

"SOUND WORDS,"

2 Tim. i. 13.

"LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY."—COL. III. 16.

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SOUND WORDS.

WHEN DID THE CHURCH BEGIN, AND WHAT ARE ITS PRIVILEGES?

MY DEAR M——:

Things, truths, not words are my objects. I had supposed that Kuriake (*Κυριακή*), was the source of *Kirche* in German, *Kirk* and *Church*. “Kyroike” I never heard of; it maybe all right. Some philologists now say that this is all wrong and that kirk or church comes from the Saxon. I can only say I really do not know, nor have at this moment the means of ascertaining, if indeed it be ascertainable with any certainty. But the truth is I have a pious horror of the word “church,” because no one knows what it means.

What does it mean? Mr. G.’s congregation might build him a new church. Then it means a building, or Mr. S. may be a member of Mr. G.’s church, then it means an assembly under the presidency of Mr. G. In England, he is going into the church, means he is going to become a clergyman; he is gone to church, is the public service or worship; gone to the church, the building again.

The Roman Catholic Church, and the Greek Church are large bodies of persons professing christianity associated under these designations. So of Presbyterians, and Covenanters, Lutherans, &c. If you press the matter, the church is the teaching, authoritative, part of it. This is so even among Protestants. The thirty-nine articles of England tell us the church can decree rites and ceremonies, and has authority in matters of faith. So that we have to

know what a person means by "the church" before we can reply to a question as to it.

But I will just mention a little bit of history which refers to this, and why it is so current a word. When James I., or as we should say with Scottish Covenanters, James VI., had the bible translated, the translation in popular use was the Geneva one, made by the refugees in Queen Mary's time. This always used the word "congregation." Now James had had a long experience, or knowledge at least, of his mother's conflicts with John Knox, and was not very fond of Scottish principles, embodied afterwards in the covenant, and used to say, "no bishop no king." He gave strict orders to have the word "church" everywhere, and not "congregation." Hence the prevalence of a word which has really no meaning.

Say "assembly" which is the meaning of *Ecclesia*, (*ἐκκλησία*) and all ambiguity disappears. *Ecclesia* was the assembly of those who in the small Grecian states were citizens, and so had right to vote, &c., and then was applied to analagous bodies or meetings. We all know what an assembly means. Only now we have to do with God's assembly. For example, "Take with thee one or two more, &c., if not tell it to the church." To whom is it to be told? Well, the minister, or perhaps the presbytery. With the Roman Catholic, "if he will not hear the church" wins awful proportions.

Now say, as it really is, "the assembly," how simple all is. If wronged, go yourself first alone; if in vain take one or two others; if still in vain, matters being ascertained, then tell it to the assembly. For the present mixed state of things this may seem very inconvenient, but the sense of the words is plain enough.

Now apply this to Acts vii., "This is he that was with the assembly in the wilderness." Can anything be simpler? Israel was a vast assembly in the wil-

derness, and assembled themselves at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. For though a different word in Hebrew, the tabernacle got its name from its being the place of meeting. But, then, all possible reference to the church, in the christian sense, disappears. Who denies that the six hundred thousand men who came constantly to the entrance of the court, were an assembly? There were three words used for it, *Kahal*, as is stated by Mr. G., from *Kahal* the verb to call together, *Moeed*, and *Heeda* or *Gneedah*, the two last from *Yaad*, to appoint a place or time of meeting. Hence the tabernacle was called *Ohel Moeed*, the tent or tabernacle of the congregation.

Israel was a great assembly or congregation, as none can dispute, but which proves simply nothing as to its being what God's assembly is, according to the word, now. It is *Ecclesia*, an assembly, in Acts vii., and the word, being simply an assembled multitude, says just no more than that. The identical word is used when it is said, Acts xix., "having so said, he (the town clerk) dismissed the assembly." Put "the church" there, and what nice sense you will have.

I quite understand it will be said, "yes, but they were God's assembly in the wilderness." Admitted, but the whole question remains; that is—were God's assembly then, and God's assembly now constituted on the same principles, on the same basis? There was no question then of conversion, or faith, or anything of the kind, or even profession. They were, as scripture expresses it, of the fountain of Jacob, descendants of Israel, according to the flesh, and under condition of being circumcised the eighth day, which by the by, none of those born in the wilderness were, at that time. That assembly was a nation. God's assembly now is not. The fact of being an assembly, or the word, proves nothing, the whole question remains, are the Israelitish nation, and God's assembly called by grace, the same thing, or assembled on the same principles?

Mr. G. makes some enormous statements: *First*, "The Church of Pentecost was Israel." Why, the Jews had openly rejected the Lord, and Peter in his sermon says to those who had ears to hear, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation," and the Lord Himself, "Henceforth your house is left unto you desolate, for I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth until ye say, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." They were a judicially rejected people, though not for ever, and are so to this day. They were men of Israel, but the assertion, inconceivable as it is, only shows how far a false principle can carry any one. God did not say in Joel, "He would give the great outpouring of His Spirit to Israel." He said He would pour out His Spirit on *all flesh*. In patience with Israel He dealt with them, and began at Jerusalem, but it was the Holy Ghost being given to Cornelius that opened fully Peter's, and the Jewish christians' eyes.

But let us enter a little more into the heart of the matter. Mr. G. says, "To them were committed the oracles of God; to them pertained the adoption, glory, covenant, giving of the law, service, and the promises (Rom. ix. 4.) Nothing more can be said of the church now." Now here is the nucleus, the heart of the question. Not the introduction of Old Testament saints into church privileges, unscriptural as that is, but reducing God's assembly, now, to the measure of Jewish privileges. The former might, alone, be treated as a mistake, the latter deprives God's assembly of its true divine standing, and that is what makes it of moment. The law was given by Moses, grace and truth (*εγενετο*) came by Jesus Christ.

Let us see what scripture says on the matter. In the tabernacle there was a veil, behind which, God sat between the cherubim; the Holy Ghost thus signifying that the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest, while as yet the first tabernacle had its standing. Now, by Christ's death, the veil is rent

from top to bottom, and we have boldness to enter into the holiest 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. We can, and are, to walk in the light as God is in the light. Is this "nothing more" to Mr. G.? I will not insist on God's righteousness being declared now, the righteousness of God being revealed, not prophesied of, because I desire to take what is most positive and on the very surface of scripture. See Gal. iv. 1-7, "Now I say, the heir as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a slave, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father; even so we, when we were children were in bondage under the rudiments of the world. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons, and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father; wherefore thou art no more a slave, but a son." Is it "nothing more" to be brought to be sons of God by known and accomplished redemption and know it, to live in the relationship, instead even of an heir differing nothing from a slave?

Will Mr. G. allow me to ask him, were the Jews under the first covenant, or the second, in their relationship with God? Are we under that first covenant? But more, we have the difference clearly brought out in Heb. x. 9, "He taketh away the first that He may establish the second." It will be said that these were ceremonies, but what ceremonies? The priesthood is changed, is that merely a ceremony, a better hope by which we draw nigh to God? And see the difference; the sacrifices could not make the comers thereunto perfect as pertaining to the conscience. There was a remembrance of sins every year; now we are perfected forever who are sanc-

tified, so that Christ, when He had by Himself purged our sins *sat* down at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. He is seated there, because all is done, till His enemies are made His footstool, and our sins and iniquities are remembered no more. The worshippers once purged are so in such sort that they should have no more conscience of sins, instead of a remembrance of them every year. We have eternal redemption, a purged conscience because the sins are purged once and for all, and boldness to enter into the Holiest, "giving thanks to the Father who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. i. 12), having the knowledge of salvation given to His people by the remission of their sins. Is all this "nothing more"?

Take what is said by the Lord and this will lead us to the question of the Holy Ghost. Than John Baptist, no greater prophet had ever arisen, nor of those born of woman, none greater, but the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. Many kings, prophets, righteous men, had desired to see the things which the disciples saw and had not seen them, but "blessed," said the Lord, "are your eyes for they see." They were more blessed than their kings and prophets—they had Messiah with them. Yet so great was the privilege and advantage of having the Holy Ghost, that, it was expedient that Christ should leave them, for if He did not, the Comforter would not come, but if He went away, He would send Him. What a thing to lose, Christ's personal presence in grace! Yet so great was to be the effect of the coming of the Holy Spirit, that it was better He should go. Yet they would persuade us that He had been there all the time of the Old Testament. See 1 Peter i. They searched their own prophecies and found they did not minister to themselves but to us the things now reported by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Was the promise to pour out the

Spirit "nothing?" Clearly it was not anything if He was there all the time as when poured out.

And now mark the foundation of this immense truth. God never dwelt with Adam innocent, nor with Abraham or others; but as soon as an external redemption even, was accomplished, we read "They shall know (Ex. xxix.) that I, the Lord their God have brought them up out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them, and the Shechinah of glory came down and sat between the cherubim and led them in the wilderness. So it was when an eternal and full redemption had been accomplished, and man (though much more than a man) sat down in virtue of it at the right hand of God, that the Holy Ghost came down to dwell in God's people individually and collectively.

We must not confound between the divine action of the Holy Ghost, and His coming. I think it will be found in scripture that all direct action of God from creation is by the Holy Ghost. Even Christ could say, "If I, by the Holy Ghost cast out devils." At any rate, He moved on the face of the waters; by His Spirit God garnished the heavens; He inspired the prophets and wrought all through the divine history; but that was not His personal coming. So the Son created all things, but He did not come until the incarnation "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father" (John xvi. 28). So speaks Christ of the Holy Ghost, "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I go away, I will send Him unto you, and when He is come," &c. (John xvi. 7, 8). And this was so distinct a thing that it is called, "the Holy Ghost," without saying came, or given, or anything else. Thus, John vii. 39, "For the Holy Ghost was not yet"—given, is added, "for Jesus was not yet glorified." So the disciples, baptized by John in Acts xix. 2, said, "We have not so much as heard whether the Holy Ghost is."

All Jews knew there was a Holy Ghost, but this was His promised presence, and this is easily understood as to John's disciples, because he had spoken of Christ's work as twofold. He was the Lamb of God, and He it is that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost, it was the second great part of His work—baptizing with the Holy Ghost—and could not be done till He was glorified. So He tells His disciples after His resurrection, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." He Himself was anointed and sealed with the Holy Ghost when He stood, the first man fully, perfectly, acceptable to God, who had ever existed since evil entered, perfect in Himself. God "anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power."

And what is the effect of the Holy Ghost's dwelling in us? The love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given to us (Rom. v). We know that we are in Christ and Christ is in us (John xiv). We know that we are sons, and cry, Abba Father, the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit. He takes the things of Christ, the glorified man on high, and shews them to us. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost which we have of God. So that God dwells in us and we in Him, and we know it by the Holy Ghost given to us. What eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man to conceive, God *hath* revealed unto us by His Spirit. Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty, and Christ living thus in us, the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit life because of righteousness. *Man at the right hand of God in righteousness, and the Holy Ghost dwelling in the believer as the consequence of it, characterises christianity.*

All this is lost by this system. What made it expedient for Christ to leave His disciples, we are told, is all the same as what they had before He came! The anointing of the Holy Ghost is "nothing!"

Besides he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit, and this leads to the corporate difference.

Till Christ ascended up on high, there was no man at the right hand of God, no one to whom the believer could, as a present fact, be united, and consequently as we have seen, no Holy Ghost either, to unite him to Him. But Christ ascended up on high, a man, in righteousness, and the Holy Ghost consequently came down, not to the world, but to believers. Let us hold fast this great truth, the essence of christianity, as the cross and God's love are the foundation of it. The Head being on high, we are quickened together with Him, according to the power with which God wrought in raising Him from the dead and setting Him there, and raised us up Jews or Gentiles together, and made us sit together in heavenly places *in* Christ, not with Him yet (Eph. i. 19-23; ii. 1-7). Neither part of this was true before Christ was glorified. There was no such glorified man, no Holy Ghost come down from heaven. On this scripture is clear as possibly can be. There was a Son of God who could quicken; no raised glorified man, whose going to the Father was the testimony of God's righteousness, nor Holy Ghost come down, the divine witness of it. We are members of His body, He has given Him, as so exalted, to be head *over* all things *to* the church which is His body. Thus by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, Jews or Greeks. Israel had lost his place as such. There was no difference now. By the cross the middle wall of partition was broken down, and of twain one new man, was made, and both reconciled to God in one body by the cross.

Now, the duty and essence of Judaism was the keeping of the wall up; christianity as a system on earth is founded on its being broken down. Were the Gentiles in the church brought into the Jewish state as is alleged? No, He makes of twain *one new man* and reconciles both, and came and preached

peace to those afar off, and those nigh, for neither had it. The apostles and prophets (the prophets are the prophets of the New Testament, see Eph. iii. 5), were the foundation of a new edifice, a habitation of God through the Spirit. This had never been promised, never revealed at all, could not have been. To say there was no difference between Jew and Gentile would have destroyed Judaism at one stroke. It was not revealed at all (Eph. iii. 4-11; Col. i. 26; Rom. xvi. 25, 26. I: 26th verse it is not the scriptures of the prophets, but now by prophetic scriptures, *γραφῶν προφητικῶν*)

But the grand point is the coming of the Holy Ghost consequent on the exaltation of a man in righteousness to the right hand of God. So when Christ says I will build my church on the revelation made by the Father to Peter, what was the meaning of that if He had been building it all the time? The church then, the body of Christ, is formed by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, consequent on the exaltation of Christ to the right hand of God, the Holy Ghost, as so come, was not yet, when Christ was not glorified, and this baptism as is declared in Acts i., took place a few days after, that is the day of Pentecost.

Romans xi. has nothing to do with the church, the body of Christ. It is the olive-tree of promise (and the church was never promised even), and it is accompanied with a revelation that when the Jews are grafted in again the Gentile branches would be broken off. There were promises and prophecies at any rate, which apply to Gentiles as, "Rejoice, ye, Gentiles, with His people;" but if Israel be God's people the church cannot exist with it, for there then is no difference of Jew and Gentile, and blindness in part, is happened unto Israel, till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. They are enemies as touching the gospel. It is "the casting them away in the reconciling of the world." The church is the body

of Christ formed by the Holy Ghost on earth, while Christ sits on the right hand of God.

I should have many things to note if I merely took up the article. "House of the Lord," or any application of it to the place where the people meet, is wholly without foundation in scripture. "The church of the wilderness," is also unscriptural. "The kingdom of heaven" is not the church at all. It is really too bad to say, "the apostles do not say a word about a new organization." There is a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. Did not Paul organize the church? Were the priests and levites, priests and levites of the christian church? There would be another difficulty which Mr. G. has not noticed at all. That before the exodus there was no assembly of any kind at all; individual saints, Enochs and Noahs and Abrahams, but no assembly; but I do not go beyond what is on the surface of the article. What I press is this, that the Holy Ghost is come, and that when He came, the baptism by which the saints were made one body, took place; the assembly is the body of Christ, the dwelling place of the Holy Ghost on earth, and never existed before that baptism, and could not, for the Head did not exist, nor was the Holy Ghost in consequence descended to unite men to Him so as to form that body.

