and defended, and denied. He is neither precipitated into, nor defended from, His death. For this cause came He unto this hour. It had come, and He was ready. *He gave Himself for us.* The cup was taken from His Father's hand, not man's.

He is brought before Annas, and then Caiaphas, the high priest, the rather to expose them, than to be judged. The one sent Him bound, the other was unable to bring any accusation against Him. The disciple denies Him, but He does not deny Himself, nor His work. Pilate is handling one who is a real King, the anointed of God, and is confronted and awed by a word of that which is kingly, "to bear witness to the truth." The whole Jewish

nation were letting all their prerogatives slip, by denying their King; then He affirms it all, witnessing a good confession before Pontius Pilate, who, unable to appreciate, yet beholds a royalty and a dignity that deepened his verdict, "I find in Him no fault at all. Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?" The soldiers, according to their natures, mock Him. No one can be quite still. All are disclosed. The Jews insist upon His death at the hand of the Romans, giving up to greater indignity, Him who in it all, confesses them according to His Father's purpose. Then, intense hatred and blind fury find expression in—"Crucify! Crucify!" as they cast into the hands of their own enemies, Him who had, all through His years with them, done them good according to the deep love and patience of God, whom they boasted that they knew. They could not endure the light.

On the cross, instead of the cry of being forsaken, there is the manifestation of the victory over all pain, in that thoughtfulness for His mother, in committing helplessness to a love, of which He was the pattern and expression. A precious token of human affection in this gospel, given to show Him as God. "The Word was made flesh."

And then in the perfect calmness of the Son only thinking of the Father's word, yet to be fulfilled by Him, He says "I thirst," and there is given Him a sponge filled with vinegar, which when He had received, he said, "IT IS FINISHED!" the complete, triumphant answer to all man's, and Satan's, rage, and the perfect work which meets sin in its place of judgment; finished, as God Himself would have it. And then He (not *dies*, but) delivers up His Spirit (*παρέδωκε*). He had "power to lay down His life."

Truly this man was the Son of God.

Fulfilling, with the most perfect obedience as a Son, the scriptures concerning Himself in His life, the Holy Ghost calls our attention to their still further fulfillment after His death. Not a bone was broken, and He is literally pierced, that they may "look on Him whom they pierced." Thus the Father's glory and His own, are fully set forth in every way. May the Lord give us hearts to enter into the meaning of all these things.

THE THREE-FOLD CHARACTER OF SERVICE.

I. "David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam; and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there was with him about four hundred men." (1 Sam. xxii. 1, 2.)

II. "And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household; each man his month in a year made provision. . . . And those officers provided victual for King Solomon, and for all that came unto King Solomon's table, every man in his month: they lacked nothing." (1 Kings iv. 7, 27.)

III. "And Solomon had three score and ten thousand that bare burdens, and four score thousand hewers in the mountains; beside the chief of Solomon's officers which were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled ever the people that wrought in the work. And the king commanded and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house." (1 Kings v. 15-17.)

It is almost needless to say, that, as a rule, christians have very vague ideas of that which constitutes service. We hear a great deal of "working for the Lord," from those who are, after all, but working for man; seeking, with humanitarian ideas, to improve the moral and physical condition of man, rather than taking up and carrying on the service *to* or *for* the Lord. Surely every christian heart must weep over the sad state of the lost, blinded, Christ-rejecting sinner; but yet, it is the "love of Christ constraineth us" to service on their behalf. And service, true service, must have for its motive the glory of God. As He said, "I have glorified *Thee* on the earth; I have finished the work which *Thou* gavest me to do."

It is important to have this before the soul, as the motive, and not the service; otherwise I may be running many an errand on which I am not sent, and doing things according to *my* ideas of what is most necessary. The lack of this, causes many a sincere christian to descend to the use of means most dishonoring to Him in whose name he professes to serve. The lack of this, also leads to the common error of making the salvation of souls the *only* service whereas, in the types I have quoted, this comes last; it is preceded by both testimony and ministry. And the devout student of the Word will surely admit that "Be

not thou ashamed of the testimony of the Lord," and, "Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," stand first and foremost in the Spirit's teaching for these last days. I may safely say that no other kind of service demands such courage, endurance, and faithfulness as this. And, further, it is the *only* service where fighting necessarily comes in.

I. Turning to the histories of David and Solomon, we find this very strikingly brought out. Solomon (type of a risen Christ in glory) had only servants. David (type of a rejected Christ on earth) had only *men of war*. As servants of the former, we quietly *serve*. His being the power, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." As *fighting* for the latter, we "contend earnestly" according to the measure of faith and devotion we have.

Look at those poor nobodies gathering to David in the cave of Adullam. They came "in distress," "in debt." "discontented;" all this from the oppression of Saul. But why to David? They recognized that God had rejected Saul and that David was king. "And David became a captain over them."

In this day of apostasy, when lukewarmness to the claims of Christ, as Lord, is characteristic, it is a relief to the heart to find a few discontented ones. We are sorry to see them still staying in Babylon, yet rejoice to see the working of the Spirit in producing discontent and a yearning for something purer. Let them recognize the truth of His Headship of the Church, and, withdrawing from iniquity, gather to Him, even though but by twos and threes, "outside the camp, bearing His reproach," and the Lord Jesus will indeed become "a captain over them."

David was, by the right given him of God, king over all Israel, but he was captain only over those who gathered unto him. Even so with the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. God "gave Him to be Head over all to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." He *is* that, whether it is recognized or not, but He has His authority as Master and Lord only over those who are gathered unto His name.

Let this truth be acted upon, and fighting must of

necessity ensue. Would Saul allow David peacefully to be captain over even the refuse of the land? Not a bit of it. He hunted him "as a partridge in the mountains." Yet David would not lift up his hand against Saul. Our warfare is defensive. It is "having overcome all, to stand." We have not to fight to gain "heavenly places," but to hold it; not to gain Christ a position as Head, but to maintain that He is that. The act for which Shammah (2. Sam. xxiii.) attained a place among the first three "mighty men which David had," was, simply *defending* a little piece of ground (*David's ground*) full of lentiles. It did not seem any thing to brag of, an insignificant affair, but evidently worth something to David, and worth recording by the Spirit.

So, if we turn to Jephthah (Judges xi.), we find another poor "nobody," having nothing to boast of, of disgraceful parentage, thrust from his brethren; and yet, as the occasion proved, he was the only one in Israel that understood God's mind and had courage to act upon it, in that day of departure from the ground that God called them to occupy.

He had no new revelation, no special word from the Lord, but first seeing that His Headship (in this a type of the Spirit working in those days) was allowed, and uttering "all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh" (a "watch-tower" being, throughout Judges and 1 Samuel, the place of waiting on the Lord when evil was owned and repented of), he straightway sends messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, saying, "What hast thou to do with me that thou art come against me to fight *in my land*?" The Ammonitish king replies, "Because Israel took away my land." Jephthah again sends word declaring that Israel took not away their land, but asserts that God gave them the land of their enemies. "Whomsoever Jehovah our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess." I think this is one of the most magnificent things in the Book of Judges. We may say of Jephthah that he is a type of one unto whom has been given "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." The eyes of his heart being enlightened that he might know "what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the

exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of the might of His power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead . . . and gave Him to be Head over all to the Church which is His body;" and being "according to the riches of His glory, . . . strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, . . . endeavoring to keep" (not create) that "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, *one* body and *one* spirit, even as ye are called in *one* hope of your calling." And, further, the enemy being still in the land, our warfare being against "spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies," taking unto him "the entire armor of God," and standing upon that heavenly truth which God has revealed to him, his only sword being the word of God.

And then, turning back again to the history of David, we find that another natural consequence of faithfulness to the "Beloved," is, suffering. When David ascended the throne they shared his joy with him; but what had they passed through? Surely, like Paul, they had been "in journeyings often, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils among false brethren, in weariness, in painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."

And so with Jephthah; his own countrymen threatened to burn him and his house with fire, and he had to take up arms against them, and their Jordan (the river of judgment) becomes the test. There, by the passage of Jordan, Jephthah's men called upon the Ephraimites to say Shibboleth (a stream), and they could not frame to pronounce it right. Can we? Have we counted the cost? Are we prepared to become as dead men, Nazarites indeed, to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ?

II. Having now looked at the chief service for the one who has the Lord before his heart, we pass on to consider the new field of service that opens up to one who is now occupying the ground, the maintaining of which constitutes the first-mentioned service.

Recognizing the truth of "one body," I find that each member of that body (however divided by sectarianism) has a claim upon me, ("whether one member suffer all the members suffer with it") a claim of *sympathy*. Con

sequently, the character of the service is entirely different. No longer warfare, but love. But, if done to Christ, still real service. Not fellowship with a rejected Lord on earth, but ministry to the members of that body whose Head is Christ in glory.

This service is not much coveted after; yet it is one which so directly connects the servant with the living heart of the Lord Jesus. So that he becomes the link that connects the needy one with the Rich One, to One who longs to bestow out of His fulness, with the emptied one who longs for that sympathy which only He can truly supply. What a blessed service! Much neglected, and yet the Spirit has seen fit, in the passage quoted, to enter just as much into details as regards this, as He has regarding the other services. The names of the servants are given, and the district entrusted to them. And, although this was in the days of the kingdom's greatest extension, so fully did all do their work that "they lacked nothing." The kingdom was an unit, therefore all was peace and plenty.