He gave Himself not for that nation only, but to gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad.

J. N. D.

THE CHRISTIAN HAS—

A life which never can be forfeited.	John x. 28.
A relationship which never can be broken.	Gal. iii. 26.
A righteousness which never can be tarnished.	2 Cor. v. 21.
A peace which never can be disturbed.	Eph. ii. 14.
An acceptance which never can be questioned.	Eph. 1. 6.
An inheritance which never can fade.	1 Pet. i. 4.
A title which never can be disputed.	Rev. v. 9.
	S. A. H.

“AND THEY BEGAN TO BE MERRY.”

“AND THEY BEGAN TO BE MERRY.”

Luke xv. 24.

Joy in our Father's house,
 Welcome sons of God ;
 Music in the courts above,
 Angels strike the chord.
 We who once were lost and dead,
 Gathered, clothed, and richly fed,
 Now give thanks unto our Head,
 Jesus Christ the Lord.

Joy in our Father's house,
 Banquet of His love ;
 Children gathered to His arms,
 Faithfulness to prove ;
 Wake the chorus, let us bring,
 Suited tribute to the King ;
 Higher notes than angels sing,
 Of redeeming love.

Joy in our Father's house,
 He has made us meet
 With himself in light to come,
 Worshippers complete.
 Conscience purged and sins forgiven,
 Standing in the light of heaven,
 From our hearts all fears are driven,
 Perfected in love.

Joy in our Father's house,
 Watching, is the word ;
 Waiting for our coming Lord,
 Jesus in the cloud.
 We, who once, to judgment bound,
 In our guilt and sin He found,
 And for us His life laid down,
 Jesus Christ the Lord.

Joy in our Father's house,
 We shall soon be there ;
 We are listening for His call,
 To meet Him in the air.
 Waiting just “ a little while,”
 'Mid the pain, and 'mid the toil,
 Hoping soon to bid farewell,
 And His joy to share,

G. E. H.

The prince who rules below
 No harm can do us, though
 He looks so fierce and grim ;
 For Christ hath judged him ;
A little word can slay him !—LUTHER.

A FEW WORDS ON PSALM XXXII.

There are three of the ASHER Psalms, so called from the first word Asher "Blessed" (see Gen. xxx. 13), the i., xxxii. and cxix., each of which gives a distinct ground of blessing as stated by God. That in Psalm i. is the ground of holiness and obedience, and can, of course, find no one who could be blessed, except the One in whom God was well pleased all the way through. If this were the only condition of blessing, though God were to come loaded down with all things for us, we could get nothing, for who of men could get anything on the fact of total separation from evil, and entire delight in the law of the Lord meditating on it day and night?

Psalm cxix. presents the blessing of one formed and ordered by the word, after having been purged and disciplined, broken and brought back to love it, who before he was afflicted went astray. In its structure it sums up the whole life's walk, the Alpha and Omega, so to speak, being one of the acrostical Psalms, having eight verses beginning with each letter of the Hebrew alphabet respectively.

In Psalm xxxii. we see the riches of God more absolutely displayed. It is, that having come down to bless, He will not go away without emptying out His fulness. He can find none among us to take the ground of Psalm i., and Psalm cxix. is not without conditions, thereby keeping Him waiting with His riches till we can have gone through certain exercises. A conditioned blessing is always a hindrance to such as we. But He is so determined to enrich and bless, that He takes the lowest ground. If He keeps upon the high moral ground of Psalm i. we all die unblessed, even cursed. The very statement of this ground, brings out the fact that we are not so. As David in his last words, gives what he that rules ought to be, and then the confession that it was not so with his house, that he might show the

exceeding grace of God that had made an everlasting covenant ordered in all things, and sure; so here, though we be transgressors, and laden with sin, and deep in iniquity, yet He alone can rise above that. O wondrous, matchless grace that can come to the front in such a case; love, that is commended, that while we were yet sinners; could meet us thoroughly. "Amazing grace that stooped so low!"

God stands among the congregation of men, then, yet to say "Blessed is he," with the full recognition of all guilt and vileness. What words to append to such qualities and characteristics, "Forgiven," "covered," "not imputed." This, the comment of the Spirit taking of the things of Christ, is *righteousness without works*. Assuredly so. What works have we wrought, if found sinners? We even refuse to cease from our works which are our ruin and keep us away from the Blessor and the blessing. We refuse to acknowledge the place and the condition. Man would "keep silence" on the matter of sin and transgression, and iniquity, his only personal possessions, which give him a place and a name and significance in creation. Yes, the only thing that thrusts us into prominence is that we are sinners.

What does God think of man, the first man, and all that are in him? I learn what the authorities think of the murderer when I see him hung. Even so I go to the cross to learn what God's estimate of man is, a criminal utterly corrupt, and that must be put out of the way. But what does He think of the Second Man? I look up and see Him in the glory, and learn God's estimate of Him. And if I take my place according to God in the first, I get a place in the Second Man.

How simple then if we come to the truth, and accept the verdict, for God comes down to that. He means to bless man as He finds him, and the proffer is complete. Transgressions forgiven, sin covered, iniquity not imputed by God Himself, who then can

condemn? And then there is no guile in the spirit, there is no need of hiding, since there is no more conscience of sin. This is complete and absolute:

“A mind at perfect peace with God,
O, what a word is this;
A sinner reconciled through blood,
This, this, indeed is bliss.”

And now what is the response to all this? The full confession that I was rebellious even against grace, that there was hatred against the Person who forgives, and was proposing to keep all from Him and get away as far as possible from Him. “I kept silence.” Oh, what a capacity for hating God and His ways, man shows in his suspicion of His appeal in infinite grace!

But He could not endure this, and therefore His hand was laid upon the silent one. There is a silence that is wisdom, such as Joshua's, the high priest's, standing before God, when Satan stood to accuse. We may well afford to be silent in such a case, for God takes up the matter to justify the one confessedly in “filthy garments.” There is the silence of shame and confusion when it is too late, as in the one who was found going to the feast without the wedding garment. He was speechless. But this silence in regard to my state before the grace that meets it, is turning my back upon God, refusing the first principle of fellowship, and acting in the stubbornness of my own will, and He must break this. Happy is it that He does so.

We see this, then, that no one gets pardon by the asking for it, for we will not ask; but by being dealt with, to bring us to see we need it. And when we are there, He forgives without the asking. How all our thoughts of God are rebuked and reversed. I, whom I thought He hated, am brought into His presence, in the light, and my sins, which I hated Him for not allowing, which I meant to hide from Him, or have Him pass by as nothing, are put out of sight for-

ever. There is nothing between Him and me, "Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." It is not only forgiveness, but a cleansing from *all unrighteousness*.

What a wonderful meeting this is. Confession comes out in the presence of a non-imputing God who forgives and covers. The heart will not disclose sins in presence of the law and judgment threatened. This telling all in the face of Him who justifies, is "repentance towards God."

The Samaritan woman, exposed to the roots by the Perfect One who sat by her side knowing all, goes out saying, "Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?" It is indeed the Christ. This leaves nothing to be brought up ever again concerning us, nothing to be found out. It gives peace. I can go on forever in His presence, fearing no future searching.

And then what a clean place His presence is. This gives tone to the whole scriptures, they are clean; and also to heaven; it is attractive, worth going to, and living forever in; it is clean. All has been looked into, and met and cleansed. God is light; God is love. Matchless combination in His nature!

"SELAH!" If this be "Pause!" as some consider, we may well pause here, and behold the beauty of our God, the glory of His work and His habitation, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. We need go no farther, for this is enough to fill us. We leave our empty vessels to go abroad and tell of One who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin. We pause and adore; we have come to perfection. If it means a kind of *Da capo*, a taking up and repeating the first clause of the whole Psalm, we may well bow our heads anew with delight as we say, "Happy is he whose transgression is forgiven; whose sin is covered."

But there is a beautiful order, the Divine one, in this Psalm, which soon turns into a colloquy, the fellowship of two that can walk together now. This we will look into in a future page, if the Lord permit.

CHARACTERS AND ASPECTS OF PEACE.

These seem to be four, as found in the word.

1. **PEACE WITH GOD.** The peace of justification (Rom. v. 1). This is the foundation or introductory peace, without which there can be no other. This seems to connect with "this grace wherein we stand" of the 5th verse "and rejoicing or making boast in God." What wonderful reality and fulness are implied in this! We may include reconciliation as (Eph. ii. 14-17) reconciliation of those who were of the uncircumcision and those who were of the circumcision, and reconciliation of both these unto God in one body by the cross, and so the preaching of peace to them that were far off and to them that were nigh. This peace is one of the characteristics of the Kingdom, as realized and consciously known (Rom. xiv. 17) and one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22).

2. **THE PEACE OF JESUS** (John xiv. 27). His own which He bestows upon His disciples, so that they have participation with Him. No empty or formal utterance of "peace, peace when there is no peace" was this! Complacency, concord, fellowship in acknowledged relationship! Given, not as the world gives, upon some sort of merit only, and in expectation of return. It was altogether beyond the range of the world-system of things. It was giving them to share of that which was peculiarly His own in and with His Father—of God and in God's light, through Jesus, and to be enjoyed as He enjoyed it (that your joy might be full down here).

This seems to introduce to what is more distinctively (Phil. iv. 7; Col. iii. 5),

3. **THE PEACE OF GOD.** Rest in God—what comes from obedience to the Lord's injunction—"Have faith in God" absolutely and unconditionally (as we understand it) apart from promises, because of what God is rather than because of what He promises to do or to be—entrance into God's peace; seeing God, so to

speak, and all that He is for us made sure to us through Christ Jesus. This peace comes to us in virtue of the relationship into which we are brought with God, from his Fatherhood, as in the salutations (Rom. i. 7; 1. Cor. i. 2; Gal. i. 3; Eph. i. 2; Phil. i. 2), and all this in the place and power of the union which we have received in Christ. The former seemed to be distinctively participation in the peace of Jesus given by Himself; this, participation in the peace of God, given by Himself, but through Jesus.

4. "Now, the God of peace be (or shall be) with you" (Rom. xv. 33; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Phil. iv. 9). This, therefore, is more than the former, for it brings God Himself to us, not only His peace, but Himself—the fullest fellowship which can be known to us. "The very God of peace" (1 Thess. v. 23), who raised up Jesus from the dead, and has set Him as the Lord Jesus Christ at His right hand on His own throne. To that all descends to us from the Throne where peace has been established.

As we look at these four characters or aspects of peace, we see how is included in them what is by the old writers and commonly put as "peace with God, with self, and with men," and how much more is really included in them. And it is all wrought in us and realized by us, by the power of the Holy Ghost, and upon the principle and in the force of faith . . . Faith, by the way, being characteristically that by which the believer lives and walks (Heb. x. 38, and Heb. xi.) and the characteristic, or that without which it is not, walking with God, being with God, or having God with us in all our circumstances.

As a man simply in nature, without God, my condition and place is that of rebel and outlaw, in revolt and with nature of evil only and enmity to God. Peace, reconciliation being made through the intervention of another—through the cross—there comes to me justification—pardon—pardon through this

grace, and so the peace. The revolt and the outlawry both are over. This is the peace of Rom. v. 1.

But this same grace gives new nature and new relationships—calls from distance to nearness, brings me first into relationship with the Mediator, and then brings me into the family of the King and into the family palace, rightfully acknowledged in relationship there. This may illustrate the place and character of the peace of John xiv. 27 and also that of Phil. iv. 7; Col. iii. 15, though we are still down here.

But I might be in the family palace, in the outer chambers, so to speak, and accordingly at home there, without being in the actual presence of the King, my Father. But if I am brought into the actual presence-chamber of the King, then the God of peace is with me. This may be the place of the fourth and fullest character of peace which we have thus tried to illustrate; this is Phil. iv. 9, more than the former three, but inclusive of them, and the former three leading to this fourth as final.

The condescension of grace! its abounding being that, while strangers and pilgrims down here in our present actual condition and circumstances, passing through a scene and system so offensive to Himself, the God of peace is with us before we are really called up to enter the mansions of the Father's House.

T. M. T.

THE GREAT THINGS OF GOD.

O the depth * * * of the riches of God,

Gift unspeakable.	2 Cor. ix. 15.
Grace exceeding abundant.	1 Tim. i. 14.
Greatness unsearchable.	Ps. cxlv. 3.
Joy unspeakable.	1 Pet. i. 8.
Judgments unsearchable.	Rom. xi. 33.
Love that passeth knowledge.	Eph. iii. 19.
Peace that passeth all understanding.	Phil. iv. 7.
Power exceeding great.	Eph. i. 19.
Promises exceeding great and precious.	1 Pet. i. 4.
Riches unsearchable.	Eph. iii. 7.
Ways past finding out.	Rom. xi. 33.
Weight of glory exceeding and eternal.	2 Cor. iv. 17.

S. A. H.

RUIN AND REDEMPTION.

1 Peter i. 17-25.

What is man's real condition before God? He knows it not; but this is the great preliminary question ere he can be brought under the ministry of the *grace* of God.

The very ground necessarily assumed before preaching the gospel of God's grace is that every man is a lost and ruined sinner. God has asserted it (Rom. iii. 10-23.) And if we come to practical christianity, it is equally an axiom that the great ground of christian action is *redemption* security.

The point at issue between God and every soul is whether man is as bad as God's testimony says he is; for the starting-post in preaching the gospel is God's declaration: "*All flesh is grass.*" Take man in every state of moral and intellectual improvement, and he is grass. "All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass" (the flower is a much more fleeting thing than the grass itself). "The grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away."

Job was a man remarkable for integrity and uprightness, according to God's own declaration: "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a *perfect* and an *upright* man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" But when he comes to stand before God it is, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. *Wherefore* I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Here Job learned that as flesh he was grass.

Whenever a plea is made for the flesh, for anything merely human, whether righteousness, wisdom, or strength, the plea cannot be established except by condemning God. The Lord had said, when speaking to Job out of the whirlwind, "Wilt thou *condemn* me, that *thou* mayest be *righteous*?"

In seeking to bring the testimony concerning truth and grace before the conscience, I would not take the

dregs of humanity to prove that all flesh is grass ; here, in the first instance, you have *righteous* Job.

Again, Solomon was a remarkable specimen of a person blessed of God in various ways, but principally in having wisdom *given* to him—the *gift* of wisdom directly from God (See 1 Kings iii. 4).

“ God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore. And Solomon’s wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men. . . . And there came of all people to hear the *wisdom* of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.” All his experience ended in this: “ I have seen all the works that are done under the sun ; and, behold, *all is vanity and vexation of spirit*. That which is crooked cannot be made straight : and that which is wanting cannot be numbered. . . . For in much wisdom is much grief : and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.” *All vanity and vexation of spirit !* “ *All flesh is grass !*”

Again as to the *religious man*. If any really think that religion consists in doing this, or doing that, the Pharisee was more religious than any of us. The era of our Lord’s ministry on earth was a most religious era ; and yet, when our Lord Jesus Christ came seeking *fruit*, He could not find any. He was cast out and murdered *because* they maintained their religion.