It reminds one of the early days of the Church, when the truth of "one body" was believed and felt. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul, . . . neither was there any among them that lacked."

Things are changed now, and yet only outwardly. It is a comfort to know that, although the "house" is a ruin, the "body" never can be, for it is linked with the living Head. And the promise that all needs shall be supplied is not according to the ruin or prosperity of the "house" on earth, but according to the glory. "My God"—man may fail in sympathy as in every thing else; but oh, how sweet to be cast back upon One who *cannot* fail—"my God shall supply *all* your need according to His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus." The One in glory is the perfect servant, and as long as there is a "body" on the earth, He will not be behind Solomon in supplying the needs of the most obscure, the most insignificant of His members.

But though the instruments of this service may be unhonored by man, they will not be forgotten by Him. God has not forgotten to record the ministry of Phebe, servant to the assembly at Cenchrea, who was a succorer

of Paul and of many others; nor Mary, "who bestowed much labor on us;" nor "Gaius, mine host, and of the whole assembly." And especially is the service of the house of Stephanus noticed; "they have *addicted* themselves to the ministry of the saints." What a blessed ministry! It shows a *heart* for the Lord. Here was a whole family giving themselves up to that special work. "Verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."

III. And now, having looked, first, at that service which has for its object the honor of the Name, and, second, at that which seeks to fulfill the claims of membership, we have, thirdly and lastly, to glance at that which has for its object the salvation of those outside.

As regards this, I have but two or three remarks to make. It is a service that *goes out* in grace after the lost sinner. It is not "*come near*, all ye that *fear God*, and I will declare," &c.; but a going "unto all the world," to those who do not fear God, and telling the message of the richest grace. The stones and timbers *had to be fetched*.

Oh, what a cutting down of proud cedars and a hewing of hard stones was necessary ere they were fit for the Temple! But they *were* fit, before they were ever placed in the wall. As they were placed, so they remained. All the fitting was done prior to the placing. No doubt many a stroke of the chisel was necessary to prepare such great stones for their places, but it must be fully done before they could be used for that building. How plainly this rebukes the practice of bringing in unconverted or even half-formed christians, into that temple composed only of "living stones." Not only is a gross dishonor done to the Lord, and to God's assembly, but a cruelty to the poor deluded victim, hushed to the sleep of death with "peace, peace," when there is no peace. And even in the case of a half-formed christian — a grotesque stone — how much better would it be to give a few more sharp, cutting blows, with the Word, to take away all "confidence in the flesh," that such might thereby be enabled to "rejoice in Christ Jesus," and "worship God in the Spirit."

No sound of a hammer should be heard in God's house. Why? Do not the saints need comforting, building up, &c.? Yes, but they do not need being

“made meet.” They are that, ere they belong to that house. Only as those who “*have* passed from death to life,” who *have* “redemption through His blood,” who *have* been made “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,” have they any place there at all.

Further, I notice that although an immense number of laborers were used in the building, there was but one architect — Solomon himself. If it had been otherwise, what an unshapely thing the Temple would have been — a wing here and a tower there, as each officer fancied. But, happily, it was not so; they all worked for one end and under one architect, and harmony was the result.

In conclusion, I will add, that although the objects sought, in each of the three services, are so different, the motive is but one, and that is, the Lord Jesus Christ.

If He alone is before the heart, these services will be each taken up in their proper course. I shall not be taking up the last to the neglect of the first; nor shall I, after taking up the first, sit down at my ease to the neglect of the second and third. But, being jealous of that which concerns His Person, I shall first gather to His Name, and, therefore, being near His Person, I shall be in sympathy with His heart, and not forget to “weep with them that weep, and rejoice with them that do rejoice;” and, thirdly, His wondrous love which I have thus learned will constrain me to go out after others in the same rich grace in which He sought and gathered poor wandering me.

C. H. B.

A LETTER TO ONE STANDING ALONE, IN SEPARATION FROM EVIL.

Mr. ——— has communicated to me the note speaking of your position, and I venture to reply to your inquiry. I do not agree as to failing in testimony by not going to the communion. It is just as to one point, and that a very important one, the strongest testimony that can be given; a privation, no doubt, but which God can make up. Where carelessness deprives us of means, we cannot expect God to make it up; but where it is faithfulness, He can, and does, make it up richly. Christians often think they possess, in their own faith what they,

sincerely perhaps, enjoy; but this is not so. When their own faith is tested as to it, they have not what they enjoyed. What we learn when isolated, we have with God, and I have often known souls thus thrown alone, when looking to God and leaning on His grace, make more progress than those who were enjoying great advantages.

I remember a case in H. The wife remained alone, knowing no saints there. The husband had not faith for it, and, as they say, joined a church. She ripened in the Lord in a wonderful way; he sank down just to the level of worldly religion. She found, after eight years, a little company, and most gladly profited by it.

I have no doubt what the path of blessing is for you, though a trying one. But if walked in, in faith, the Lord will meet you there. Do not be occupied with any next step. Quietly waiting on the Lord, where you are, is, for the moment, your place; as when Mary and Martha sent to Christ, "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick;" when Jesus heard that, He abode two days in the same place. He had no will of His Father to move. The obedience of Christ is not only God's will for the rule of action, but for the motive of action, too. By this negative obedience, He baffled Satan. He had no word from His Father to make the stones bread, and He did nothing. And Satan could do nothing against Him.

If the Lord be precious unto you, growth will be there, not in what you see in yourself, but in what you see in Him, which is true growth. When I came out, forty-eight years ago, a verse had great power with me, as a principle. "If thou wilt separate the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth. Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them." (Jer. xv. 19.) Positive directions are, no doubt, to be found in the N. T., as in 2 Timothy; still, as a principle in a like state of things, it helped me greatly. I had none to go to. Going back to what I was leaving, was nought. I went out not knowing whither I went, and the Lord has not failed. If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor, that is in having done with it; why give up, to go to it again? This was Paul's reproach to Peter, when taking up the law again. The Lord graciously keep you, and He will. Only look to and lean on

Him. There is a great lack of laborers, but the Lord is graciously raising up some. But it is a time of patience. Very truly yours in the Lord. J. N. D.

EVANGELIZATION AND HOLINESS.

America has been leading the way in this country, of late, in great public gatherings, both for the preaching of the gospel and the enforcement of christian holiness.

Messrs. Moody and Sankey have had the lead for the past two years in evangelization, and Mr. R. Pearsall Smith has been founding a new school for holiness, which seems likely to absorb, in a great degree, the energetic if not spiritual life of the churches.

Mr. Moody has taught the gospel-loving community in Great Britain and Ireland, the American method of successfully carrying on a revival: and Mr. R. Pearsall Smith has convened mass-meetings of believers, on the American model, such as have never before been assembled in this country, in pursuit of higher life, so called. New methods, melting music, monster meetings, and every thing on a great scale, that souls may be saved and saints consecrated, are the American order of the day. And these good and earnest men have had unparalleled external success in their several spheres. There has never been in this country such a crowding to hear the gospel and its sacred songs, as there has been to the meetings of Messrs. Moody and Sankey; and we doubt not that thousands of souls have been savingly affected by their ministrations: and hundreds of saints who had been groaning in legal bondage under law, have received a certain assurance of their salvation under the teachings of Mr. R. P. Smith and his co-workers. London has never been moved by the gospel from the lowest to the highest reaches of society, as it has been this spring and summer. And for this gospel work all Christians must give thanks. "Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice and will rejoice." All Christ-loving hearts must be in fullest sympathy with the objects aimed at—the saving of souls and the promotion of holiness in the saved.

It is quite true that thousands of the saints of God have not been able from conscientious motives to join in either movement; yet, perceiving the hand of the Lord

with them, and the Holy Spirit giving blessing, they have not ceased to give God thanks for souls converted and saints emancipated, while they have earnestly prayed God in public and private to uphold and lead on in the truth and right ways of the Lord the souls thus acted on, and the prominent leaders in the work. Their methods and associations have excluded them from co-operating with them, but they have not ceased to pray for them that the gospel may have free course, and that the saints might know real deliverance and true holiness. The reasons they give for holding back are chiefly such as these, that they would be mixed up with all sorts of unsound men, and evil doctrines, and doubtful practices; that the ultimate object is the furtherance of sectarianism; for their principles are, that there is to be worldly fascination, and no separation from ecclesiastical as well as moral evil, to Christ, in order to enjoy and manifest true corporate holiness; and if all the converts are to be sent back to their respective pastors, instead of being gathered together as at Pentecost, then they would feel that they had made themselves responsible for upholding, not only every form of denominationalism, but such systems as Romanism, Unitarianism, or Mormonism, as the case might be! Believing in the Church of God, they adhere to God's word, and glory in it; for they are convinced that human expediency in church matters, when substituted for divine principle, will always produce a heavy crop of evil, however plausible and pious the motives of its promoters may appear, and in the long run it must prove subversive of the Word of God and obstructive to the free action of the Spirit in the saints of God, to the praise of Christ's name.

A seed of human expediency was sown in the soil of evangelical ecclesiasticism in 1845, which in our day has grown to be a great tree, in the branches of which fowls of every wing now safely lodge, and all the great unattached enterprises of the hour move on pleasantly and magnificently under its umbrageous shadow. 7

In the year just mentioned, the Evangelical Alliance commenced its existence, and its principle being this—“We know that the Church of God is one, and ought to be manifestly one; but we never intend to act upon this divine fact and principle except for an occasional holiday

to see our Christian brethren of other communions." This is the human platform on which the two great movements we have referred to, have been worked; the temporary suspension, but not the renunciation, of an unscriptural and anti-christian sectarianism.

But the Evangelical Alliance movement has run parallel for the past thirty years, with another movement which, though dating from an earlier period, took a fresh start with more distinctness and outward pronouncement in the year 1845 (absolutely independent of the Evangelical Alliance), and its watchword is, "The Church of Christ is one, and we mean to act as though we believed it;" and seeing that being of the Church of God involved their severance from all that practically denies it, they have gone on holding and acting upon it permanently ever since its public enunciation and adoption. Thus we see that "God has never left Himself without witness;" and "as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses" by spurious imitation, so when this intermittent imitation of the Church was introduced, God created a living witness to the true doctrine and practice of the Church, which now colors all Christendom; and the two movements continue to confront each other with great sharpness of outline—the one Philadelphian, the other Laodicean—the one of God, the other of man: and just as the one or the other predominates, so will the living Christianity of the closing half of our century, be characterized by the human element or the divine.

It is abundantly clear that the more earnest of the saints of God, even among those who remain within the sects, are away from the direction of the old Evangelicalism. A new power, too, is at work among them, for the evangelical has been superseded by the evangelistic, and the multitudes who have crowded the meetings of the American Evangelists can no longer be satisfied with the ordinary routine of evangelical "service," but must crave the lively style of revivalistic address and stirring song to which they have been introduced; while the thousands that have been convened for the purpose of getting spiritual liberty and an increase of holiness, by Mr. R. P. Smith, many of whom have, no doubt, received a measure of liberty, or at least assurance of salvation, will no longer allow themselves to be put

back under law, as the teachers in a Galatianized Evangelicalism are now straining every nerve to do, in order to ensure keeping them on the ground of the Reformation theology, and within the boundaries of a mutually acknowledged and permissible ecclesiastical confederacy; for the Holy Ghost is evidently at work among the saints of God in these movements, urging them to whole-hearted devotedness to Christ and single-eyed obedience to His Word and Spirit, and many will hear His voice and go forward "unto Him."

In the Protestant Christendom of to-day we have three great divisions—the Ritualistic party, urging the unestablished, Rome-ward; the Protestant, chaining down its devotees to the Reformation principles, theology and traditions; and the advocates of the revival, with its two-fold objects, tendencies, and issues, as above described. Separate from all in the path of cleaving to the word and name of Christ are those that take at least as deep an interest in the gospel, and a far deeper love for the Church, but confessing its present ruin. It is obvious enough to all who have the unction of the Spirit, that God is working a fresh work of the Holy Ghost in our day, such as involves the necessity of its being provided with a *new vessel*; for you cannot put the new wine of this vintage into the old bottles of the Reformation or the Puritan age, unless you mean permanently to scandalize the whole of Christian society by the chronic spectacle of the new wine bursting the old bottles.

Messrs. Moody and Pearsall Smith have been allowed full scope and freedom, because they have not preached the disquieting truths of God with regard to ecclesiastical position, which would lead to separation from sectarian ways; nor yet the full truth of man's total ruin, and of the new place of the believer in Christ risen; but yet one cannot help seeing that the whole tendency of their work has been to unsettle the minds of the saints, and to send a spirit of inquiry throughout society, why the churches do not supply them with the same clear, free gospel and the soul-emancipating truths which these abnormal movements and irregular agencies afford. Whence the liveliness and joy of the meetings of the one, and the dulness and insipidity of those of the other?

Can that system be right in principle, which is always wrong in practice?

Such are questions that are pressed upon the saints by what is now transpiring. And clear-headed ecclesiastics in all the churches perceive that the whole tendency of the present abnormal work is to loosen pious, Christ-loving and consecrated Christians from their present sectarian associations, and lead them to act permanently on the divine basis of the oneness of the body of Christ, the principle on which, after a sort, these temporary evangelistic and "holiness" movements have been conducted; for they have felt it good to meet as members of Christ, and being all one in Christ Jesus they cannot help seeing the unscripturalness of separating themselves again into their varied human denominations, "after the commandments of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

Judging from the past, the issue of this present awakening will be a growing dissatisfaction with the ordinary services of the denominations, and a great exodus from them. During the next ten years, if the Lord tarry, another hundred thousand saints will likely have severed their connection with the sects, as the result of the present free and open work in the gospel followed up by this movement for holiness; and those who withdraw, may, in the first instance, chiefly swell the ranks of unscripturally gathered assemblies; a thing generally to be deplored; for, being short of the truth of God, it may, by and by, unfortunately form the very centre and focus of the Laodiceanism of the last days which is characterized by preferring christians to Christ; and boasting of being rich and increased with goods, and having need of nothing, just when this indifference, that has excluded Him and His claims that they might go on smoothly and happily with each other, is provoking Him to spew them out of His mouth. This is, no doubt, the ecclesiastical goal of the great christian expediency movement—that professes one thing and does another—professes to know the basis of God for His Church, and the glory of Christ in the manifested oneness of His people, and yet without conscience, lives permanently in indifference to it, save when they choose to come together for mutual conference, general evangelization,

or personal holiness. "I would that thou wert cold or hot; so, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." But the true-hearted among them will sooner or later find their true place in reference to the Lord Jesus, and keep it to their own blessing and His glory.

It is necessary to distinguish between what God permits and what He approves. We know what He permits, by His Providence; we know what He approves of, only by His Word. God will use men who are burning with zeal for souls, much more than those who are full of truth and cold of heart, irrespective of their associations; but no amount of success in the gospel can prove that human expediency is right, and divine principle wrong, for the Holy Scriptures unequivocally declare the contrary; and we must judge all that claims our attention by that unerring standard. Great apparent success is no proof of rightness of position, for though Babylon is seen on the back of the Beast, in Revelation, still the prophetic voice is heard regarding her—"She shall be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God that judgeth her." In the Providence of God she is seen riding on the Beast; by the Word of God she is seen in the fire!

God has left Himself free to go even into Babylon to save souls; but, when saved, His word to them is—"Come out of her, my people!"

Wherefore, we learn from His own declarations, that nothing will meet with Christ's approval but that which is *of God, and founded on His Word*; and all really consecrated saints, who long to glorify God and please the Lord and not deny His name, are bound to be where they can keep Christ's word on the original ground of the Church of God, if they would have the present good work permanently established, properly conducted, and so planted as to be likely to propagate itself.

If Messrs. Moody and Pearsall Smith, instead of taking the ground of a mere truce to sectarianism, had boldly assumed the only true basis of the Church of God, and worked from God's centre to God's centre, though it might have looked as if they had had but poor success compared with having the kingdom of God coming with observation, they would have done ten times the amount of good, by giving permanent blessing to

many more souls; for all those who prefer faithfulness to Christ among the saints would have been with them, and the converts made, if allowed to remain where grace had placed them, in the Church of God, would have been nourished there with sound doctrine, instead of being left to famish outside of it on the mere common-places of worldly religiousness, and they would have grown in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, and would in their turn have proved laborers that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. Thus the awakening would have been a tree whose seed is in itself, whereas it will only merge into and intensify the exulting Laodiceanism of the period, and have no reproductive power, though it will boast much of its past achievements and supposed possessions. We must work from God's centre, if we would gather with Christ; and return to God's centre, bringing our converts with us, if we would build up any thing that God will own as His building, and not wood, hay, and stubble, which will perish at the first touch of fire. Christ is God's centre — not christians.

LAODICEA, the human thing that forms the basis of these great demonstrative works, excludes Christ from its basis of co-operation, to be able to secure the union and co-operation of all sects of christians, with a majority who are not christians; and while He complains, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," its inmates are exulting and self-satisfied within, saying, "We are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;" but self-deceived, of course, for Jesus says, "Thou knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

PHILADELPHIA has nothing great to boast of; her doings seem hardly worth mentioning. But the people there have gone into what their brethren of Laodicea laugh at as narrow, illiberal, and behind the age, but which is described by Christ in these terms—"I know thy works; behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, AND HAST KEPT MY WORD, AND HAST NOT DENIED MY NAME." And the blessed Lord Himself is pleased to commend them for it; and though they have "little strength" now, they are content to be "small and despised," and abide their time until

the Master's cheering word is made good to them: "*Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to* KNOW THAT I HAVE LOVED THEE. 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. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." (Rev. iii. 9-13.)

It is with a sense of sorrow before God, because of the scattered condition of the saints, and the dishonor done to the Word and Spirit of God, that one writes of such things. Would that all of us, on seeing the growing indifference to CHRIST, were led to deep self-humiliation and intense cleaving to the Lord in our present actual circumstances. Individual faithfulness in cleaving to Christ, His word and Spirit, is the path of love, privilege, and duty; and must lead to the maintaining of corporate separateness and chastity, as the affianced Bride of Christ, as well as personal holiness. W. R.