Here we see that human righteousness, human wisdom, and human religion are all hindrances in the way of knowing God really as He is and ourselves as we are. One of the most genuine marks of real conversion to God is the utter and entire denial of any goodness in ourselves, or expectation from ourselves.

Man, as an intellectual and moral creature, is now putting forth all his powers to establish that concerning which God says it is grass. Modern philanthropists are seeking to raise and cultivate man’s intellect.

They may succeed above all their expectations, but no philanthropic society or effort for the amelioration of man, however honest the intention, can meet the ruin of the condition in which man is before God, because it falls short of the cross. It can do nothing but leave man as it found him, a ruined sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, unaltered before God, knowing nothing of Him, or what it is to have thoughts and desires in communion with Him, and in a world as ruined as himself.

Every man by nature is a lost and ruined sinner, and he is *in* a lost and ruined world. It is quite necessary to state these things together in order to know what *salvation* is.

What was salvation before the flood? It was to get into the ark, because the world was going to be judged.

What was salvation in the days of Lot? To get out of Sodom, because Sodom was going to be burned.

And what is salvation now? Not merely to be saved from hell, that it is; but it is also deliverance from this present evil world.

Persons may be *reformed*, and yet *not be converted*. I do not like the expression, "a converted character;" conversion is the being turned from everything, whatever it may be, and brought to God.

What is God's testimony now to man, thus ruined himself and in a ruined world, but testimony unto His own grace, and His own power, to His own ability to meet him in these circumstances, in a way that nothing but His own grace could provide. The apostle says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." It is impossible to be the subject of God's power without effects following. Christ is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God." "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto us which are saved, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of

God, and the wisdom of God." This may be a puerility to the present age, as it was to the Greeks, to men who are seeking wisdom, a stumbling-block to those who are requiring a sign as the Jews; but unto those who believe, Christ is "the *power* of God, and the *wisdom* of God."

The same God that hath told us that "*all flesh is grass*," the same God who, after long experience of man, has said, "*flesh profiteth nothing*," is now sending forth the testimony unto salvation through "*the precious blood of Christ*." He is not any longer testing man, beloved, and in that sense, it is not *now* a state of probation to ruined sinners. They have been tried under the best and most favorable circumstances in Israel, under the law, and found wanting. The Son of the living God has come, and found man to be "dead in trespasses and sins." Man, therefore, is pronounced as bad as he can be—utterly ruined.

But grace would never be known as it is, if it could not meet a sinner "dead in trespasses and sins." This was exhibited in the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ; He was the expression of grace and truth when here, and it was thrown in His teeth by the self-righteous Pharisee, that He was receiving publicans and sinners!

Man is more angry with God for meeting ruined sinners in *grace*, than for dealing with them in *righteousness*. Grace is the one thing he cannot understand. Human wisdom cannot grasp that word, it can understand law, but that God should be dealing in *grace* with poor lost sinners—the human understanding cannot grasp that. You will find, if you test your hearts, that you naturally hate grace a great deal more than you hate holiness. Well, grace meets the sinner *just where he is*, in all his misery and ruin: the love of God meets him *there*. Each one of us, who have received Christ into our own souls, can give our amen to that. We were loved by God, not when we had improved ourselves, but when we were dead in

trespasses and sins. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

What is it which enables God thus to have to do in grace with poor lost sinners? "*The blood of the Lamb.*" "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the *precious blood of Christ*, as of a *Lamb* without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory: that your faith and hope might be in God." It is *the blood of the Lamb* which enables the *holy* God to meet *unholy* sinners, it fills up the amazing gap between the throne of God and them, as lost and ruined sinners. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

And this after man had proved that there was no response in his heart to the love of God. Had there been a spark of good in him, it would have been called out by the Lord Jesus Christ. But no, the answer to all His love and grace was, "Away with Him! away with Him! crucify Him! crucify Him!"

Man has preferred a murderer to Jesus—"Not this man, but Barabbas!" Nay, God's Son *has been murdered!* And now the ministry of reconciliation is granted to that world *where* He was murdered. God's answer to all the hard thoughts of man's heart is, "*I have given you my Son.*" His answer to all man's pretensions, "*You have crucified my Son.*" It is always of strengthening power to my own soul, to see that when God begins, He begins with those who crucified His own Son! What a blessed thing to find, that from among the very murderers of Jesus a number were brought to know God's love through the blood of His Son.

The gospel to us is the proclamation of the value, not only of the *person* of Jesus, but of the blood which has been shed. God's controversy with man therefore is, What estimate have you of His Son, and of the *blood* that He has shed? You cannot be neutral: "he that is not *with* me is *against* me." But it matters not what your thoughts are; God's thoughts and the thoughts of *all redeemed* sinners are, that there is nothing so "precious" as the blood of God's own Son.

The *blood* of Christ not only brings God down in grace to us, it brings us up to God. "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." A ruined sinner washed in the blood of Jesus, is immediately brought into the presence of God. All the great things of God are very simple. By one and the same blood a sinner who believes in Jesus is washed from his sins, justified and brought nigh to God! And in the glory the theme of the redeemed will be, "*the blood of the Lamb.*" "Thou hast redeemed us unto God by *thy blood* out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." "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. Amen."

What becomes of a person so "washed from his sins," "redeemed," and "brought unto God"? Here we find the importance of his seeing his position in the Head. He is redeemed as he fell: he fell in one, he is redeemed in one, in a Head: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." We are *in* Him as the *Risen One*, and derive from Him new life, a new nature conversant with a new sphere of things—new affections—a new world. The redeemed man is brought into a new creation with Jesus, and all those who are redeemed by Him unto God.

This is a remedy *worthy* of God. It is that which the apostles preached, "Jesus and the resurrection." Deny grace, and you deny the wisdom of God.

Were man redeemed merely to be brought into a moral system, then remedial associations might effect the object; but he is *dead* and *wants life*, and men are seeking the improvement of that world which is *stained* with the *blood* of Jesus, for which He will make inquisition by and bye. If I am giving myself to philanthropy, a thing which would be very well if man were to be improved for a social system here, I am denying his ruin and that of the world. In this we see the deceiving power of Satan. The church should not be deceived by him, he is the *accuser* of the *brethren*; but the *deceiver* of the whole *world*.— *Words of Truth*.

LIKE A CHILD IN HIS ARMS.

Safe in Thine arms, Lord Jesus !
Close to Thy wounded side,
Hidden from evil and sin,
By Him who for me has died.

Safe in Thine arms, Lord Jesus,
Borne on Thy shoulders strong,
Fatigued I never can feel,
Nor finding the way too long.

Safe in Thine arms, Lord Jesus !
Held to thy loving breast,
Content like a child to lie,
Happy, and sweetly at rest.

Safe in Thine arms, Lord Jesus !
Feeling Thy beating heart,
Enjoying the sweets of love—
While screened from the world apart.

Safe in Thine arms, Lord Jesus !
Meeting Thy heavenly eye,
Beaming with tenderest love—
Who in Thine arms would not lie ?

Safe in Thine arms, Lord Jesus !
Gaining Thy ready ear ;
Thou wait'st with sympathy true,
My griefs and my joys to hear.

Safe in Thine arms, Lord Jesus !
Hearing Thy precious voice
Whispering comfort divine,
Bidding me only rejoice.

Safe in Thine arms, Lord Jesus !
 Tasting such joy and such love,
 Content to be carried, caressed,
 Till called by Thyself above.

C. A. D.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

1. "J. L. L." What is the meaning of 2 Peter i. 12, by "diligence to make your calling and election sure!"

Ans. This epistle is addressed to those who have obtained like precious faith with the apostles, in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, with the desire that they might escape the corruption of the world through lust, and live godly lives, for which all things needful have been given, through the full knowledge of Him who hath called us by His own glory and virtue (or praise). His glory &c., characterizes their calling, and was that from which it sprung. Even so their election was unto the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. It will be seen then that it was not to make sure their election before God, but to confirm it in their own walk and life, to walk according to the exceeding great and precious promises given, according to all that was given for righteous living. Elected to be holy, they must be practically holy, called by the glory, they must live according to it.

2. "C. S. C." I. What is meant by "enduring to the end," and what is the nature of the "salvation" in Matt. x. 22? II. What is meant by striving to enter in at the strait gate is in Luke xiii. 24, and who are addressed?

Ans. I. In relation to the earthly kingdom that was proposed in Israel, salvation was never looked upon as a settled thing before entering into it actually by the coming of the Lord, and then it included earthly deliverance, first from their enemies, and then a place of security with Him in the kingdom. Hence this salvation would depend upon their endurance in the midst of all the opposition and persecution that would (will) be brought to bear against them. If they yielded they would be found among the enemies who are to be destroyed at that time. If they held out, they would be delivered and saved. It is another people, from us who are waiting for the Lord Jesus to come and take us to Himself, as those that are saved already as to the soul. We have received the end of our faith thus; they will not know of a present salvation in the risen Christ in heaven; but as the remnant of the Jews, holding on to the word of prophecy, will be waiting for the salvation of the Lord. II. In this passage, "striving" is not put in opposition to "seeking" as if men must work harder to secure salvation; but rather the one seek,

to enter into the kingdom, by their own way, while those who are addressed are told not to strive to enter into the kingdom, but into the *gate*. This is where the contrast lies. The one would enter into the kingdom without going through the gate (Christ), but are admonished that there is no other name. Instead of counseling greater efforts, it sets aside all works, by making Christ all. Striving to enter in at the strait gate, is a man brought to a sense of his being without strength, and a sinner, and cast upon what Christ has done. The Jews were at any time willing to have the kingdom without the King, they would even put Him to death that the inheritance might be theirs; but they are admonished that there is but one way, One Person. They must take the kingdom through God's appointed King. So now people would gladly go to heaven, by their own way, allowing all their doings, bad and good. The gate is narrow, allowing nothing of us, and yet it is open, clear and perfect. The sinner must take his place as such, seeing the death of Christ cutting off all that he is and has.

3. "S. A. R." What is the everlasting gospel spoken of in Rev. xiv. 6. ?

Ans. It is intimated in verse 7, which seems to be an exhortation, from which we can see that this gospel was a proclamation and revelation of God as Creator of all things in contradistinction to the idolatry that will be established by Antichrist. God has always had that ground of speaking to man, even from the beginning. Among Israel He came with the good news of the kingdom, to be re-established in moral government on the earth. In our day it is the gospel of the richest display of His grace, called "the gospel of the glory," because it is of the Lord Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Father. This will be ended at the rapture of the heavenly saints at the coming of the Lord. Then the gospel of the kingdom will again take its course, especially among the Jews. But upon the setting up of idolatry the testimony against it will be the good news of Him who *made* in opposition to this idol that can make nothing, but had to be made, itself.

JUSTIFICATION.

We are justified by God, the author of it.	Rom. iii. 26.
We are justified by grace, the spring of it.	Rom. iii. 24.
We are justified by blood, the ground of it.	Rom. v. 9.
We are justified by resurrection, the acknowledgment of it.	Rom. iv. 25.
We are justified by faith, the principle of it.	Rom. v. 1.
	S. A. H.

A FEW WORDS ON PSALM XXXII.

“For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee, in a time when Thou mayest be found.” This is a sweet response of the one that has been cleared of every stain, till not a spot remains. He can now pray, and on this account. The wonderful grace displayed toward him, calls out the heart to communicate his wants to Him who has first loved him. Prayer would have been impossible before. He was rather occupied with keeping secret his sins, and of what avail would prayer on his part have been, while regarding iniquity in his heart? Or if confessing, the forgiveness comes before the petition for it. The proper place and time for prayer is from the forgiven soul, not the sinner. The marvellous thing is now, that God has taken the place of praying (2 Cor. v. 20), beseeching the sinner to be reconciled on the ground of what He has done in Christ, as the invitation went out “my oxen and fatlings are killed; come ye!” (Matt. xxii. 4).

But the reconciled one delights to pour out his heart to Him who has had mercy upon him. He can come boldly, for he knows the worth of the blood. He knows the time of finding, too. It is in an acceptable time that he is heard, and in a day of salvation that he is helped, as the word is addressed to Christ in Isa. xlix. 8. Surely one is near to God as his Father, when he can know himself addressed as He was. It is only when I have His thoughts by knowing His kindness that I can talk with Him. It was when David had learned the exceeding greatness of God’s kindness to him that He would build him a house, that he went in and sat before the Lord, and, overwhelmed with that which was so grandly beyond the manner of man, he found it in his heart to pray a prayer unto Him. It is the fruit of faith, the outflow of confidence. I must first be a listener to be blessed, and then I become a speaker.

And this is the nature and character of prayer. It is the prayer of *faith*. We speak to God, not the

thoughts and desires of our own coining, but according to what He has revealed of Himself, we proceed upon His own words. And the Holy Ghost is in us to shed abroad this love, these facts of God according to His valuing, and to carry our hearts out to Him. We know God, He has acted worthy of Himself and adequately for us, and we meet Him on His own ground. Because of this, shall every saint pray unto Him in an acceptable time. "The floods of great waters," the judgment, cannot come nigh such a one. All is overpast. They came over His head who was bowed beneath our load; but grace that reigns through righteousness has given us this boast, "if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, *much more*, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Nothing can still or contradict this boast. It is the peace of conscience through the blood of the cross, by which we face all judgment and say, "Who is He that condemneth?" And he that has not the whole question of guilt and sin settled in view of the judgment-seat, has not peace.

And then, what? "THOU art my hiding-place." Adam, called out from his skulking place, exposed as to what sent him there, is covered so completely by the coat of skins which the Lord God provided as to stand with ease and confidence and without shame before God, on the new ground of all being judged and its consequences accepted. It is a far more substantial and satisfactory ground than that of innocence, or of doing, or being, good. God Himself, from whom we would have hidden and concealed everything, becomes the very hiding-place. This takes away shame in the presence of others, too. When I have seen all judged righteously and met by God, I can let others bring out what I have been or done. I can confess it all in its vileness and hideousness, and say, "Yes, I did it all, I was just that, but He has put it away out of His sight, and mine." And I, knowing that

He can never discover any new thing in me to bring up, can make my boast in Him. Should Satan or man array all before me, I have but to refer them to Him. I am on His foundation. As we so often sing :

“ What though the accuser roar,
Of ills that I have done ?
I know them well, and thousands more ;
Jehovah findeth none.”

Any accusation, now, is against Him and the perfection of His work. Let Him see to it, He is my hiding-place.