"THE SUFFERINGS OF THIS PRESENT TIME."

The costly vessels of the heavenly Potter are not complete until they have been burned with fire. Our Father must prepare His "polished stones" with the rough file and the sharp cut of the chisel. The gold of the sanctuary must go through the third furnace of heat for its complete refinement. *Therefore*, "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you."

Suffering had its mission even for the sinless One and He learned lessons by it; it brought Him a "perfection;" and so He became the "author of eternal salvation." We think it a good thing to become hardened to suffer

ing, to have the sensibilities blunted: but Jesus thought not so. He laid bare every feeling of His heart, and they must have been wounded by all they came in contact with, and so He was troubled in spirit, groaned and wept.

The first thing for us to learn, is that what God permits is as *necessary* as what He wills. God permitted Satan to afflict Job, yet he says, "the *Lord* hath taken away." Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord and shall we not receive evil? We mourn over the lack of judgment which has brought misfortune upon us, and we find no rest until we see that God permitted it for our good; that it is one of the "all things" which "work together" for our good. A dear christian woman is at this very time mourning over the overwork and neglect which have brought on a protracted sickness; and wonders when ourselves shape the rod which smites us, if we may expect the Lord in the trial.

We never shall find strength and confidence until we look beyond the agent, beyond second causes directly to the Lord. And when we can do this, we are prepared to look with forgiveness to the subordinate agent, who has slandered or ill-treated us.

But when I have learned to receive all things from God's hand, it is still hard to believe that His will is best for me. This is indeed a long and hard lesson and will cost many a fierce conflict; I have two natures within me. The one must love God's will, for it is its nature to do so. The other must oppose His will, for it is its nature to do so, and so the struggle begins. But thanks be to God, it is not a question on which side shall be the victory, by those who "walk in the Spirit." And each time it will be the easier, and there will be peace in the heart, though suffering is there too.

Oh, how the renewed heart delights in God's will, and prays that it may be done at whatever cost to itself. Believing that nothing better or higher could possibly come to it than it is now receiving as the expression of that will, it is at rest, though suffering in the sensibilities. The surface of the ocean may be tumultuous, while in the depths is a perfect calm.

Would I miss the *exact* place in the kingdom for which God designs me? No, not for the whole world and all

that is in it. Then let me lie down at Jesus' feet in submission and subjection to every trial, and all suffering which He sees necessary. Is there anything which we could not better part with than our trials? Do we not say so when they are passed; and think it a choice mercy of our Heavenly Father that He condescends to take so much pains with us? How good to leave ourselves in His hands, for there is a sweetness even in the bitter, surpassing the joys of earth. There is a good brought out of the evil, better than the most desired thing of earth. And if we only knew what we shall sometime know, we should ourselves make the very same choice which God does for us.

As one has said, "It is sad, it is piteous, but less would not have sufficed the purposes of God. The future is the present of God, and to that future He sacrifices the human present." "Can love injure? Yes, in time, for a benefit through eternity." So let Thy will be done in me, and through me. Heed not my murrurings. I rejoice to know that Thou wilt not, for Thou art determined to bless me in spite of myself. But Thou wilt pitifully bear with me while I tell out to Thee the tale of my trouble. Nay, more, Thou dost suffer with me. "In all their affliction He was afflicted." J. A.

A WORD ON FELLOWSHIP.

There are few terms in such common use and so little understood as "fellowship." In numberless cases, it merely indicates the fact of a nominal membership in some religious denomination—a fact which furnishes no guarantee whatsoever of living communion with Christ, or personal devotedness to His cause. If all who are nominally "in fellowship" were acquitting themselves as men of God, what a very different condition of things we should be privileged to witness!

But what is fellowship? It is, in its very highest expression, having one common object with God, and taking part in the same portion; and that object—that portion is Christ—Christ known and enjoyed through the Holy Ghost. This is fellowship with God. What a privilege! What a dignity! What unspeakable blessedness! To be allowed to have a common object and a

common portion with God Himself! To delight in the One in whom He delights! There can be nothing higher, nothing better, nothing more precious than this. Not even in heaven itself shall we know aught beyond this. Our own condition will, thank God, be vastly different. We shall be done with a body of sin and death, and be clothed with a body of glory. We shall be done with a sinful, sorrowing, distracting world, where all is directly opposed to God and to us, and we shall breathe the atmosphere—the pure and exhilarating atmosphere of that bright and blessed world above. But, in so far as our fellowship is concerned it is now as it shall be then, “with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ”—“in the light,” and by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Thus much as to our fellowship with God. And, as regards our fellowship one with another, it is simply as we walk in the light, as we read, “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” (1 John i. 7). We can only have fellowship one with another as we walk in the immediate presence of God. There may be a vast amount of mere intercourse without one single particle of divine fellowship. Alas! alas! a great deal of what passes for christian fellowship is nothing more than the merest religious gossip—the vapid, worthless, soul-withering chit-chat of the religious world, than which nothing can be more miserably unprofitable. True christian fellowship can only be enjoyed in the light. It is when we are individually walking with God, in the power of personal communion, that we really have fellowship one with another, and this fellowship consists in real heart enjoyment of Christ as our one object—our common portion. It is not heartless traffic in certain favorite doctrines which we receive to hold in common. It is not morbid sympathy with those who think, and see, and feel with us, in some favorite theory or dogma. It is something quite different from all this. It is delighting in Christ, in common with all those who are walking in the light. It is attachment to Him—to His Person—His Name—His word—His cause—His people. It is joint consecration of heart and soul to that blessed One who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

and brought us into the light of God's presence, there to walk with Him and one another. This and nothing less is christian fellowship; and where this is really understood, it will lead us to pause and consider what we say when we declare, in any given case, "such an one is in fellowship."—*From the "Man of God."*

C. H. M.

SATAN'S SNARE.

This is the day of special grace,
 When tares and wheat together grow,
 And thorny plants with beauty glow,
 And sinners wear a smiling face,
 Say in their hearts, what need of care?
 "All things continue as they were."

So thought the world in Noah's day,
 So thought the cities of the plain,
 'Till fire and brimstone on them rain,
 Or all beneath the waters lay,
 Their souls deluded by the snare,
 "All things continue as they were."

And once again the warning note,
 Is sounded in the worldling's ear;
 As then, he sees no cause for fear,
 'Tis bright as when the prophets wrote;
 The old refrain is still the snare,
 "All things continue as they were."

So will it be unto the end,
 The preacher's voice unheeded falls
 On hearts as hard as granite walls,
 And ears that care not to attend,
 Still blind and deaf to Satan's snare,
 "All things continue as they were."

Yet truly 'tis the day of grace,
 Though men refuse to be forgiven,
 They want the earth and not the heaven,
 Nor long to see the Saviour's face.
 Their wishes bait the devil's snare,
 "All things continue as they were."

But at an hour when ye think not,
 The Son of Man shall surely come
 With trumpet shout to call us home,
 And only those shall be forgot,
 Who in the dread delusion share
 "All things continue as they were."

J. T.

OCCASIONAL NOTES ON JOHN.

Chapters xx., xxi.

Chap. xx. Here, there are given, in a characteristic way, the incidents following the resurrection of Christ; and the most blessed results of it are made to pass before us rapidly, in their order, taking us along to the millennium in the next chapter.

In Mary Magdalene, out of whom had been cast seven devils, we see one who could not do without Him who had loved her. She seeks Him, ignorantly, no doubt, for she seeks the *living One* among the *dead*; but her heart is wholly His, and, first at the sepulcher, "while it was yet dark," she runs for those who ought to have known most about Him, with the word, "they have taken away the Lord!" She knew not that none could take Him away, and yet she could own Him as her Lord. But what did Peter and John do, who had been so long time with Him, and heard Him say, the third day He must rise again?

We see that accompanying one does not give intimacy with him. He had called *them* friends, but they had not yet entered into His thoughts or doings. They see in the orderly arrangement of the napkin and the linen clothes, that neither friend nor foe had taken away His body, and they believed on evidence, a belief of no moral value, and of no power over them, for they went to their own homes. It is peculiar that the chief priests and Pharisees remembered against Him, as a "*deceiver*," that He had said He would arise again after three days (Matt. xxvii.); but His disciples did not seem to remember it of Him, as Son of God, having power to take up His life again.

In the calm dignity of a conqueror He took up His life again, casting off and laying aside the things of the grave, in due order. According to the Scriptures, His soul was not left in hell, nor did His body see corruption, but these who *saw* these things, knew not the Scriptures. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the *Word of God*.

So they could do without Him, while Mary, as ignorant of the Scriptures as they, stood without the sepulcher weeping. What is "home" or all the world to her without Him, the one need of her heart? She knows no place beyond that tomb. Its emptiness is not under-

stood; but *He* had been there, and there she confesses Christ, not according to the truth, for He is risen, but according to a soul wrapt up in Him. Oh, for more of this!