But, so is He, in all troubles that assail. I have found the One who has gauged every sorrow and every evil, and He has perfect calm which He imparts. It is the peace of God keeping the heart and mind through Christ Jesus our Lord. I am related to God through Christ, and am entitled to all the liberty and quietness and joy that He has, above all circumstances, preserved from all trouble. How completely all wants are met, for man's first and last want is a hiding-place ; when sin was brought into the world, and at its final judgment ; in the first case, cowering among the trees, and in the last, calling upon the rocks and mountains to fall upon him

But the thoroughness of the triumph is told in the “ songs of deliverance,” with which the hidden one is “ compassed about.” Men do not sing when they are in danger, or when they fear. Song is the expression of complete victory and joy. It characterizes our standing in Ephesians, both as making melody in our hearts unto the Lord, and speaking to each other. There was a difference in the journey experiences of Israel, between the earlier days and the last, when just about to enter the land. The rock was smitten, in the former for the supply of water, and it “ followed them.” But, in the end, the princes digged, accompanied with buoyant song, “ Spring up, oh well !” They had sung one song of victory over Pharaoh and his army, at the Red Sea, and seem to have been silent

all the way through the forty years, wherein sentence of death was being enacted upon them. But now when death has passed, and none of those who rebelled are left, and Israel has renewed her youth, in the children of these taking their places—the image of resurrection practically—then they may dig not as a servile labor, but as becomes nobles and princes, with songs of joy. And thus the journey which proved both God and themselves—He being first their deliverer through blood, and then their hiding-place all the way through—was begun and ended with song; compassed, so to speak, with songs.

So our lives are to be celebrated in song, when according to His dealings, we are led to know Him as the One who exposes but to forgive and cleanse, and then is our everlasting refuge and resource.

The Samaritan woman had characterized the well to which she came, as deep and having nothing with which to draw; but she left her empty bucket and that well that seemed hopeless, when, being exposed, she was filled at His own well-spring, and she carried the well-spring with her, jubilant and unshamed before the men of the city. Christ and she had drank and been refreshed together, the well had sprung up as they dug, and by it, “the Saviour of the world” was richly manifested.

And now again, we have come to this suggestion and admonition of the Spirit, “Selah!” The third part of the Psalm is ended, and we are called to review this as well as the other precious things in the ways of God with our souls. Who, in view of these dealings in grace would stay with his own sins, and his own ways of concealing and attempting to quiet *himself*?”

Herein is love made perfect with us that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world. And not only so, but we also rejoice in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

FELLOWSHIPS.

May we look at the several fellowships brought before us in the Word of God. Notice first, the fellowships which are prohibited:

• I. 1 Cor. x. 20, 21—fellowship with devils, their sacrifices and their table; a prohibition actually for the earlier days of the assembly rather than now, because the Corinthians had come out from such fellowship. They were supposed to have heeded the injunction, “flee from idolatry.” They were, on the contrary, in the communion of the body and blood of Christ and called to His table. But the principle of the prohibition held good still. It was in its aggravation the sin of Israel that they sacrificed to devils (demons) and not to God. They provoked Him to jealousy with their strange gods—the gods of the nations of heathendom. (Lev. xvii. 7; Deut. xxxii. 17). This principle would bring out now from tables not really the Lord’s. Not that the tables of Christendom are such as 1 Cor. x. 20, 21 refers to, and there has been much mischief done by speaking of the tables of Christendom as the tables of devils. Sadly mistaken and hurtful this is. Far be it from us to apply these words of 1 Cor. x. 20, 21—which are really the following up of the injunction, “flee from idolatry”—to the tables of the churches of evangelical Christendom, those who really own the Lord that bought them, though we may have been led through grace to separate from these to what is more truly the Lord’s table on His own ground—the unity of the body, the presence of the Holy Ghost, and His own name.

II. 2 Cor, vi, 14 to the end. This is not necessarily and alone heathendom. On the contrary this calls out from much that is of Christendom; These are the associations and yokes of walk and of daily life as well as of the communion of the table—of many possible and commonly allowed connexions, relations and participations. This is a wide range. It is in principle the distinction between what is according to God’s

distinction, clean and unclean. It is the old principle of Lev. xix. 19. It is really separateness of that which is of the Spirit from that which is of the flesh which is here enjoined, and disallows any yoke or alliance of the Christian with this world system of things. It is general in its application, but surely it is also ecclesiastical, and is a call out into the place of acknowledged relationship with the Father. So also, indeed, 1 Cor. x. 20, 21, may be said to be ecclesiastical, even more especially.

III. Eph. v. 11. Here is not only no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but resistance enjoined—testimony against them. There would be positive incongruity in the Christian being in such fellowship. Ye were darkness, ye are now light. The distinction in principle is that of Gal. v. 19–26. If works of the flesh formerly, now these would be fruits of the Spirit. The sons of disobedience, whether of heathendom or of Christendom, are to be denied our fellowship. Works, in some sense, result from the walk. If the walk is in the light, there will be the works of light, and there is to be no association or part with the unfruitful works of darkness. How egregiously those persons err who attribute to the higher truths of the Word of God any tendency, practically in the Christian's walk, to break down moral distinctions.

Thus, these three scriptures together, cover the ground of worship, walk, and works, and afford plain prohibitions as to these three. These are the negative. They show the believer, as the man of faith, characteristically the man who walks with God (Heb. x. 38; xi.), that which he is to pass by, and are boundaries, so to speak, of the narrow path in which the man of God is to walk down here.

Look now at Zech. xiii. 7, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts." Wonderful this is in itself and in its consequences. The action of this

fellowship is the ground and title of all the fellowships into which we are called. They all result from this. Here we have the dignity of the person—the divinity, and the actuality of sufferings of the Lord Jesus, and also companionship and equality in all titles and dignities and glories with the Lord of Hosts, the One who could rightfully use the sword against the sinner and against the One who stood in the sinner's stead and became the Great Substitute. See from Heb. i. 3, who He is, and who purged our sins.

Now what are the fellowships to which Christians are called?

I. The fellowship of the Son, 1 Cor. i. 9, "called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord." The believer is thus of God in Christ. The Word of God makes much of this fellowship. The Son revealed the Father, and the Spirit reveals the Son. He is Himself the Word.

II. Fellowship with the Father and with the Son (1 John i. 2, 3). We could not really have fellowship with the Son, without also with the Father—the Father and Jesus Christ thus together, in John xvii. 3, and these fellowships are the ground of the fellowship one with another into which christians are brought.

III. Phil. ii. 1. Then there is a "fellowship of the Spirit." It seems to me that is different from 2 Cor. xiii. 13, "The communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all." That communion may be joyed individually as well as collectively. The former is exercise and participation in a corporate fellowship. It is an activity of believers one with the other, in that which, of the Spirit, is common to them all, and comes out of a spiritual apprehension of that which the Spirit is to us. It suggests the ecclesiastical ground of Eph. iv. 3., 1 Cor. x. 16, and 2 Tim. ii. 19-22. But that unity may be doctrinally recognized without this fellowship being realized and enjoyed. To have in power "fellowship of the Spirit," there is called out

exercise of soul in sympathy with what the Spirit is doing—in fellowship with the Spirit in regard both to sinners and saints, and the unity which the Spirit has accomplished.

Thus we have glanced at the fellowships “of the Son,” “with the Father and the Son,” and “of the Spirit”—a trinity of fellowships, and with the ever-blessed Trinity of the Father the Son and the Spirit. How wonderful and gracious this is, and how much needed that we have the blessedness and power of realizing it practically!

IV. “Fellowship one with another” we get in Gal. ii. 9, and 1 John i. 7. This has a character altogether its own. It is of Him who first brings into fellowship with Himself, and is the outcome of a common relationship to Him, and in Him with one another. It has responsibilities, as well as reciprocities. It is children of the Father, but viewing them as gathered in the consciousness and power of the family union, in the family circle into which we are brought. This may include the “fellowship of the ministering to the saints,” (2 Cor. viii. 4.) It is only found in its fullest character when believers are gathered on the ground of the unity of the one body in the “endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace.”

V. (Acts ii. 42. 1 John i. 2, 3.) “The apostles’ doctrine and fellowship.” To us this fellowship is particularly in their doctrine and a fuller doctrine than at the time of Acts ii. 42, for it was after that that Stephen saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God; after that that Peter learned the grand lesson that what God had cleansed was no more unclean, that He was no respecter of persons, that Gentile and Jew were to be one in Christ; and after that that to the apostle of the church, and the unity it was given to make known, “the fellowship of the mystery” (Eph. iii. 8). It is into the completed doctrine, completed by Paul, and the completed word possessed by us in the power of the one Spirit, that we are

brought. And it was by this same apostle that there was carried, so to speak, from heart to heart the special message from the glory, first to the Corinthians, and through them to all who believe, of 1 Cor. xi. 23-26. Then we have,

VI. (Phil. i. 5.) "Fellowship in the Gospel." This is much needed in its manifestations, by effort to bring souls under sound of the Gospel, and by prayer and by personal dealing with souls, and by helping publications for spread of the truth. This fellowship comes out best when the former fellowships are known and enjoyed (Rom. i. 16, 17).

VII. (Phil. iii. 10.) "The fellowship of the sufferings of Christ." I must see something by the teaching of the Spirit, of the glory—have a view of the mount of transfiguration, before I can see the depth of the stoop of the Lord Jesus down to sufferings and the depths of death (Psalm xxii). He bore the curse, exhausted the judgment and died the death, alone, and on the cross alone; yet for us, and faith reckons that we were with Him there, because He, though alone there, was not there for us only (I allow the sense in which He tasted death for every man). But there were sufferings of another kind prior to death, as the Holy One walking through this world. "They have both seen and hated both me and my Father." "If they hate you, ye know they hated me before they hated you." "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, the world hateth you." It is only as the affections are with Him, and the walk with Him, and the ways like His, that this fellowship becomes realized, as one of fellowship with Him as His. "But rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings." We look from His glory to these sufferings of His also—from our sufferings to when His glory shall be revealed "and we shall be glad with exceeding joy"

(1 Pet. iv. 12, 13.), and in this fellowship there may be included both that part in the sufferings of Christ which faith reckons as ours, and that following in the sufferings of Christ which experience makes ours.

Thus we have the series of seven positive fellowships briefly noticed. They are all very real, and should be realized and known to our souls as real, fully entered into and reciprocated, so to say, by each and all of God's children. To those gathered on the ground of the unity, they should be very real. We have thus grouped them, in order to view them together—the better to see them and feel their power. There attaches to each one of them a distinct responsibility—an attitude and answer of our soul towards each. The accumulated responsibility of the whole, who is sufficient for? But our sufficiency is of God.

T. M. T.

REMNANT TESTIMONY.

AS ILLUSTRATED IN THE BOOK OF EZRA.

Chapter i. I suppose that all these things are typical in a double manner: First, as referring to the literal restoration of Israel; and secondly, as typical of the remnant testimony in this day.

The Lord's hand in this restoration is plainly recognized (1-5). The bringing forth the vessels of the house of the Lord show us the separating of the vessels to honor from those to dishonor, all alike had been in the "great house" (2 Tim. ii. 20, 21). The exact number of these vessels is given, and their description, showing us how precious the testimony is in the eyes of the Lord, His eye marks every vessel brought forth, and the number is not so great but what they may be easily enumerated.

Chapter ii. All the families that returned from Babylon are enumerated. This again shows the precious character of the testimony.

Verse 61. But here are some who cannot prove their genealogy, what of them? "These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood. And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and with Thummim." What of the great mass of professing christians who cannot trace their genealogy, who have not assurance as to their being God's children, who have no intelligence of the priestly place. Well, we cannot trace it for them. One who knows not his place cannot eat of the holy things. "The Lord knoweth them that are His." When he appears He will make manifest who are His, and who are not.

Verse 66. Not only has God numbered the people that returned from the captivity, but their cattle! How precious this is! If He numbered the cattle of that remnant, will He not number ours? He knows how rich and how poor we are. And if any have suffered loss through faithfulness (as those appear to have done, for they had only one beast of burden to eight persons), He knows it and sets it down.

Verse 68. This giving of money for the house of God, shows us that such is acceptable. Some have made the assertion that only the evangelist should be supported, but this surely cannot typify the preaching of the Gospel, but rather the gathering of saints on to God's ground.

Chapter iii. The people have returned, they have come out from Babylon, the separation has been made; this must always be the first step, the next is—what? Rebuild the temple? No, worship! First separate from evil, then gathering at one centre, worship, keeping all the ordinances as though nothing had happened, going right back to the church truth as first given. They offered burnt-offerings "as it is written,"

“They kept also the feast of tabernacles as it is written.” *Then*, the testimony to what the house of God is, is raised (6, 7). It is a blessed thing to have these things so clearly laid out before us in the Word, for the flesh is apt to be busy to try and pull down and build up something else.

The names of those who were instrumental in gathering to this worship are full of meaning. The name of the high priest was Joshua, this is significant. He to whom we gather in our weakness is the One who took us through the river of judgment, and led us into the heavenly places. He is the Risen Saviour, and—in spite of the ruin we hold to Ephesian truth, recognizing Him as Head of the Body, and give Him His place as such. The name of Zerubbabel is very significant, “stranger in Babel.” This shows the separating character of the testimony. In fact all the names are significant: Jozadak, “justice of the Lord,” this is quite a contrast to Laodicea, “justice for the people,” Christendom may talk of people’s rights, our testimony is to *His* rights. Shealtiel, “asked of God,” (Shealtiel was father of Zerubbabel) the testimony of strangership in Babel is given in answer to prayer.

“And when the seventh month was come (verse i). This was the jubilee month, when the trumpets were blown and liberty proclaimed throughout the land. The tenth day was the day of atonement, and the fifteenth, the feast of tabernacles (Lev. xxiii). How instructive all this is! Liberty, deliverance from captivity, and atonement. How much they would feel the need of this, for they had suffered for their sins! Next, the feast of tabernacles, possessing the land in booths in memorial of the wilderness sojourn.

In the second month of the second year of their return (which must therefore have been after they had kept the passover), they laid the foundation of the Temple. It was done with great joy, but also with weeping. Some wept when they recollected the first house. “Being mindful of thy tears” is the sweet

word of 2 Tim. Who would not weep, who meditate upon the blessed testimony the church at first was, and know, *have felt in their own souls*, what the ruin is? "The people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a great shout, and the noise (of weeping) was heard afar off." Who would not rejoice at the upraising of this blessed testimony, but who would not weep at the ruin? Joy and sorrow thus mingle.

Chapter iv. "Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard." Ah, yes, an "open door and many adversaries" go together. There was surely an open door here, the Lord had stirred up the heart of Cyrus to let the people go, and now when the Temple was being rebuilt, there appear many adversaries. And thus now, it is *this* testimony that raises up adversaries. Now let us mark who these adversaries are, and how their opposition is shown. They were those whom the king of Assyria had put in Israel's land, they were not of Israel. They oppose by desiring fraternity. "Let us build with you, for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto Him since the days of Esar-haddon, king of Assur, which brought us up hither." But Zerubbabel refuses their help, "Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God." They illustrate to us the false profession, those who are not of the seed of the "Israel of God," but who worship God rather as *a* God. They claimed that they did "sacrifice unto Him since the days of Esar-haddon which brought us up hither." Now the real Israelite always went back to the redemption from Egypt and the passage of the Red Sea, (see Psalms in witness to this) but these to the time when they who were image worshippers, were put here to worship Him whom the king called "the god of the land." So the real christian goes back to the time of his redemption from the world through the death of Christ, but the mere professor to the days of the founding

of "our church." The first effort of Satan is to commingle. This of course can never be allowed. They, of course, *could not* help us in raising this testimony, for they gather not to one center but are like these Samaritans of whom the Lord said, "Ye worship, ye know not what."

Their fellowship being refused, they proceed to annoy. "Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, and hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose." All this is easily applied. Mark, the thing hated is *the testimony!* If we would only take the ground of a sect, be one in the Babel, all would be peace. But, as it is, everything is done to weaken, and there are plenty of "hired" counsellors to plead against those who dare to gather on God's ground.

They proceed to more bitter measures; the secretary of the Danite and the other "societies" write, accusing them to the king Artaxerxes, "Be it known unto the king, that the Jews which came up from thee to us are come unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and bad city, and have set up the walls thereof and joined the foundations. Be it known now unto the king, that if this city be builded, and the walls set up again, then will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom, and so thou shalt endamage the revenue of the kings. Now *because we have maintenance from the king's palace, therefore have we sent, &c.*" Truly the world loses the revenues it derives from christians if a visible testimony is raised. So, they succeed, by force in stopping the work. What will God do now?

Chapter v. The work ceases, but for a very short time. The Lord stirs up the people to the work again. At His command they again build. We may learn a lesson from this; having had the door opened by the Lord (through Cyrus), they needed nothing else. By Haggai's prophecy it appears that through

having been compelled to cease building, the people had sunk into indifference, and, being swayed by circumstances, said, "The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built" (Hag. i. 2). And so, to this day, lukewarmness excuses itself on the plea of "waiting the Lord's own good time." *He* says, "I have set before thee an open door, and what He says is sure. We are not then to be discouraged by opposition *as if God was in the opposition*, and not rather, in the "open door." But it is often found that the reason of coldness is love of ease, as in this case: "Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai, the prophet, saying, is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways, ye have sown much and bring in little; ye eat but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways; go up to the mountains and bring wood' and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord. Ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? said the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house" (Hag. i. 3, 9).

Chapter vi. Who could have dreamed of the way in which the Lord would help them? In faith they took up the work again, which called forth fresh opposition, but the Lord made that very opposition a means of great help. The lesson then is—if you have the word of the Lord, go forward, heedless of the many adversaries.

The house being finished, they kept the dedication with great joy, and it is significant that although they were chiefly of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (i. 5; v. 1), they sacrificed as the children of Israel

(iii. 1 ; vi. 16), and " offered for a sin offering for *all Israel*, twelve he-goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel." How remarkable that expression of Paul in Acts xxvi. 7, " Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come." *Twelve tribes!* Why, ten had disappeared hundreds of years before ! Yes, to sight, but not to faith. Even so, a handful of believers gathered round the Lord Himself, can take no lower ground than " One Body." The unity of the church, the Body of Christ has disappeared to sight, but not to God, and not to faith. The Word allows no lower ground than " We being many are one loaf, and one body." Faith sees with God's eyes, not with man's. And we get another principle of the utmost importance, purity at the Lord's table, " For the priests, and the Levites were purified together, all of them were pure, and killed the passover for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves. And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and *all such as had separated themselves* unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the Lord God of Israel, did eat." A table where impurity is allowed cannot be the *Lord's* table. And surely the holding of doctrines that dishonor Christ and disown His Lordship, is impurity, it is the worst kind of leprosy, *it is the leprosy of the head* (Lev. xiii. 44).

Chapter vii. The temple is now finished and dedicated ; fifty-eight years elapse, and then Ezra's heart is stirred up to go and instruct the people and further to gather out from Babylon. So we see that only a small portion of Israel had *founded* this second temple ; there were many others who remained in Babylon. The Lord calls Ezra out, and with him went up " some of the children of Israel." And the king's decree was " they . . . which are minded of their own free-will to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee." The test was then as now. Who has a heart for the Lord ?

We can fairly suppose that many of the Israelites were prosperous in Babylon, and therefore only those went out who loved the Lord, and had a heart that was pure for Him. Alas! how many christians are getting on too well in the Babel to leave it! Thus the remnant character is to "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." That this remnant testimony was precious we see again by the exactitude of details. Ezra's genealogy is given, and when he started, and how he came to Jerusalem.

Chapter viii. Again the genealogy of those who go up is given. How precious, how rewarding the thought that the Lord so values faithfulness. To Zerubbabel, He says, "In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet; for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts" (Hag. ii. 23). To Philadelphia, He says, "I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

Having professed trust in the Lord, trust must be exercised (21-23).

Chapter ix. And now comes another point. There may be a separation from the Babel around us, and a testimony established, and yet, in individuals, mixture with the world itself. This is, grievous though it be to say it, common. Ezra mourned over this more than all before. And indeed how distressing it is to find worldliness among those who have taken a place of separation from the world. Surely in view of such a testimony being thus marred, we too must say, "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God." How beautifully the remnant place is pictured in these words: "And now for a moment grace hath been showed from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in His holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage."

Chapter x. The names of those who had failed in this thing, are given here, just as before we have the names of those who returned from captivity. He, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, does not let worldliness escape His notice, whatever the profession may be.

Many hearts are exercised as to what will become of the testimony. Will it be swamped by the lack of separation from the world in the details of private life? Will the candlestick be removed? Does Philadelphia sink into Laodicea? We have the way of escape as well as the warning here. "Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children, for the people wept very sore." The valley of Achan is the door of hope. Let those who confess it and lament it in private, surely, first, but also like Ezra, in public, too—let those who have spirituality, confess it with weeping "before the house of God," and the nail shall not be removed, but the Lord will gather others to take the ground of self-judgment with them. Let coldness, worldliness and love of ease be exposed in the light of God's word, and the Lord will bless the faithfulness, the evil will be put away which does practically deny the "Name." Beloved! suffer the word of exhortation. As the day of judgment draws nearer let the Enoch ("dedicated") character be more apparent. Separate from the world, and dedicated to Him, let the walk be with Him, which can only be in the light." Let us covet to have "*before*" the translation (Heb. xi. 5), the testimony that we please God.

O. H. B.

JESUS ONLY.

The Light of Heaven—is the Face of Jesus.

The Joy of Heaven—is the Presence of Jesus.

The Melody of Heaven—is the Name of Jesus.

The Harmony of Heaven—is the Praise of Jesus.

The Theme of Heaven—is the Work of Jesus.

The Employment of Heaven—is the Service of Jesus.

The Fulness of Heaven—is Jesus Himself.

THE SIN-OFFERING.

It is remarkable that nothing was so stamped with the character of holiness, of entire, real separation to God, as the sin-offering. In the other offerings, perfect acceptance, a sweet savor, and, in some cases, our leavened cakes, are found therewith in the use of them; but all passed in the natural delight, so to speak, which God took in what was perfect and infinitely excellent, though it supposed sin and judgment to be there. But here the most remarkable and exact sanctions of its holiness were enjoined (Lev. vi. 26-28). There was nothing in the whole work of Jesus which so marked His entire and perfect separation to God, His positive holiness, as His bearing sin. He who knew no sin alone could be made sin, and the act itself was the most utter separation to God conceivable, to bear all, yea, beyond our thought, and to His glory. It was a total consecration of Himself, at all cost, to God's glory; as God, indeed, could accept nothing else. And the victim must have been as perfect as the self offering was. As a sacrifice, then, for sin, Christ is specially holy; as indeed, now in the power of this sacrifice, a Priest present before God, making intercession, He is "holy, harmless, separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens." Yet so truly was it a bearing of sin that he who carried the goat before his letting loose, and he that carried the ashes of the red heifer, and sprinkled the water of separation, were unclean until even, and must wash to come into the camp. Thus are these two great truths in the sin-offering of Christ presented to us in these sacrifices. For, indeed, how can we conceive a greater separation to God, in Christ, than His offering Himself as a victim for sin? And, on the other hand, had He not really borne our sins in all their evil, He could not have put them away really in the judgment of God. Blessed for ever be His name who has done it, and may we ever learn more His perfectness in doing it!

LONGING.

Oh God, Thou art so gracious,
 Thy mercies came unsought ;
 For us Thy Son Thou gavest,
 And with His blood we're bought.
 Thy blessings who can number,
 Or sum their priceless cost ;
 Compute, by weight or measure,
 The love that saved the lost ?

There seems no end of glory,
 Our cup of grace runs o'er ;
 It deeper grows and wider,
 Nor bottom has, nor shore.
 Our lot is all so joyous,
 So richly is endow'd,
 In Christ, all things are ours,
 For us the heav'ns are bow'd.

And yet the heart has longing—
 It prays for one more grace—
 It yearns to meet the Saviour,
 It longs to see His face.
 Wilt Thou, oh God, not send Him ?
 He waits the word from Thee,
 For 'tis His blessed promise,
 We shall His glory see.

J. T.

 THE FOUR GOSPELS.

Every attentive reader must have been struck with the diversity of the four gospels. Even in the narration of the same event, considerable difference is found to exist. The reason is obvious. While each writer was divinely inspired for the work, it is clear that it was the province of each to give a different aspect of the personal glory and ways of the blessed Lord. While no parts, therefore, of these Holy Scriptures can possibly contradict each other, it is clear that, because each evangelist gives a separate line of instruction, the labor of the natural mind to harmonize the four gospels must always be unsuccessful. To suppose that each merely wrote an account of our Lord and His blessed ways, as each best knew and remembered, would be to lower the idea of an inspired account to a

mere human production. It is, moreover, certain that this was not the case, but that they recorded and put together facts, sometimes independent of their chronological order, as they were divinely directed; so that on some occasions one omitted what he was most familiar with, and others who had no personal acquaintance with the fact, were led to narrate it. For example, John was the only one of the four evangelists (*Matt.* xxvi. 37) who was present in the garden with our blessed Lord at the time of His agony, when "He sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." But John writes nothing of it in his gospel; whereas Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, who were not present, are the instruments used to give us such touching details of Gethsemane.

It was *Matthew's* office to write of our adorable Lord as the Messiah, *Mark* as the perfect servant, *Luke* as the Son of Man, and *John* as Son of God—"the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." All the gospels, therefore, begin differently. *Matthew* introduces Him as "Son of David, the Son of Abraham;" *Mark* as "Jesus Christ, the Son of God;" *Luke* as the holy thing born of Mary, "called the Son of God;" *John* as "the Word which was in the beginning with God, and was God; the Word made flesh, and dwelt among us." Nor are the terminations of each gospel less remarkable, each, too, in keeping with the subject of the book. *Matthew* gives us no account of our Lord's ascension, but concludes his gospel by setting forth Jesus risen, standing on the earth, and instructing the apostles of the kingdom—representing the Jewish remnant—as to the discipling of the nations, which we know will not take place till after the church is gone. *Mark* sets our Lord before us as finding no rest till He is risen, ascended, and sitting on the right hand of God; *Luke* concludes his account of Jesus the Son of Man as risen, eating broiled fish and honey-comb, promising the Holy Ghost, leading His disciples out as far as to Bethany, parted from them, and carried up

into heaven. *John* ends his gospel by an account of Jesus risen, ascending to His Father and our Father, His God and our God, breathing on His disciples the Holy Ghost, caring for them, and alluding to His coming again. Observe, too, the gradation in the termination of the four gospels. *Matthew* concludes with Jesus risen; *Mark* with Jesus risen and ascended; *Luke* with Jesus risen, ascended, and promising the gift of the Holy Ghost—"power from on high;" *John* with Jesus risen, ascended, breathing on His disciples the Holy Ghost, and speaking of His coming again.

The general structure and contents of each gospel remarkably agree with the aspect of the Lord which each evangelist introduces. *Matthew*, therefore, treating of the Messiah character of our blessed Lord, gives many points of precious truth, in keeping with this subject, which are not found in any other part of Scripture. He alone speaks of Him as "born King of the Jews." The expression, "the kingdom of heaven," is found only here, and is repeated about twenty-eight times; for the hope of Jewish people is a kingdom "as the days of heaven upon the earth" (Deut. xi. 21). The expression, too, "the end of the age," only occurs in this gospel. Here only have we a detailed account of the Sermon on the Mount, as it is called; and the twelve apostles of the kingdom are charged to confine their ministry to the house of Israel. Here only have we a full record of "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," because, though they give instruction to us now, they will be specially applicable to the remnant of Israel by and by, when the Lord shall "cast out of His kingdom them that offend and do iniquity." *Matthew* only gives a full report of our Lord's prophetic discourse as to His coming again to the earth and the end of the age, and of His judgment of the sheep and goats when Christ sits as King upon His throne; and His brethren after the flesh deeply realize Jehovah's faithfulness to His promise to Abraham, "I will bless him that blesseth thee, and curse him that

curseth thee." In this gospel only is recorded the wicked utterance of the apostate Jews, "His blood be on us, and on our children;" or the fact narrated that the soldiers were bribed with money to declare the palpable falsehood that while *they slept* the disciples came *by night*, and stole the body of the Lord Jesus. And, as before alluded to, here only is the commission given (not by Jesus ascended in glory, but) by Jesus risen and standing on the earth, to the apostles of the kingdom, to disciple (not Jews, but) the nations, and to baptize them "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Thus the Lord looks beyond this present church-time altogether, and appoints a ministry of His faithful people on earth (no doubt the Jewish remnant) after the church is gone. This ministry is here contemplated to continue until the Lord comes out of heaven with us in flaming fire, "the end of the age;" hence He adds, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to *the end of the world*" (age).

In *Mark* we have no account of the Lord's birth. "Jesus Christ, the Son of God," is here looked at as the perfect servant, going on day by day in faithful, untiring devotedness to Him who sent Him. The words "anon," "straightway," "immediately," occur many times. On one occasion we are told that "they could not so much as eat bread." His feelings as Jehovah's servant are peculiarly noticed. We read once that "He looked round about on them in anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts;" and another time, that "He sighed deeply in His spirit." Still He went on, and accomplished all the work appointed Him, until He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. He commissions the eleven to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Luke, presenting Jesus as the woman's Seed—Son of Man—brings out many points, not found in any other book, of the Lord's ministry and ways, strikingly in keeping with his subject. Here only have we a de-

tailed account of the circumstances connected with our Lord's birth, and "that holy thing, the Son of God," and "Son of the Highest," contrasted with a child full of the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, and "prophet of the Highest"—John. The Lord's genealogy is here traced to Adam; and in this gospel only is the account of Simeon's taking the holy child in his arms; the ways of Jesus at the age of twelve years; His deep compassion for the widow of Nain; the story of the good Samaritan; His being received into Martha's house; the parable of the prodigal son, as it is called, and also of the rich man and Lazarus. And, to pass on, it is Luke alone who speaks of our Lord in Gethsemane, "sweating as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground;" or that He prayed for the Jews, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do;" and said to the believing thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise;" or that records the conversation with the two disciples going to Emmaus after He was risen from the dead. This evangelist only tells us that He enjoined His disciples, when they were affrighted, supposing they had seen a spirit, to handle Him, and see; for, said He, "a spirit has not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have;" and then took a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey-comb, and did eat before them. It is Luke who enters so fully into the Lord's ministry of the Scriptures to them, and that, while in the act of blessing them, "He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." The commission here is to preach "repentance and remission of sins in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

In *John* we see Him who "is in the bosom of the Father"—"the Son of God"—"the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." We therefore find Him here disclosing the counsels and love of the Father's heart. This gospel is unlike any other book in Scripture. All is peculiarly in keeping with the subject proposed. It is the ministry of "life," and

“light,” and “love.” He is “the life,” the giver of life, and the water of life, and is the bread of life. He is “the light of the world,” and those who follow Him have “the light of life.” He so declared the Father’s love, that He spake the words of the Father, and that the Father who dwelt in Him did the works. So that he that had seen Him had seen the Father, that the Father was greater than He, though it was equally true that He and the Father were one. But, for all His love, He had hatred—they hated Him without a cause. And, after being rejected by Israel, He brings out the marvelous discourse of chapters xiv., xv., xvi., and the prayer recorded in chapter xvii. Here, specially for our comfort during His absence, He refers to the Father perhaps forty times, and many times to the Holy Ghost, the other Comforter given to us while He is away. Nor can He leave the earth after He is risen from the dead without sending to His disciples the message, “I ascend unto my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God;” thus showing that, through the grace of God, in virtue of His finished work, they would now be brought into the same relationship with His God and Father as Himself. In the last chapter He shows His tender care of His own, even as to food for the body, enjoins them who love Him to care for His lambs and sheep, and to follow Him in expectation of His coming.