She had been the object of a wonderful deliverance. In this dire possession by seven devils, she was doubtless a picture of Israel in the last state of evil that shall come upon them, (Matt. xii. 45,) she being completely given up to the adversary. And as she stands now, weeping and looking down into the grave, she is the representation of the beloved remnant of that people, ignorant of His power and of resurrection, at the grave's mouth, with a soul thirsting after Him. And they that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

She turns away from an empty grave, telling out more fully the absorption of her heart with the one object, by her speech to Him, who, she supposed, was the gardener, "Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." *Him?* as if any one would know whom she meant; as if every one would be occupied with just one thought, *the Lord was not there!* As if there could be any thing else to think of at such a supreme moment. This is beautiful, indeed, and Jesus at once reveals Himself to her, calling His own sheep by name. And then His voice is known, and answered, "Rabboni," my master.

But He is not to dwell on earth and be in relationship with the remnant here, and so He says, "Touch me not." In Matthew, the other women "held His feet;" but there, it is the pledge of His bodily presence with the Jews in the latter day, while here, He, as the risen Son of God, is to take His place with the Father, and all must be detached from the earthly thought. He had not risen to re-establish the kingdom then. All this will, in due order, be done, after the heavenly family is called out and caught up. The grand scene is heaven now: "I am not yet ascended to my Father." "Though we had known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we Him no more." There is a better thing introduced, union with Him above, as risen with Him. The corn of wheat has fallen into the ground and died. Henceforth it abideth not alone. "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and yo

Father, and to my God and your God." They are brought into the same position with Himself before God the Father. This is the Christian position; that in Matthew xxviii. 9, the Jewish.

It is sweetly instructive to see that she, whose *heart* was fully set on Christ, after seeing angels and seeing the Lord fully revealed to her, being the first to see Him, becomes the first messenger of His resurrection! Happy errand!

And so (vv. 19-23) this testimony *gathers the disciples together*. It is on the ground of their union with Him, though they may not then have acted in the full intelligence of it. The scene represents it. There is first the statement that they are in the same relation to the Father with Himself, and then there is the being assembled together on the first day of the week, with the doors shut. Then Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace be unto you." He shewed them His hands and His side. It was He, the same that had died, and their peace came through that blood that flowed thence; and, as belonging to Him, as risen, they must be established forever in *peace*. It is an essential thing and characteristic of the new position, as well as of testimony, which follows. So again, He says, "Peace be unto you," sending them forth as the Father had sent Him. "And when he had said this he breathed on (into) them, and saith unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." It is a picture of the church, gathered alone to the Lord Jesus, apart from the world, with authority to administer discipline. If one is received from the world, on the ground of his having become a child of God, that is remitting sins; or if one be restored upon confession, it is remitting sins; if one be excluded, his sin is retained; or if one be refused fellowship it is retaining his sin. And what a responsibility this is, and how suggestive of the holiness and grace that become His house. There is here nothing of Laodicean indifference, being neither cold nor hot. With Christ in the midst, how can sin be allowed? And this is true in a day of confusion and looseness, when possibly only the two or three can be found gathered in His name.

The breathing on, or into, them is the imparting of spiritual life, according to the power of resurrection. In the old creation, God breathed into Adam the breath of life, and man became a living soul. So in the new, it is the breath of inward life, the life in which they were to act as now sent into the world, and as being of and for Him, the new man. And so it is to be distinguished from the descent of the Person of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost.

Looked at as a picture of the church, it is of course understood that the Holy Ghost is the power of life in each and dwelling among them.

In the next scene (vv. 24-29) there is a representation of the Remnant of the last days, after the church has gone. What characterizes them is what was apparent in Thomas, believing when they see with their eyes. While the gathering of seven days previous was to the testimony of God as their Father, His confession is "My Lord and my God," the acknowledgment of the Jews when they *look* upon Him whom they pierced. It is not sonship, but owning Jesus as Jehovah—the covenant name of God to Israel—and God.

And thus the first day of the week, the day of his resurrection, seems to have been distinctly marked and consecrated by our Lord as the occasion of his meeting together with His own, the day afterwards marked by the church meeting for breaking bread (Acts xx. 7), itself a scene of worship, and joy in Him on the ground of accomplished redemption.

We learn, too, that nothing is written in the Word simply for information, or to gratify curiosity, but for our profit. God has furnished us a record according to His own mind, giving here that which sets Him forth as the Son of God, that believing, we might have life in His name.

Chapter xxi. Following the two days marked in the previous chapter, there is here the third time that Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after that He was risen from the dead. And it is as distinct in its dispensational meaning as the former two. The first one set forth the Church, those who have first to do with Christ as risen; the second, the Jewish remnant in their day of deliverance when they shall *see* Him, and believe. The

third day gives that which follows, the millennial scene of gathering, by those whom He made fishers of men. It was while fishing that the Lord had at first met several of the disciples and made them His followers. Now after His resurrection He meets them under the same circumstances. Seven of them were together in this. But of themselves they could do nothing. It was night, and only toil. But when the morning was come, after all the season of the testimony of the Jewish remnant was fruitless, Jesus stood on the shore, the earth upon which He will be seen, when the gathering out from among the Gentiles shall take place. In the beginning, when He first found them, their net broke. Israel as then known, in the fallen condition, could not be used; but now in the new kingdom, established in resurrection, they became really co-workers with Him. It is Himself tells them to cast the net on the right side of the ship. They cast, and now they are not able to draw it, for the multitude. It is the fulfilment of Ezek. xlvii. 9, 10, the re-establishment of Israel.

When they came to shore they found that the Lord already had fish there. Before His manifestation He will have a remnant already. Afterwards He will gather the full number as set forth in the number of fish in the net.

And then, the "come and dine," of Jesus, is the expression of fellowship on earth with His people. And it also precedes the gracious interview with Peter, in which his full restoration takes place. To him, personally, there is a restoration of *conscience* in his hastening to the Lord, and dining in peace with Him; a restoration of *heart*, after the thorough searching by Christ, and accepting his love, as a known thing; a restoration to *ministry*, in committing to Him, His own sheep; and a deeper, richer token of restoration, in allowing him, who in the flesh had boasted he would die with Him and for Him, now at the end of his ministry to die for His sake, whereby he should glorify God.

There is doubtless much instruction for us, in this incident, occurring in this appended chapter, where all is typical; a glimpse of the ministry of Peter and of John, the former having to do with the Jewish sheep, the Remnant to be saved, and so closing in death; while the lat-

ter goes on till the coming of the Lord, as we find in Revelation, our Lord speaking only of that which is in connection with the earth. As to this, Jerusalem, as a centre and the apostleship to the circumcision, pass away, while John carries us on to the coming Lord Himself, giving by revelation what pertains to it, in detail. Meanwhile, distinct from both, is the ministry of Paul, the mystery, Christ and the Church, which is heavenly, and, of course, has no mention here. Thus there are three characters of apostleship, Peter's, Paul's and John's.

And then the Lord and the disciples vanish with the word to Peter, "Follow Me," the word that called them to Him at the beginning of His ministry on earth, and which comes with new emphasis to them now, as fully set forth to the work, on His resurrection. The wondrous work has been done, that makes all possible, and heaven becomes the end secured to them, and to us through grace.

It is but a little while and we are to follow Him thither, keeping, till He come, the word of His patience. Whether it be they who "sleep in Jesus," as Peter, or we that are alive and remain to His coming, as the ministry of John does, this is distinctly our hope, to be caught up to meet Him in the air. Well may we follow in the path of suffering and service which He has worn for us, waiting but His voice to follow to the glory:

With such an expectation,
Well may our hearts be light;
This hour, anticipation,
The next, the glory bright!

Thus, with a word here and there, have we hastily passed over this book of infinite riches, displaying Christ as the Son of God, in the bosom of the Father, made flesh and dwelling among us, who in all this was manifesting to eyes that were opened, the glory of God, and who as such, filling all things, and for whom all things were made, it would surely be impossible for all to be told, were the world filled with the volumes about Him. And this is He who has loved us and given Himself for us, and with whom we are to be FOREVER!

THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR.

The Old Testament closes with the proper Jewish hope which by them will be fully realized in the latter day, after the "joint heirs," or in other words, "the church of the living God," is taken to the glory, and the time of the "Revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven with His glorified saints and mighty angels" comes. The prophet Malachi gives us in very stirring language the character of the "Jewish hope," and what will take place when it is realized. "For behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the 'Sun of righteousness' arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. iv. 1-3). We cannot fail to see in this prophecy, all that the Jewish nation looks for, and in the days of its fulfillment will be blessedly realized by them. And how blessed will be the beams of that "Sun of righteousness," as they fall upon the sorrowing, suffering remnant, that have been passing through the refining process of "the great tribulation," when from the very depths of their longing and waiting hearts they will exclaim, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation" (Isaiah xxv. 9); and again, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Ps. cxviii. 25, 26).

It is when the bright beams of the "Sun of righteousness" do arise, that the dark clouds that have so long enveloped "God's people of that day" shall be dispersed, themselves restored to their own land, the earth relieved of its curse, Satan bound, the quick judged, and the bright and glorious Millennial day introduced, when "God shall gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him" (Eph. i. 10), and when heaven shall celebrate the fact that "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall

reign for ever and ever" (Rev. xi. 15); and when "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Heb. ii. 14).