8.

THE DEVOTED ONE.

None are so above the difficulties of this scene as those wholly devoted to Christ in it. The more difficult the day, the more devoted you must be. Danger there will be. The moment you become a witness for Christ, you are a target for Satan; but you must not be as one who *propounds* truth, but one whom truth *controls*. Ruth is an example of the devoted one; and she finds Boaz (which is “strength, a pillar”). Of him that “keeps the word of my patience” it is said,

“I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God.” Paul had found “strength” when he said, “I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. . . . I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” He was independent of everything, because he had got one object—Christ, the source of everything—the one his heart was governed by. There is an ease of heart in passing through this scene, which none but one thoroughly devoted to Christ can know. Such an one is superior to circumstances—able indeed to enjoy the bright day if it comes, but able to dispense with it if it goes; having a distinct path of blessing, devoted to Christ because it is his duty to be so; but so enriched as he travels along, by being thrown into company with Himself, that he finds the absolute loss of all things to be gain; the friend of Christ, he is informed in His mind, useful, personally contented, and satisfied in Him.—*Extract.*

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

I.

Beloved Brother :

I desire in whatever small measure I can, to share your grief. Surely He doth not afflict willingly, but the fruit-bearing branch must be purged, and especially it must be so with one whom He has called into it the honored place of fellowship in His care for the church, for as Christ *gave Himself*, so is also every teacher or pastor. He gives himself a gift. The Lord uses not only the word but the life, the joys and sorrows, poverty and sickness, all are used, not merely as discipline to himself, but through him to the saints. He must be poured out on the sacrifice and service of their faith. I know that these are no new thoughts to you, but I desire to exercise a brother's privilege, to extend a brother's sympathy. The Lord is using your affliction and the grace that sustains you to teach many a one. He thus shows that He needs, not only your work, but yourself, and we can

count it all joy so to be poured out when we realize the fellowship, with Himself, with the church, it teaches. Also, on the other hand, your sorrow brings out the place you have in the hearts of the saints, and tends to the realization of that sweet injunction, "your hearts being knit together in love."

Each sorrow teaches us more of the place of Nazarethship to which we are called—lifted up above our own joy or sorrow, to enter with Him into the joys and sorrows of the Body. Surely the realization of our fellowship with Him and His with us in it, does make the bitter waters of affliction sweet. And that sweetness will be perfect when in the day of the pouring out of the wine, "the servants who draw the water" will know, with the Master, how that wine was made. In that day of the great King, when every vessel shall be filled with joy, some vessels—those who have been purged ones here—will hold more wine, will be enabled to share the Master's joy, more than others.

I am sure that you will not deem these few lines an intrusion. And while I seek thus to express my fellowship to you, I also express it to the Lord at the throne of grace.

C. H. B.

II.

I have borne you on my heart and mind with much anxiety through all your tide of trial, and now feel anxious that the fruit of it should appear. That which I desire for you is fellowship with your Saviour in that which distinguishes Him so pre-eminently above His fellows. Repose of character, quietness of spirit from a mind and heart shut up and merged in Divine love and glory, is my ambition. How blessed, how unearthly, the calm, quiet, unruffled composure of the Lord's course! No haste, no hurry, because though on earth, yet still in heaven. His mind, His heart deep buried in the Father's love. And may we not thus abide in Christ, and Christ in us, in real fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ? And walking in the Spirit, led by the Spirit, abiding in the

Spirit, may this unction which you have received, abide in you. Indeed I count myself your brother in Christ, and therefore as well, free as bound, to be anxious for you. More than this, there is a stake risked on every saint by Christ, which makes the walk of every brother and sister, as our own. In the glory of Jesus, has been given to us, not fellowship only in the outward show of glory, in the last day, when each shall be manifested, but (much above this) a present investing us with the glory of Christ. May Enoch be your pattern, as far as you have an earthly one, who walked with God and was not. I have learned lately much of the value of a life of communion with God, close communion, nothing else should content us, though the flesh has no glory in it, but would fain persuade us, even as Satan did, to pour contempt upon it, and lead us to glory in every other object—yet why is hurry or perturbation our badge, if indeed we have Christ Jesus as our anchor within the veil?

Again I say, may the unction which you have received, abide in you. I feel a great jealousy about you that you should have much communion, much interchange of thought with God. It is easy to run here and there and to speak to this one or that one, but how much of it is will-worship of our own inventing, not growing up out of, and not appointed us by, the Spirit. May the Holy Ghost be your life. As a brother I write to you freely. Satan has tempted you, *will* tempt you to be unwilling to be subject to vanity. To pride it is humbling to have to give so much time to sleep, to rest, to food, even to prayer, to say nothing of the littlenesses of life, yet these are our glory, because His will. Ever glory to do His will. The saint who is used by Him by sickness of body to draw forth the love of others, is quite as much honored as a Paul or a Peter. How wretchedly we have ceased to have His will within us, and how wrongly do we judge by man's thoughts instead of God's. Peace be with you.

G. V. W.

A FEW WORDS ON PSALM XXXII.

Ver. 8. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye." We come in this part of this precious Psalm to something very grave and very thorough in its character. And this is, of course, what God says to us, rather than what we say to Him. Indeed there is wonderful wisdom in the arrangement and wording all the way through. In the beginning we would be light and careless about our sins, but *He lays His hand heavily upon us*, and our levity ceases. It is a dreadful thing that we should make light of our badness, and act as though we had not sinned. The weight of His hand brings to looking at sin in the light of His countenance, and then comes forgiveness and cleansing. And the heart made full before Him can tell of its joy, first in the sense of this forgiveness, and then, *what He is*, "Thou art my hiding-place."

But if we will make our boast in Him, He will be to us according to that, and more. In finding Him a refuge, did we purpose to have Him go with us every step marking out the way for us? We found in Him comfort; He will give us companionship. But companionship always involves surrender. It is not the looseness of being alone. It is not the simple liberty of being forgiven, nor the quietness of being hidden. It is more, it is deeper. It involves a setting self aside completely, and letting Him be everything. It is not that He marks out a way and retires, leaving us to make the best of our steps through it. He proposes to go on with us. Moses asked Hobab to go with Israel across the desert, that he might be eyes for them because he knew the wilderness. Here was a sad mistake, because God was leading them according to His purpose, and did He not know a thousand fold more about the wilderness than Hobab? But when faith fails we want something for sight. Directly in rebuke of all this, Jehovah put Himself in the very front of

the whole camp, going forward to find out a place for them. Would Hobab have led them to where a rock must be smitten for water, or the bread must come from heaven, or to the bitter waters of Marah? How great their loss then would have been by his leading.

And so if He guides us with His eye, becomes eyes for us, He will lead us according to the power of the cross, and where living on Christ as our food is for the whole way. "I will guide thee with mine eye," is not leaving us to our own judgment at all, but involves the continual exercise of the heart and conscience and mind in His word, and an exquisite sensitiveness to His will. Many would be glad to find an express direction for this or that, in the letter of the word, while many would turn aside from the word to take their impressions, and call these the actings of the Holy Spirit, when they are frequently aside from the word, too. It is certain, if we do not know what crucifixion is and the setting aside of will, and our own pleasure, we have all to learn of guidance, in its richest sense. That is a wonderful expression in 1 John iv., "God dwelleth in him, and he in God." Have we really understood that? If I have found Him my hiding-place then I stay there, and let Him take me out into everything. No need of advisers, nor that any *man* should teach me. What can man do for me in God's path of holiness? "Now we have received not the Spirit which is of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might *know* the things that are freely given unto us of God."

There is such a thing as having a spiritual understanding, of proving what the mind of God is, of increasing in the knowledge of His will. The more subject I am, the nearer I walk to Him; the more under the sense of dwelling in Him, that nothing of the old man will do, the more thoroughly I am broken and poured out by Him, the more really will I know the guidance of His eye. I have, then, God before

me in all things, instead of self, and I can walk in the singleness of having but One to please.

“ He *always* wins who sides with God,
To him no chance is lost ;
God’s will is sweetest to him, when
It triumphs at his cost.”

And this “winning” is being put down, is knowing how to walk so as to please God. Besides it is walking in confidence. The difficulties are all understood ; *He has led me to them*, let it be Marah, or the walls of Jericho reaching up to the heavens. I am not responsible for their being there. If I am not clear that it is the will of God that I should be there, then difficulties will put me into confusion and doubt, but if I am, the difficulties are just right, the very things to prove Him, for He is above all difficulties.

Ver. 9. “Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding ; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.” With this we are oftentimes more familiar. When God has to deal with our will, then the bit and bridle are in use. We must first be subdued, brought in, before we can go on at all. And it is very blessed that He will do this. And, after all, He has to pull the rein this way and that ! This is not certainly a very high order of guidance, but it is better than our independence, which plays havoc with everything.

How easy, comparatively, we might make it for Him, if we were done with will forever. It would only be for Him to go on to and through the highest, richest things, according to the full counsels of His own will, instead of having Him halt so often to deal with us. All His dealings ought to be for us away on ahead, rather than the turning back to get us into proper place and subjection. Why should we not rather walk in the clear light and intelligence of a heart and will one with Him, in the implicit and owned ignorance of a child, and so with the whole body full of light—His light ?

Many get no farther than *providence*. They speak of providence permitting and forbidding, and the like. This may be very well if needed, but providence is not a guide after all, and if I am depending on providences I am not being guided, properly speaking, but driven or hindered, overruled, kept out of mischief, too, it may be. It was providence that had to do with Jonah after he entered the ship to flee away from God, but it was not the guidance of the eye. The word was "go to Nineveh," and that was exceedingly simple. Paul's being brought into the castle in Jerusalem (Acts xxiii.) was a bit and bridle, whereas his imprisonment in Philippi was guidance. In the latter only he sang praises at midnight. In the former case, he had been stumbling along, poorly enough, too, ever since he entered the city, and God takes this method of stopping it all, and getting him out for Himself. If I am going on to act like a mule I *have* to be held in. And this is not so much for positive service or benefit to any body, but only to keep myself or others from harm. "Lest they come nigh thee" is the reason of the bit and bridle. It is for holding in, not moving forward. It is because of getting ahead of ourselves, or of Him, being out of place. What a testing exhortation.

Vs. 10, 11. "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked, but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice ye righteous, and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart." The region of joy is reached through all these exercises. He can never leave us, find us as He will, till He brings us to the name and the blessing of the righteous. And we can never really leave Him, as the Source of all good and the Resource in all evil and failure. Through the consciousness of sins, and of the need of a hiding-place, we have found Him to be *all*. He has met, and cleared up everything according to Himself, and Himself becomes our joy. We joy in *God*.

PAUL'S DEFENCE.

As I have been much blessed by the Lord in the account given in Acts xxvi., of Paul's defence, I feel led of the Lord to write a few words on the subject.

We have here a man arrested by a religious body of people for holding the same hope (vs. 6, 7,) on which their religion was founded. A man well-known of them (ver. 4,) and as strict as they all, even of the "straightest sect" (ver. 5). *Now why was he persecuted?* For he says, "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying *none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.*

1. The first thing brought to our notice is the standing and character of his accusers, the council, or chief priests of the Jews. At the first glance we would see that all who *outwardly professed* to be of God is here represented, and the great professing religion of the day. To go to the Gentiles for an acknowledgment of God, in any way, would be useless. What claim had the Jews to the title "God's people?" In the first place they had a temple, the pattern of which they could say had been given to Moses for guidance in building. True, it was neither the one he builded, nor yet the one builded under God's direction by Solomon (1 Chron. xxviii. 10-21); yet it was recognized of God, for it was in the Temple the first notice of the Saviour's coming was announced (Luke i. 13-17). And the Lord also in driving the "money changers" and those who sold doves, from their place, said it is written, "My Father's House shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." So aside from their utter departure, it stood a representative of the earthly dwelling place of God, who also instituted the priesthood, and to them were committed the oracles of God. They had utterly departed from the laws given them for guidance (Jer. xxiii. 9-11).

So we see in truth, the Lord *had* commanded the building of a Temple, the institution of a priesthood who were to be looked to for the voice of the Lord. And one who was a devout Jew, reverencing everything claiming divine origin, would, of course, look on the decision of the priests and council with some degree of awe. They feared them also, we find, in John ix. 22. So his accusers were to the *outward eye*, all that was really authorized of God, and the religious power of the day.

2. Now let us look at the accused. We see by ver. 5 he *was* one of them having hope in certain specific promises which they also claimed to hold (ver. 7). He had been one of the foremost in putting down everything that threatened their vaunted sanctity; what caused this change we find in vs. 13-18. "At mid-day, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things in the which I will appear unto thee: Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles unto whom I now send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith, that is in me."

And no wonder. Oh, think of the richness of the grace that could say to him in one moment, "Why persecutest thou me?" And the next, "delivering thee from the people and the Gentiles," &c.

With such a work and commission as that before

him; no wonder he opens the defence with, "I think myself happy," &c. But to return, we find a man who had suddenly changed, and was preaching that Jesus Christ of the seed of David *was* raised from the dead." "And declared to be the *Son of God* with power, according to the spirit of holiness, *by* the resurrection from the dead." "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that *through this man* 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."

What a change! Defending alone the name, and the One he had before so bitterly hated (ver. 11).

The question now arises, which was of God?

One against the whole body of recognized religious teachers. But, oh! the word of God settles all questions in a few words, for ver. 23 was God's word through the prophets and Moses, saying "that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles. The defense of Paul was he believed God fully, and the result of his defence was that testimony to the truth—Agrippa's answer, Paul, "almost thou persuadest me to be a christian."

Everything that is of God is, to the outward eye, in weakness and bonds, and it opposes kings, governors, priests and councils. And as then so now, the man accused was simply relying on one name, Jesus Christ, who had passed through death and in whose promises Paul was resting, "counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, and not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith"; thus putting aside himself and flesh completely.