The New Testament closes with a different scene entirely. If the Old Testament closes with the "*Jewish hope*," the New closes with the "*christian hope*." The difference is great; and to mark the distinction is of the greatest importance. It is as follows: "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star. And the Spirit and the bride say come. And let him that heareth, say, come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. . . . He which testified these things saith, surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. xxii. 17-20). It is not here the Sun of righteousness breaking in upon the moral darkness of this scene, delivering an earthly people, slaying their enemies, and ushering in the day of Millennial glory; but the representation of the Bridegroom in the heavens, as "The Bright and Morning Star," to the heart of His waiting and expectant Bride upon the earth. It is Jesus from amidst those scenes of glory on high, presenting "Himself" to her as the consummation of her joy—her proper hope and expectation—"The Bright and Morning Star." O! what unspeakable blessedness there is in all this! But is there no response? Ah, yes; that wondrous presentation of Himself to the heart of His beloved and blood-bought spouse, has not failed to reach the very depths of her heart's affections. Wondrous thought. The Bride on earth, as actuated and taught by the spirit, responds to the beatings of the heart of the Bridegroom in the heavens above! If He says, "I am the Bright and Morning Star," she responds and says, together with the Spirit, come, come, come! What a blessed reciprocation of love and affection is shewn here, resulting from a full appreciation on both sides!

But it is not as in the Jewish hope, His coming and blessing them in the earth, and at the same time slaughtering their enemies; but His coming as the "Bright and Morning Star," not to light up the whole earth with His glory, but to take *out of the scene*, the bride of His

heart—the whole of the joint-heirs, that they may return with Him when He does so come as the “Sun of righteousness” with healing in His wings to the “remnant of Israel,” and for the establishment of His kingdom to the uttermost parts of the earth.

In this dispensation, which actually began at Pentecost, the Church is being called out and built, and is going on to *completion*. When that Church is completed and the Lord shall have come for His Bride, there will no longer be any suspension of the fulfilment of the Old Testament predictions respecting the purifying of the remnant in the fires of the great tribulation, and ultimately their full restoration in their own land under the reign of their true Messiah.

The coming of Jesus as the “Bright and Morning Star” closes the present dispensation, and finishes the time of the suspension of the fulfilment of the Jewish prophecies, and as it has been said before, the “joint-heirs” are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and conducted by His own gracious hand to the Father’s house on high. Even as Jesus said Himself, “In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go and prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, *and receive you unto myself*; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John xiv. 1-3); and as the Holy Ghost witnesses, “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and 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” (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17). How soon this may take place we know not; but we can repose by faith in the verity of that word which says, “He which testifieth these things saith, *surely I come quickly!*” (Rev. xxii. 20.)

Could any thing exceed the glory of the church’s prospect? One moment, yea, the twinkling of an eye, is enough to land her on the fields of light and glory in the presence of her Lord who will come for her. He will not send Gabriel or Michael, those mighty archangels to fetch the loved one to His heart—His chosen Bride; no, He will come Himself; and above the atmosphere of this

lower world will be the meeting place; and if the quiet fields were the only witnesses (save the servant, type of the Holy Ghost) of the blissful meeting of Isaac and Rebekah, even so, shall not the rude gaze of this godless world disturb the blessedness of that meeting of Isaac's Lord with his beloved Bride. They shall be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. We cannot conceive the glory and blessedness of that scene—that meeting of heaven's Lord and His Bride—and the overwhelming joy of every heart; but, blessed be God, it awaits us. The Lord is at hand.

Let us look for a moment at the practical effect of all this upon us here in the world. The very first thing that it does, is, "It sets the affections right." It calls our affections from every creature object, and fixes and centers them upon the "Bridegroom of our heart." The Bride renders to the Bridegroom what are His rights—her every affection. And those deep Spirit-wrought affections ever causing the utterance of the blessed words, Come, Come, Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus.

Again, it brings about an *intense* separation from all that is not agreeable to the mind and word of the Lord Himself; it is not, "there is no harm in this and no harm in that;" but what is the mind of the Lord? is it agreeable to Him? will it glorify him? It is "living no longer to oneself, but to *Him* who died for us and rose again."

It also necessarily sets one in his proper place in this world. The world is a system that has arisen up without God, and which has cast out the "Holy One of God," and has been going on without Him ever since. The Church is a *calling out* of the world; and the spiritual sensibilities and affections of the Bride would lead her to remember that the world crucified and still rejects her beloved Lord, and instinctively to shrink from association with it. The deckings of this world, its honors glory, and fame, ill become the Bride of the blessed One, whom it rejects.

Will all this make us idle in the way of soul-winning? Far be the thought. Quite the reverse, it will lead us into the very current of the heart of Christ about poor sinners; for if it leads us on the one hand to say, Come, Lord Jesus, Come; it on the other leads us to turn to

the perishing around, and exclaim, with deep fervency of desire, "And let him that is athirst, come. And *whoso ever will*, let him take the water of life freely." O! may these truths sink deep down into our inmost hearts!

E. A.

DEUTERONOMY XXXII.

It seems by the way this chapter commences, that there must be something in it especially worth noticing. "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth." And so it is; for it is *God* who is speaking. O what a blessing it is that God has spoken; but what a responsibility also, to those who reject God's testimony. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the words that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

God speaks, and, by the next verse, we see that it is something refreshing, something precious: "My doctrine shall drop as the rain." How refreshing God's word is to the dried up heart that has nought but *man's* teaching. When *God's* teaching comes, it is like rain to the parched ground. "My speech shall distil as the dew."

There are four modes of watering here, each, I think, bringing out varied aspects of the effect of God's words on the soul. "Shall distil as the dew," *i. e.*, gently, thoroughly watering every part, but in that soothing, quiet manner. First it is, "my doctrine," then "my speech"—after God has once watered our souls by His teaching, He will continue it. O let us come to His "speech," let us come to His word, and morning and evening He will speak to us as the dew.

Next, "as the *small* rain upon the *tender* herb." O how precious to see God's care of the weak, tender plants of His planting. And we are His plants, we are in that vine of which the Lord Jesus said, "My Father is the husbandman." Yes, He is the husbandman and He will refresh us by the "dew" and "small rain" of His word, and also purge us that we bear *more* fruit. "And as the showers upon the grass." How beautiful the grass looks after a shower of rain, how refreshed it appears. May we present that same appearance; may we watch that we hinder not the Holy Spirit from ministering to us, that

we may be continually refreshed by God's "rain," and "dew," and "small rain," and plentiful "showers."

And why will His speech distil as the dew? "Because I will publish *the name of the Lord*." That is the precious thing. God's word speaks of *Himself*, and we are refreshed and strengthened by hearing of *Him*, by knowing *Him*. How much better than to be occupied with one's experience, with one's self. So Jesus says "Abide in *Me*."

"Because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, *His* work is *perfect*: for all *His* ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He." That is God's doctrine, that is what God's speech is about, and that is the kind of teaching that is as the dew to our souls, to learn what God is. I am a poor lost sinner—I come to God, and He teaches that He is love; that is as rain to my poor dried up heart. As a child I fall into sin, and I come to Him—He says, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." That is as the dew to my heart after the day's trials and failings. It is knowing something of what God is, that comforts the heart. To know what one's self is, is very needful to break one down before the Lord, but that knowledge does not refresh, though it leads us to Him who does.

Having stated *what He is*, He now tells them what *they are*, and what they will do; what judgments will fall upon them; and, finally, that He will be true to Himself, and deliver them. God prefaces the statement of what they are and how they will fail, by what *He is*, and that is their safety. Are they unstable? He is "the Rock." Are their works evil? "His work is perfect," "His ways are judgment." Are they perverse and crooked? He is "a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He."

And we see further on in the chapter how this turns out their salvation. For after they have left Him to go to other gods (v. 16); and He, in judgment, has given them over to their enemies (v. 20, 25), after they are brought low (v. 36); He for *His own* sake, because they are His people, will take vengeance on their enemies (v. 43). For He says, "I will render vengeance to *mine* enemies, and will reward them that hate *me*" (v. 41). See how he

incorporates Himself with His people. Although they had left Him and gone to idols, yet in His mercy, He comes to their help and calls *their* enemies "*mine*" enemies. So the Lord will finally restore Israel for His name's sake, and make good the promise, the unconditional promise, He made to Abraham.

See how beautifully it described the Lord's care of them before they departed from Him. "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He *set the bounds of the people according to the number* of the children of Israel." What foreordaining care is here! Long before He called His people out, He had prepared a place for them. He knew their number, and according to that number "He set the bounds of the people." Notice, that in speaking of the nations, He says "the Most High;" He does not say Jehovah, *that* is the covenant name with Israel. When He speaks of them He says, "For the LORD's portion is His people: Jacob is the lot of His inheritance."

What a thought! He gives a portion of earth to the nations. He reserves a portion for His people, but what does he leave for Himself. "The Lord's portion is His people: Jacob is the lot of *His inheritance*." Ah! the Lord *needed a portion*, He needed some one to take care of, His grace delights to find an object on which to display itself. Why has the Lord saved us? Was our salvation the *chief* object? What does the Word say? "To the praise of the glory of His grace" (Eph. i. 6). "That in the ages to come, He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." There is a sweet hymn, which says—

"Jesus, Thou needest me,
E'en me, Thou Light divine;
O Son of God, Thou needest me.
Thou needest souls like mine.

"Thy fulness needs my want,
Thy wealth my poverty;
Thy healing skill my sickness needs,
Thy joy my misery.

"Thy strength my weakness needs,
Thy grace my worthlessness;
Thy greatness needs a worm like me
To cherish and to bless."

Yes! the Lord needed an object for His love and grace, and He finds it in His saints. And if we would be in communion with God's mind let us also delight in His saints, though *our* portion is the Lord Himself.

Verses 10, 11, though applying to Israel, may also in principle be applied to ourselves. See how every thing was of the Lord—"He found him;" "He led him;" "He instructed;" "He kept." It was all *His* doing. So with us—"Jesus sought me when a stranger." O, that we were better scholars, more docile and quick to learn. But the Lord *does* lead, and *does* instruct, and *does* keep us; and He bears us up as on eagles' wings. "The Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him." And it was *only* when *alone* that the Lord would do it, for when they went after other gods, He left them, *to them*. So with us, in proportion as the Lord *alone* is the object of our hearts, will we have the guidance of His eye; and in proportion as our faith is in the *Lord alone*, will He answer to our faith. But His love to us *never ceases*, even though it has to express itself in chastisement.

C. H. B.

REMARKS ON INTERCESSION, ADVOCACY, THE LORD'S PRAYER, &C.

The intercession of Christ as Priest, in Hebrews, is not for the forgiveness of sins, nor for sins properly at all, but for mercy and help in time of need to succor them that are tempted, because all the sanctified are viewed as perfected by one offering.

In 1 John ii. the advocacy is exercised when one has sinned, because there, fellowship or communion is spoken of, and that is interrupted by sin.

Forgiveness, in the sense of non-imputation, cannot be sought by one set free in Christ, because he does know that sins are not imputed to him. But he confesses his sins, and fatherly forgiveness is given him. Confession goes much deeper into the conscience than mere asking forgiveness.

There is a forgiveness which applies to christians, and to christians only—what I may call administrative forgiveness, which has nothing to do with non-imputation or righteousness. (See James v. 15, compare 1 John v. 16, and 2 Cor. ii. 10).

In 1 John ii. the advocacy of Christ is founded on righteousness and the efficacy of propitiation being already there in Christ.

That pardon is plenary on coming to Christ is clear; and to refer to none else, (*i. e.*, Scriptures) in Heb., ix., x., it is largely reasoned out by the Holy Ghost. If not, such sins never could be cleared, as Christ cannot now die over again, and without *shedding* of blood is no remission. Christ must often have suffered.

To make a difference of time (as to all our sins being put away) is to confound the time of the spirit's operation, in bringing our souls to faith in Christ and His work, with the work itself. All our sins were future when Christ bore them. The way in which "once for all," "for ever," and "no more," are used in Heb. ix. and x., is most distinct and characteristic.

As to the Lord's prayer, it must be remembered that it was given before the Lord's work was accomplished, and, of course, has the characteristics of the time in which it was given because it was perfect. Nevertheless, statements that accompany it show that where the spirit of forgiveness does not exist, forgiveness does not belong, though we are imperfect; and no one in his senses would ask for forgiveness from God in the measure in which our forgiveness is perfect, though in spirit and purpose it is, according to the new nature. Christendom and christians have forgotten that our place and standing is that of christians, consequent on the accomplishment of the Lord's work, and the gift of the Holy Ghost thereupon. The things belonging to the Father's kingdom may be possessed, or partly still desired; but when the Lord's prayer was given it was not come, and the desires which Christ would teach His disciples are according to the position they were then in. Hence, also, the Lord's Prayer is not in His name, for the work and plan on which that was founded were not yet accomplished.

J. N. D.

We can only be, in truth, a testimony to the complete failure of the Church of God. But, to be such, we must be as true in principle as the thing that has failed. And, as long as we are a testimony to failure, we shall never fail.

THE ANNIHILATION OF THE SOUL.

I lately had to say to one who had got infected with this doctrine, and like a man bewitched by a seducing spirit and a devil's doctrine, as this most assuredly is, he was alike regardless of the inconsistency of his own arguments, and the direct statements of Scripture, where they opposed what he was advancing. Thankfulness for the soul-deliverance he professed to have received through this newly imbibed idea, and regardless opposition to all that could be said against it, went together in his mind, along with the entire setting aside of the plainest passages of Scripture. Yet I fully believe he thought that he was right and had the truth, as he professed to be only seeking for it, but he really was under the deadly influence of having "given heed to seducing spirits." Nothing but a distinct proof that the doctrine would do away with the person and work of Christ would satisfy him that it was wrong. It was this especially that interested me in him, for he thereby showed a regard for the foundation of the truth, and gave me hope that he was right at bottom, and would, through the Lord's mercy, be brought right altogether; therefore with the more willingness I sought him out.

He affirmed that the unbeliever perishes at his death, soul and body ceasing to be, and remaining in unconsciousness (a strange contradiction; for how could he be unconscious if he ceased to be? but this arose from a false use in his mind of the word "perish") until reunited for final judgment, when he is consigned for a limited period to a punishment in which he is finally annihilated as the penalty of his sins. First, I showed him that the Lord's account of the death of the rich man, in Luke xvi., quite disproved this, for it is said that he "died and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments," having left five unconverted brethren on earth, "and seeth Abraham afar off," to whom he prayed for some one to be sent to "testify unto them lest they also come into this place of torment." Now, at the final judgment of the wicked (Rev. xx. 11, &c.), the earth and the heaven have fled away, and the present state of things has ceased altogether, and there is no more gracious testimony to the unbeliever; so that the torments of this man, who is represented as sensible in

all his faculties—his real self there—must be *before* the time he alleged for the future consciousness of the wicked reunited soul and body, for judgment and annihilation.

But this did not meet his mind—or perhaps better, his *will*—for he said it was but a parable, and could not be literally taken. First, it is remarkable that the Lord does not say it is a parable; He tells it as a fact; but taking it as a parable, what does it teach us, parabolically? Surely not that the dead lose all present consciousness till the great judgment day, but the reverse. But he was under a spell, poor fellow; he had already come to another, a foregone conclusion, that it either meant to teach nothing, or the annihilation of the soul; and all its power was nullified by the poison he had already imbibed.

“But besides,” I said, “you lose the person of Christ by your doctrine; for if by his constitution man is made subject to annihilation, and that this is the punishment of sin—for the wages of sin is death; had there been no sin there would have been no death; and the Lord said to the young ruler, “This do and thou shalt live;” *i. e.*, death would never overtake him)—then Christ became a man, and on the cross He became sin, and bore fully and exhaustively the punishment of sin, the judgment due to it—and if so, He must have been annihilated, His humanity gone, and gone for ever—and we have lost the Saviour and salvation, or if He did not fully bear the penalty of sin, He could not have put it away—it is still between us and God, and judgment is still before us—and our salvation thus is equally lost. He bore the judgment of sin, or He did not bear it. If He did, we have no Christ; if He did not, we have no salvation. And it is useless to say His divinity preserved His humanity from annihilation, if that were the penalty of sin—it would thus become but a cloak for sin, a shield to prevent the proper judgment of sin from having been borne, instead of being, as it is, the blessed and divine source of eternal life and salvation for us in Him, who truly bore our judgment “in his own body on the tree.”

“Well,” he said, “I confess I never thought of it in that light—I must think of it, and I will; and I will be

very glad to read your book, ("The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment," by J. N. D.) or any book that will give me the truth, for it is the truth I want. E. C.

WHAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE:

Two cases, quite in contrast in their nature, have recently come under my notice, and I trust have not been without good, both as to cheering the heart in Christ's service, and also in discriminating where God is really dealing with souls; and I thought might not be without benefit to others. The first needs but few words to describe it.

I had been holding a series of gospel meetings in ——. A few seemed deeply interested, and the time seemed to have arrived to change the meetings into Bible readings, in fact such was the wish of a few, especially the subject of this sketch, who expressed even anxiety to take his place around the person of Christ. The first reading meeting was appointed at this brother's house. Between that and the next appointed meeting, he expressed a wish that I would not hold any more meetings at his house.

First, there were some points of doctrine he never could agree with; second, there did not so many people come in as he had hoped; and thirdly, the truths unfolded were of such a character as to necessitate too much thinking, and in fact kept them both awake the whole night. Of course I acceded to their wishes and found opportunity for service elsewhere.

The other case, in sweet and blessed contrast, will require a little more extended notice. A clergyman, who had been an active preacher for twenty-five years, and one of the most faithful and self-sacrificing chaplains in the late war, lay upon his dying bed. I was requested by his son (with whom I had conversed previously on some of the simple truths of the gospel) to call and see his father, who was in bondage through fear of death. I responded to the wish and read to him the Scripture that speaks expressly of the very purpose of Christ's work to deliver from the moral condition in which he was suffering. The Lord seemed to honor the word—he found immediate deliverance; and then commenced one

of the sweetest experiences that I ever enjoyed in Christ's honored service. My soul was truly refreshed in being able to minister Christ to a dying saint.

For a few weeks I visited him, often spending hours at his bedside, and most wonderful was it to see his progress in the things of Christ, especially when we think how much in his past vitiated training he had to ignore. The work of Christ fully delivering the soul, our present relation as sons, His coming, for the saints, the glory to be revealed, the priesthood of Christ ministering to our infirmities, were some of the vital things he seized with the avidity of a starving person, like one who had been hungering all his life, and had never received until then what his soul craved.