It is the *name* Jesus Christ that was so bitter to the Jews, for we find in Acts iv. 17, 18, "But that it spread no further than among the people, let us straightly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this *name*. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the *name* of Jesus." Any other name, Sadducee and no resurrection, Pharisee and resurrection, no matter, only not "Jesus Christ."

Why is it that at the present day a few christians meeting in the name of Jesus only, should be reproached for narrowness and exclusiveness, when we find in scripture such as, "For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, *and hast not denied my name.*" "And *His name* through *faith in His name* hath made this man strong whom ye see and know." "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other *name* under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." "And where two or three are gathered together in *my name*, there am I in the midst of them." The name of *Jesus Christ* is a power against Satan, and one (strive against it as he will) to which he must, in the end bow, for it is written, "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a *name* which is above every *name*: That at the *name* of *Jesus* every knee shall 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).

Now, as then, God's power is shown in weakness, and all simply holding "faith in the risen Son of God" must meet and answer the professing religiousness of the day; who are to the outward appearance they who can make much boasting of being *the ones* to whom were committed the oracles of God, possessors of the wisdom, power and might of the land. And may we all like Paul in defence, show we "are not mad, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness;" and besides, let us have the same mind

that was in him, instead of bitterly resenting the charge, and desiring the punishment of his accusers may we with him say, “I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.”

May the Lord show us, more and more, how full and complete His word is for our direction and guidance, and make us to delight in and follow the spirit with which it was written.

S. B. C.

“ELOI! ELOI! LAMA SABACHTHANI?”

Mark xv. 34.

For myself—I speak as a man—I never found peace before God, or conscious rest with Him, until I was taught the force and meaning of that cry of Jesus of Nazareth, “Eloi! Eloi! lama sabachthani?” Never until I understood that He, who knew no sin, had (then and there, on the cross) been made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, could I rest, as a sinner, in the presence of a holy God. And, as I suppose, it is owing to the distinctive peculiarity of that, His sorrow under the wrath of God, *not being understood*, that so many christians have no settled peace at all.

The questions of sin, and of guilt, have never been met in their consciences. The incarnation is amazing and beautiful. That the eternal Son of God, the only begotten Son of the Father, should have become a babe, and been laid in a manger of an inn: the contrast between the glory He came out of and the place man assigned to Him, is a contrast! God and heaven could express their delight over Him, then and there, as well as feel it (Luke ii. 8–14). But the bearing of our sins in His own body was NOT in the cradle, but on the cross, and on the cross alone.

The flight into Egypt, the return and settling at Nazareth of the Child, the Youth in the temple, and

in returning from Jerusalem, the hidden retirement of His early manhood, is beautiful, each in its place; but none present us with Him as in the act of bearing our sins. Again, when we look at Him as (when He voluntarily identified Himself with those that owned their need of repentance, confessing their sins) at His baptism, in His service and ministries, all, and each part of all, is beautiful and perfect; but, if heaven could approve Him in each step, heaven, too, could give its avowals of approval to Him. Yet He stood not as sin-bearer under the judgment, at any of these periods.

Again, what a contrast, (and who ever felt it as He felt it), between Himself as the seed of the woman, and the race of man to whom He had come! What a contrast between Himself personally and individually, and the house of Israel, His own, among whom He had come! Himself, not only God manifest in the flesh, but that holy thing that was born of the virgin, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, apart from sin; and yet voluntarily, amid sinful men and guilty Israel, the immaculate seed of the woman, the King of Israel in His holiness. This brought with it sorrows. So, when He had entered upon service, did the constant persecution for righteousness, which He endured, and the consciousness that there was none who could sympathize with Him, and that fallen men welcomed not the mercy of which He was the messenger—sorrows He had to endure at the hand of the world and man; but even that was not being forsaken of God. But in none of these parts, nor in the being straitened when His soul turned to His coming baptism; nor when, in the garden, His soul passed into the scenes which then lay immediately before Him, was there (any more than anywhere else) that which there was when He cried out, "Eloi! Eloi! lama sabachthani?"

Here, too, He was perfect; forsaken of God, He would not, did not, forsake God. Never did God or

heaven see perfection shine out of Him as then and there, when His obedience was at the goal, "Obedient unto death, the death of the cross." But, if heaven found in His submission under forsaking, for the sake of others, its delight, for it was the revelation of God as the Saviour-God, there was, there *could be* (just because it was *forsaking for sin*, our sin, which He had to endure) no expression of approval, NOTHING BUT FORSAKING. "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

I do not see how a sinner can find rest until he has learnt somewhat of that which is distinctly peculiar to Calvary, learnt that, then and there, there was a cup drunk by the Lord, in obedient submission to God, cup of wrath due to us only, undergone by Christ at Calvary. The only spot I turn to, when in conscience the question is about sin or guilt, or sins (of the human family, of myself as an individual, &c., &c.), is Calvary, and to the Lord there, crying out, "Eloi! Eloi! lama sabachthani?"

He bore my judgment in my stead, then and there, in His own body on the tree, in the presence of God, and received the woe of wrath and forsaking, at the hand of God. And there is my quittance, clear, and full and complete, but there alone.

The experience of His soul when He said, "Why hast Thou forsaken me?" was altogether peculiar and distinct from that which He had to endure and experience at any other time whatsoever. In that suffering of His, as forsaken, I get the measure and the judgment of my sins against God. G. V. W.

ENDURING TEMPTATION, AND ENTERING INTO TEMPTATION.

James i. 2, 12; Matthew xxvi. 41.

There is manifestly a vast difference between "falling into temptation," or "enduring temptation," on the one hand and "entering into temptation" on the other. We do well, therefore, to have it clear and

settled in our souls, for, as the one is blessed, the other is the utmost possible danger for the soul. There is nothing more strengthening than to "endure temptation;" nothing more perilous than to "enter into" it. There seems little difference in the words, and people might easily slur over the difference in their thought. But the difference is complete; for in the one case it is an honor that God puts upon us, and in the other a snare that Satan presents to us.

Which of these two things do we know best? How far do our souls that are here round the table of the Lord Jesus know what it is to fall into divers temptations, or to endure temptation? For blessed are we if we do. Falling into temptation, or enduring it, is that which God delights in. In Genesis xxii. we find that Abraham was in a condition in which God could try him; and He loves that we should be in such a condition that He can try us. But this is not so when we are not governed by the sense of the presence of God, as well as happy in Him. It is not so where flesh is not judged. Are we then brought to this point in the ways of God? For it is this that he looks for from every saint of His. Are we then brought into communion with the Father and His Son in our Lord Jesus (1 John i.)? Have we not the same Saviour and the same salvation of God?

Still, in Christ, salvation is not merely an incomparable favor such as God has shown to us in the depths of our need, but it is also assuredly inseparable from the dealing with self in the presence of God; so much so that where this is not learned at the beginning it must be more painfully taught in the course. And then what dishonor to God! How grieving to His Spirit! Such failure, to teach us what we are, is *not* enduring temptation, nor is it in the least the same as God's trying us. In such a state the Lord has rather to buffet us for our faults, as those who bear the name of the Lord Jesus, after an uncomely sort.

How grievous that those who have in the Saviour

such a salvation, based on the utter judgment of the flesh, should so little have used it to deal with self, the most hateful of all things to God; for so one need not hesitate to call it. I admit there is a greater daringness, and pride and subtlety in Satan; but it seems to me that for that which is low and base and mean, there is nothing so bad as self; and yet this is the very thing that every one of us carries with us. The question now is, How far has grace acted upon our souls to lead us to judge it, out and out, in the presence of God? Where this is the case, the Lord can try us; that is, He can put us to the proof by what is not at all a question of evil of any kind, because God does not tempt by evil any more than He is tempted by evil things.

When God then was pleased to ask Abraham to give up his only son, this was in no wise evil, but a most blessed trial. It was proving whether Abraham had such perfect confidence in God that he would give up the object that was dearest to him, in whom were centered all the promises of God, and by grace Abraham could. Of course he did it with the perfect certainty that if Isaac were then to die, God would raise him up; for Abraham perfectly well knew before the sacrifice was asked that Isaac was to be the child of promise, and he knew that it was to be that Isaac and nobody else—not another son, so that he was certain if Isaac were offered up, God would raise him again from the dead. It was therefore really the good of God's own heart that was reflected in what He asked of Abraham's heart; and Abraham was brought into greater communion with God in that which was in its measure the counterpart of the gift of His own Son.

Just so is it with the trials by which God is pleased to try us, speaking now not of our bad trials, but of our good ones; not of such sorrows as Lot passed through, but of those like Abraham's. It is a proof of the greatest confidence on God's part if there is in us such a groundwork of walking before God, and in

the consciousness of His presence, that He can try us with something that is like Himself—some prize to give up, some suffering to endure in grace—whatever it may be, that is according to His own mind. It is in this sense that temptation is spoken of in James i. 2, 12.

After this (vs. 13-15) we immediately turn to temptation spoken of in a bad sense, and this connects itself with the verse I read in Matt. xxvi. I shall not dwell long upon either, though both are words of most salutary character for our souls. The Lord had looked for His disciples to watch with Him. Alas! He had not found it. And the Lord had gone Himself alone, and had prayed to His Father in deepest suffering. Then He comes back to the disciples, and, finding them sleeping, He says to Peter, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" No, they could not watch with Him one hour. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak.

Now it would be very unworthy for us to take this as an excuse for our own failure; this would be reading scripture to the positive injury of our souls and the dishonor of God; yet I am afraid there are many who do so. But we must remember there is this difference between our standing now, and that of the disciples. Flesh had not been thoroughly exposed and judged at that time; it was before the cross of Christ, and so before the Holy Ghost was given. There was divine life, but divine life, in itself, always goes in weakness.

It is the Holy Ghost that acts in power, and you never can have power without Him. But *we* are always responsible for the power of the Holy Ghost, because He is given to the believer, and forever abides in him. This time was not yet come, but the Lord does say in view of it, as well as of the state in which they then were, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." For remember this, it is not any power conferred by the Spirit of God that keeps, even though He be the Spirit of power—it is not energy in this or

that which keeps, but dependence; it is the sense of weakness that watches and prays, and thus has the power of Christ resting on us, His strength made perfect in weakness.

There is nothing that so tends, where it is severed from Christ, to destroy dependence as a large knowledge of the word of God. And that is where our danger lies. The greater our knowledge of the word of God, where it is separated from the sense of utter weakness, and consequently from the need of watching and praying, the greater the danger. This is a solemn warning for our souls. There is no doubt plenty of knowledge of scripture, and of what is called intelligence of truth; but do our souls keep us this sense of our need and weakness, and the expression of it to God? "Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation."

What does our Lord mean by "entering into temptation?" The *will* that goes into a scene where nothing but a judged will in one who goes at the bidding of God, and leaning on Him, can be kept; that is, the will goes in where failure is inevitable, just because it *is* will at work. So Peter himself soon proved. He went where Peter could not stand, unless the Lord had called and kept him by faith. He entered into temptation. *He* did not suffer. There was no such thing as enduring temptation; but he entered into it, and fell.

And let me just say that it is all well in the midst of the saints of God to confess our Lord Jesus Christ; but it is not so easy to confess Him truly and humbly where, instead of saints sympathizing with us, shame and contempt, or death even, may be the consequence, as in Peter's case. He would have endured, had he gone in by grace, obedience, watching and praying, instead of trusting in his own willingness to go to prison or even to die for his Master. When our Lord says, "The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak," He is looking at nature in man; and nature in capa-

ble of such a trial. None but God can sustain, and therefore it would require God's will expressed in His word to lead us rightly into such a scene of temptation and His grace-sustaining in faith to keep us in it; otherwise it would be but our own will, and we should fall. It would have been an abomination in Abraham to sacrifice his son unless God had spoken the word. But faith, where self is judged, strengthens the soul to endure temptation. One enters not into temptation where one abides in dependence and self-judgment. Then when we fall into various temptations we count it all joy; and as we did not enter of our own will, so we do not fall in them, but by grace endure.

The Lord give us to watch and pray, so much the more because He has blessed us with such a knowledge of His word and of Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ.

W. K.

JACOB AT BETHEL, PENIEL AND BEER-SHEBA.

Much gracious illustration of the love of Christ towards us may be found in the story of the Patriarch at these three places, or on the three occasions which they furnish. And each of them has its own lesson and comfort for us.

At Bethel (Gen. xxviii.) Jacob is a saint *under discipline*. His sin in deceiving his father had brought a rod upon him; and he was now an exile from his father's house, soon to be a drudge in the house of an injurious master, in a strange and distant land.

He was now lying by night under the broad heavens, with the stones of the place for his pillow, and his traveling stick as his only companion. But the Lord meets him, as He always can meet His people in the place where they are accepting the punishment of their sins. He does not however remove the rod. He does not send him back to his father's house, undertaking to make all there comfortable to him again,

but allows him still to pursue his wearisome, solitary journey. He does not take away the rod. This is never His way. But He promises to be with him under it, to give him His presence in the distant place of his exile and bondage, and never to leave nor forsake him till He bring him back to the land of his fathers, his own pledged and promised inheritance.

This was so, and this is one of the perfect forms of love. This was love, not in word or in tongue, but in deed or in truth. The Lord (to speak as men speak) did not spare Himself trouble or consult for His own ease, but looked simply and merely at the condition of the one He loved and ministered to it. Just like His way afterwards with the camp in the wilderness. When by their unbelief Israel made themselves wanderers in a barren and thirsty land for forty years, the God of glory in the cloud went about with them. He left them not, but was a wilderness-wanderer with them for forty years, as now He becomes a sojourner with Jacob in a distant land for twenty. "I am with thee," says the Lord to Jacob, "and will keep thee in all places whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee again to this land, for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Jacob must still be under the rod, an exile in a strange land, but the God of all grace will be there with him. This was love "in deed and in truth."

At Peniel (Gen. xxxii.) Jacob is in another character before us. Not as at Bethel, a saint under discipline for moral evil, but a saint *in an unbelieving spirit*, calculating and fearing, though religiously, when he should have been trustful, and calm and satisfied. The fear of Esau had ensnared him, and he had surrendered confidence in God to that fear. He had not morally offended, as before at the bedside of his father, but he had backslidden in spirit from God, reasoning, and praying and laying his own plans instead of exercising peaceful confidence in God and a

believing remembrance of His undertakings and promises.

The Lord cannot be indifferent to this. Surely not. He searches the reins and the heart, as He notices the hands and the feet. He discerns between joint and marrow, between thoughts and intents (Heb. iv), and cannot be indifferent to this backsliding in spirit, this departure from the simplicity and the quiet of a believing mind. He therefore contends with him. In the gloom of midnight He comes forth to wrestle with him. But withal, by the secret, in-working virtue of His spirit, He restores His soul also. He revives faith in the heart of Jacob—commanding, triumphant, princely faith; so that Jacob faints not under this rebuke, sharp and peremptory as it was; but he is led again in the path of righteousness, and beholds the face of God again in unclouded joy of heart, singing of his blessedness as he goes onward.

This was love, divine love again, though in another form. The Lord was consulting for Jacob's condition and ministering to it accordingly, faithfully and practically. And this again is love, "in deed and in truth." It is not loving "in word and in tongue," as amiable human nature often does, as some of us know to our humbling; but "in deed and in truth," as God must and does love.