"Oh," he would say, "how wonderful! how blessed! These are all living truths, and I never knew it! I have read the Scriptures through several times, once even upon my knees, and I knew not they contained such glorious truths! What have I been doing all my life? I have had great power in moving audiences, but it was not by the power of God's truth, only the action of flesh upon the flesh."

How many times he exclaimed, "If the Lord should enable me to recover how I should love to meet and read the word with you, and how differently I could preach. Oh, what sweet waiting this is for Christ. My brother, what a blessing you have been to me, how you have lifted me from a state of despondency. Many times I have had such blessed feelings—I have been able to shout glory to God—but they would be followed by darkness. But you have lifted me up by these blessed truths, and it is a solid foundation. Blessed Jesus, what hast Thou done for me!"

Once, as I approached his bed, extending his hand he exclaimed, "Ah, brother, I have been counting the minutes till you come. I have had a wearisome, suffering night." I asked, "Has Satan been taking advantage of your nervous condition to bring in doubts?"

Said he, "I can not keep my mind on any thing for a minute. If I get to thinking about the blessed Jesus it flies right off." Said I, "Do not try to think—rest in the thought that He has His mind on you, and He is the same yesterday, to day and forever." "Yes, yes," he ex-

claimed, and burst into tears of joy. Often he would say, "Please, brother, repeat that precious truth."

On one of my visits he exclaimed as soon as he grasped my hand, "Dear brother, thinking I might not live to see your face again, I made my family promise to request you to preach some of these important truths at my funeral. Christians need so much to know these things."

The readers of SOUND WORDS will very quickly be able to answer the question which forms the heading of this simple story: "What made the difference?" The first individual referred to was in good health; the latter suffering under, what by post mortem examination proved to be, a cancerous tumor in the bowels, and what necessarily produced great restlessness and nervous prostration; so much so, that during the hours I read and explained the word to him, his wife had to be either fanning him or applying cold water to his head. Ah, what made the difference? What a responsibility devolves upon those to whom are committed those precious truths, that alone can deliver the soul and build it up in the things of Christ. It is well for us who labor in service to inquire sincerely, "What wilt thou have me to do?" There are those silently hungering for the truth in the midst of all this confusion and wretchedness. The Lord knoweth them that are His, and if we wait upon Him, He will open the door that no man can shut, by bringing us to them, or them to us. May we be faithful to the sacred charge.

G. O. A.

THE LAST DAYS.

In these days the unity of Christ's body by the Holy Ghost, and separation from evil, are vital points of testimony for Christians. One is the original and abiding condition of the Church's existence; the other, faithfulness to its nature, and characteristic of that faithfulness in a special manner in the last days. To me it is that (both) or nothing. One is the special purpose of God as to us connected with Christ; the other, His nature. The notion that we can be wittingly associated with evil and be undefiled, is an unholy notion—a denial of the nature of holiness—and in the world, the Church

is the pillar and ground of the truth. The character of Christ with Philadelphia is, "He that is holy, He that is true." The keeping His word, and the word of His patience, is what is commended in the saints. An open door, and only little strength, but special association with Christ the Holy One, and the truth in the midst of a degenerate people.

Things are going on so rapidly in these last days that Christians will be cast on their own ground, and we shall need the word to be an authority, and it is a divine one.

I have been struck lately with the evidence of antagonist powers in the Acts. We know it, but it came out then distinctly. Apostolic power of the Spirit might overcome, and be greater than what was in the world. So it was, and it delivered, but the power was there; and when masses seemed anxious for the world of *grace*, they rose up and drove the *truth* away, and remained in possession of the world, at least, all who did not overcome by personal faith. When this ceased to be the case, the Church itself became corrupt—Satan would cast some into prison—Antipas, a faithful witness, be slain where Satan dwelt, and there the witness was. Soon it became Thyatira, and Jezabel, the mother of children, and then the remnant had to abide the Lord's coming; and (ecclesiastical blessing) being replaced by the kingdom, and the Morning Star, ours.

I have no doubt that in the present breaking up of what did seem steadfast to man, and in the rapid progress of evil, a testimony to the truth, however simple, by those who are not shaken when all around is, and who have, in the midst of acknowledged weakness in themselves, found peace and rest and stability by the truth, is of the greatest value, and may be a help to thousands. Hence, I rejoice in the wide dissemination of writings which proclaim the truth and unfold and lead to the study of the Word; and I can say this, though some of them should not be without defect in judgment, and should be deficient in exactitude of expression.—*Exct.*

The love of Christ constrains us, having judged this, that if one died for all then all had died; and He died for all, that they who live, should no longer live to themselves, but to Him who has died for them, and risen again.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Will you kindly give a few words on 1 Peter, iii. 18-20? It has been used lately to bring some false doctrine, and, I know, is obscure to some.

Ans.—A little attention to the scope of the passage, and its connection, will be of profit in seeing its meaning. The subject in the chapter, is suffering for righteousness, or for Christ's name sake. The faith of these believing (Christian) Jews, in Christ risen and gone to heaven, exposed them to special suffering from their Jewish brethren, who, not feeling their need, would not receive the knowledge of His grace, and redemption through Him. They walked, of course, only by sight, and turned away from One who was not present in body but preached in Spirit, the Holy Spirit, Himself invisible, giving testimony to an invisible Christ. The Apostle could say, as to Him, "Whom having *not seen*, we love, in whom, though *now* we see Him not, yet *believing*," &c., with great force, as containing a very peculiar mark of Christianity, in contrast with Judaism. They looked for a manifestation; but it was a time for preaching, with few results, among the Jews, instead of the public display and government. *Just so it was in the days of Noah.* It was Christ preached then, in the Spirit, through Noah, with few results, only eight souls being saved in the Ark. The long-suffering of God waited *then*, and it was salvation from the coming judgment to those who believed, as, in the second Epistle, he tells us it is *now*. (2 Pet. iii. 15.) It had a limit, and they who rejected, are now "in prison," having been disobedient *at that time*, *i. e.*, in the days of Noah.

It was in the power of the same Spirit by which Christ was quickened, after being put to death, that in the days while the ark was preparing, He preached. The emphasis is on the fact that it was then done in Spirit, with little results, as now, and that judgment followed then, and they are "in prison," as it surely will on the disobedient, now. If, now, we look again at the text, beginning with v. 15, clearly translated it will be seen that this is the sense: "But sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts, and be always prepared to give an answer to every one that asks you to give an account of the hope that is in you, but with meekness and fear." Their hope

was the coming glory of chap. i. 5, reserved for them in heaven, not any great thing on earth. But they must be careful in their walk, "having a good conscience, (as to that) in which they speak against you as evil-doers, they may be ashamed who falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For, it is better, if the will of God be so, to suffer as well-doers, than as evil-doers; for Christ indeed has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death, in flesh, but made alive in (the) Spirit, in which, also, going, He preached to the spirits (which are) in prison, disobedient in a time when the long-suffering of God was waiting in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water."

There is no foundation for the idea that Christ went into hell and preached there. Besides doing violence to the language of the original, it is not true, as He told the dying thief, he should be with Him, in *paradise*, which is certainly not hell. The attempt to found universal restoration on it, must necessarily fail therefore. There is no such thought in Scripture, in the "restitution of all things," or the restoring of all things. That looks to the redemption of *Israel*, and blessing to the earth, after the present dispensation is closed. But the wicked, shall go into hell with all the nations that forget God, and this is everlasting. (2 Thess. i. 9; Matt. xxv. 46; Rev. xx. 15, &c.)

Suppose I am happy in Christ, am I looking for my rights in this world? Christ had none! Oh! no, my treasure is elsewhere; I am going out of this world; I can wait for my rights till Christ has His. Let our hearts be weaned from things here, let us pass through the world as weaned children. Christ passed through it, leaving all to go its own way. In the presence of unrighteousness, the spirit is apt to rise; but let us cultivate the subduedness that *yields*. The Samaritans would not receive Him, and He turns aside into another village. Oh! what a lesson that is! Because He had steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem! The half-hearted would not receive Him, because He was doing the very

thing that marked His devotedness to His Father. And so it will be *with you*; the religiously half-hearted will not want you, *if you set your face steadfastly to go right!*

THE CHRISTIAN'S PLACE.

So near, my God, to Thee,
 In Christ, my Lord.
 My blessed place I see,
 In Christ, my Lord.
 This all my song shall be,
 So near my God to Thee,
 So near my God to Thee,
 So near to Thee.

His precious, precious blood,
 Has wash'd me clean;
 And by His death I am
 Freed from all sin.
 Thou hast by Him removed,
 What all my vows ne'er could;
 And now, brought nigh by blood,
 I joy in Him.

Thy perfect, perfect love,
 My rest shall be;
 And here, my soul shall find
 Her liberty.
 Made free by Thine own Son,
 The work was fully done;
 And now I gladly own,
 I'm near to Thee.

And now, "outside the camp,"
 Réproach to share;
 His name alone my boast,
 And all my care;
 Outside of every plan
 Formed by device of man,
 I, by the Spirit, am,
 A worshipper.

And though, for Him, I wait,
 My Saviour God;
 And through the darkness watch,
 Keeping His word;
 "Within the veil," I see
 My blessed place to be,
 And worship, near to Thee,
 So near to Thee.