At Beersheba, after all this, (Gen. xlvi.) this same Jacob is seen in another character, another relationship to God. He is not, as at Bethel, an erring saint under discipline; nor as at Peniel, a saint in a backslidden state of heart for the time, calculating on his own resources, instead of using God's; but here at Beersheba, Jacob is a saint *in healthful jealousy of heart over his own ways*, fearful that he has already taken one wrong step, and pausing godlily ere he take a second. It is interesting and instructive to ponder this.

Jacob had been already persuaded that Joseph was indeed in Egypt. This we see at the close of the pre-

ceding chapter. And this persuasion had, very naturally, set him on the way to Egypt at once. "Joseph, my son, is yet alive," said he; "I will go and see him before I die." But now, on reaching Beersheba, he pauses. Beersheba was the southernmost point in the land, that looked right down towards Egypt; and as, with that land full in view, he begins to bethink himself afresh, and to remember the God of his fathers in connexion with it. He pauses and offers sacrifices to the God of Isaac. A godly fear, which ever works repentance not to be repented of, seems to seize upon his spirit. It is not again the fear of man, which brings a snare, but the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom. He pauses. He seems to remember that Egypt was forbidden ground. His grandfather, Abraham, had been defiled there, and sent out of it back to the land which he himself was then leaving, humbled and dishonored. His father, Isaac, had been warned not to go there; and, according to this, it seems he offers sacrifices to the God of his father, Isaac.

This was beautiful in its season. This was the exercise of the godly mind. He had listened to nature ere he set out, but now he must sift and challenge the way of nature in the light of the Lord. And under this awakening of his soul, this action of a quickened, sensitive conscience, he makes his appeal to God. And, blessed to tell it, the God of Bethel, and the God of Peniel, will approve Himself, in the riches of His grace and the perfections—the divine perfections—of His love, the God of Beersheba also. He appears to His saint that very night. If the saint, having used the two-edged sword, and having had his very thoughts and intents exposed to him, had likewise used the throne of grace and applied himself to it, the blessed God would surely let him know that He was sitting on that throne to show mercy and render help in the time of need (Heb. iv). He appears to him that night, and quiets the uneasiness of his heart, comforting him with

the assurance that he may continue his journey down to Egypt without fear or hesitation, for that He would be with him, give him a sight of Joseph, bless him in that land, and bring him up out of it again.

This was love again in its divine quality, love "in deed and in truth," love that consulted for its object. Yea, and all these are samples and witnesses of immediate, individual, personal love; that love to one's very self which the heart of the Lord both entertains and exercises. Are we conscious of it? Is it among the gifts of grace? Surely, indeed; though we taste it coldly and with some suspicion, it may be. It is more, as I may express it, than the *public* grace in which we stand, as in company with "all saints." At least, it is beside that. It savours of the white stone, which the overcomer is to receive at the hand of Christ in the day of the kingdom (Rev. ii. 17). These cases at Bethel, Peniel and Beersheba witness this immediate, individual, personal love of which I speak. May we enjoy it by simple faith! It is no strange thing. Paul carried the sense of it about with him wherever he went, as we see in Gal. ii. 20.

J. G. B.

FAITH, NOT DISCUSSION.

A WORD ON KNOWING.

John vii.

Of the three great feasts of the Jews (Deut. xvi. 16), in which year by year all the males had to go up to Jerusalem, two have had their antitypes; "Christ our *passover* is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 7). "When the day of *Pentecost* was fully come" (Acts ii. 1); the third has not.

The feast of *tabernacles* was celebrated after the harvest and the vintage. "The harvest and the vintage refer respectively to the Lord's gathering in His own, and to the treading of His enemies in the winepress of the wrath of God" (Rev. xiv). In it the children of Israel dwelt in booths, in witness that,

once strangers, they were strangers no longer. For this the Jews must be in their own land. But then there was in connection with this feast an *eighth* day, showing that along with the accomplishment of God's purposes in respect to the earth, there would be the introduction of a new period, the commencement of a new week.

Jesus was in Galilee (ver. 1). "Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto Him; Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, *shew thyself to the world.*" They wanted Him to give a manifestation of Himself adequate to His claims. This was not the time for Christ to show Himself to the world. He *will do so*; "every eye shall see Him;" His glory shall be exhibited to the terror of the ungodly. But He is not showing Himself *now* to the world; and this, to a world lying in wickedness, is mercy—real long-suffering (2 Peter iii. 9). His brethren had no understanding of this; "for neither did his brethren believe on Him."

Mark His answer: "*My time is not yet come*; but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come." When He is manifested in power, it will not be a question of *testimony* merely against evil, He will say, "Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay before me" (Luke xix. 27). He takes no such place of vindicating Himself now. Cost what it will, we are to accomplish the will of God while evil is in power; there is no bringing in of power to hinder the evil (Mark ix. 13; Rev. iii. 10).

Having said this, "He abode still in Galilee," He had

gone there on His first rejection ; and, though we find Him going up to Jerusalem to keep the feasts, &c., He abode there. "The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles ; the people which sat in darkness saw great light ; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up" (Matt. iv. 15, 16). For judgment was He come into the world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind. "Ye say ye see," He told the Pharisees, "therefore your sin remaineth." He was "Jesus of Galilee." The poor despised Galileans had the light when the Jews had not.

His brethren having, gone up, He also goes up (ver. 10), "not openly, but as it were in secret."

And now we find what is going on in hearts. There is much murmuring among the people concerning Him : some say, 'He is a good man : ' others, 'Nay ; but He deceiveth the people.' The Lord might bring blessing out of it, but they are *reasoning* and *discussing*, and this is just the proof that they have nothing to say to it as yet. In another place He asks His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am ?" They tell Him, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist : some, Elias ; and others, one of the prophets." It was all *discussion*. But when Peter replies (to the question, "But whom say ye that I am ?") "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," He tells him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona : for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." There was *personal recognition of Himself*, and where there is that, there is no *discussion*. Discussing Him as subject-matter in their minds, they had not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. Where people's minds are at work discussing the right and the wrong, there is not the mind of the new-born babe ; they are not receiving, but judging. "Can there any good

thing come out of Nazareth?" asked Nathanael (Nazareth was a despised city, and he thought no good thing could come out of it); but when that which was blessed was presented to Him, the Israelite without guile received it.

Further, we get instruction here (vs. 14-17) as to receiving the doctrine of God. About the middle of the feast Jesus goes up into the temple and teaches. The Jews marvel, saying, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" He tells them, "My doctrine is not *mine*, but His that sent me." They thought He had received it from man, therefore He says, *it is not mine*. No matter what we have learned, if we have not learned it from God, it is nothing; there is no faith; if learned from man, it is *mine*. Then He adds, "If any man *will do His will*, he shall *know of the doctrine*, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." Where there is faith, there is the unfeigned desire to do the will of God. Observe, He says, 'If any man *will (i. e. wills to) do*,' not, 'If he have done.' If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light; God will show what His will is. If it be not, what is the good (speaking with reverence) of knowing His will? There is not the intention of doing it. Where the heart is right in the sight of God, He gives the capacity for knowing His will. The heart ought to be, in a certain sense, wary; there is a Christian simplicity, and there is a simplicity not Christian; but there may be this wariness, and yet sincerity of desire to do God's will when known. This is ever the practical test of Christian truthfulness. There may be great ignorance and infirmity, but if the eye be single, if there be the real intention in the heart of doing God's will, he *shall know, &c.* Very often we do not get light, because we are not prepared to walk in the light when known.

He next refers to proofs; for there are certain moral proofs quite evident to hearts opened by grace. Never in a single thing sought He His own glory.

Then He turns to them about what they *have known*. "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law?" The *desire to do* the will of God, if known, is not merely in question, there is not *the doing* His will *in things known*. He turns, so to speak, the tables upon themselves. You are speaking of my being unlettered, and you are walking in sin; "Why go ye about to kill me?" There will always be hatred in the heart to the truth, where there is not the will to go along with it. As bad a thing as can happen to a man, is for him to be contented without it; when we find him saying, "I am happy now, I was exercised about it once, but I am happy now."

Verses 25-27, there is again *discussion*. "Is not this He, whom they seek to kill? But, lo, He speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto Him. Do the *rulers* know indeed that this is the very Christ?" [What is the meaning of this? He is teaching publicly, and no man owns Him; *have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees* believed on Him?] Here is their great motive, not God's truth—"Howbeit we know this man whence He is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is." Nor did they.

The Lord turns now. "Ye both know me," He cries, "and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but He that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know Him: for I am from Him, and He hath sent me" (vs. 28, 29).

This disturbs conscience. They seek to take Him. Their only thought is to get rid of the testimony that is troubling them. But no man lays hands on Him, because His hour is not yet come. Meanwhile many of the people believe on Him, and say, "When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than those which this man doeth?"

Then there comes out a further great truth. The Pharisees and chief priests, enraged at hearing of the

effect produced on the people, having sent officers to take Him, He tells the people, It is no good getting into a carnal *discussion*; while you *have* the light, *walk* in the light, lest darkness come upon you; you are seeking me now in ill-will, in enmity, in malice. "Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent me." I am going to my Father, and ye shall see me no more, *ye shall seek me, and shall not find me*; you may seek me now, and find me; but the day will soon be when *I go unto Him that sent me*; I came from God, and I am going to God; *where I am, thither ye cannot come*. There could not be a more terrible judgment, spoken in all calmness as it was.

Then said the Jews among themselves, "Whither will He go, that we shall not find Him? will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What manner of saying is this that He said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come?" Not a thought of God! they can think about the Gentiles, but not about God or His Christ.

But as the converse of this result of unbelief, we get Jesus in "the *last* day, that *great* day of the feast," standing and crying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that *believeth on me*, as the Scripture hath said (what? not as in chap. iv., "whoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him *shall never thirst*." He speaks of another consequence of His going away, of what should take place while He was away, of the power of identification with the *eighth* day; it is not that the thirsty one shall be satisfied, that, if he comes to Him and drinks, his thirst shall be quenched, but) *out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water*. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (vs. 37-39). The Holy Ghost should be received in such

sort by the believer as to dwell in and flow from him. Israel drank in the wilderness of that spiritual rock that followed them. There was a river to drink from, at which their thirst was quenched. In anticipation of the feast of tabernacles we have the Holy Ghost to give us the joy, the power, the glory and fulness of this communion with God. (Eph. i. 14).

Now the Holy Ghost never flowed in this way in an Old Testament prophet, nor yet even in John the Baptist. He worked on a person's mind and gave prophecies; but when the prophets searched, what did they discern? "that not unto themselves, but *unto us* they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you *with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven*" (1 Peter i. 10-12). If Paul speaks, he speaks of that which he *has*; he speaks of future things indeed, but he speaks of things that belong to himself. See what is said Rom. viii. 26, 27. The Holy Ghost come down from Christ the head of the body, takes His place in the body, and brings down the love of God into the detail and circumstances of the Christian life, into the sorrows of the way, whilst, as come down from Christ glorified, He identifies the members with Him in all the coming blessing and glory.

And mark another thing. The Lord is not here speaking of the quickening power of the Spirit (a most blessed truth in its place), but of that which they *that believe on Him* should receive, as it is expressed in Ephesians, "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." That is our position.

But whilst it is so blessed, where does it cast all the people who have not believed? Back again into *discussion*. Many of the people, when they hear this, say, "Of a truth, this is the Prophet." Others say, "This is the Christ." But some, "Shall Christ come

out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David dwelt?"

"There was a division among the people because of Him" (v. 43). Whilst Christ is to the believer the source of *living waters*, unbelief is *discussing* about Him.

"Every man went unto His own home; Jesus went unto the mount of Olives."—*The Christian's Friend*.

HIS GLAD CHILD.

How happy has God made me,
 Revealing His rich grace;
 His boundless power to aid me,
 Giving me perfect peace.
 I want just what He bringeth,
 No other need there is;
 My heart within me singeth,
 Because that I am His.

All His own things are for me,
 The fulness of His home;
 His great love's brooding o'er me,
 Whisp'ring of things to come!
 And yet, the choicest blessing,
 Without which all were dim,
 Is, that, this all possessing,
 I have it all *with Him!*

I know His own good pleasure,
 By which He all has done;
 His thought for me, the measure
 And stature of His Son.
 That I'm to share the glory,
 That He will take as man—
 Such is the wondrous story,
 This, His eternal plan!

And now, e'en sorrow teaches,
 Lessons none elsewhere find;
 The grander, deeper, reaches
 And counsels of His mind.

Surely, the way He leadeth,
Suits with my statelier birth,
His every stroke but pleadeth
That I be done with earth.

Only as I am broken,
And Christ alone received,
Can I e'er say, "I've spoken
Because I have believed."
No care, nor dread, nor fearing
Within my heart can dwell,
I know, so well, I'm nearing
Delights ineffable.

Until, in glory yonder,
HIM, face to face I see,
I shall not cease to wonder
At grace that took up me.
And then!—Ah, there is given
For that, just its own word,
That name's, the name of heaven,
"FOREVER WITH THE LORD!"

T.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

4. "D. H. B." I know that a woman is to keep silence in the assembly, she is not allowed to speak (1 Cor. xiv. 34), and, if as usually understood to refer to speaking and praying, why not keep silence in regard to singing, and sing with the spirit and with the understanding instead of being heard?

Ans. In the order of the assembly which God has established to manifest His own wisdom in the whole, He has made subjection to be paramount to everything else. In His infinite wisdom He has bestowed upon woman the precious place of setting forth that subjection. As the assembly is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in everything, gives the principle. "The mystery is great, but I speak concerning Christ and the assembly," is the closing word on this matter of the distinct duties of husbands and wives in Ephes. v. In the assembly He does not select the woman as teacher, for she there represents the thing taught, the assembly which is never teacher. But the assembly is a worshipper, and what pertains to all, as gathered, such as singing, would belong to her. The Holy Ghost, who has said, "I suffer not a woman to teach," when giving directions how we should behave in the assembly (1 Tim. ii. 11, 12; iii. 16), calls upon all to sing and make melody unto the Lord (Ephes. v. 19).

THE PRESENT PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

Before speaking of the present service of the Lord as our "Great High Priest," let us see from the word of God for whom the priesthood and intercession of Christ is. Many think that Christ is interceding before God for the unconverted, for *sinner*s, and therefore He will forgive their sins and save their souls. This thought is quite contrary to scripture, and gives a wrong thought of God Himself and His blessed gospel, and thus the peace of many of His saints is damaged. It is as though God was against the sinner instead of *for* him, and that it required a great deal of persuasion and entreaty to induce Him to save a soul, but that at last, through the intercession of Christ, He would consent to do it. If we turn to the scriptures in John iii. 16 we read, "God so loved the world; that He gave His only begotten Son." It was *God* who first thought of the sinner, and so *loved* as to give His Son to die on the cross, thus proving that God is not *against*, but *for* the sinner, and needs no one to move His heart towards him. We also read in that beautiful passage in 2 Cor. v. 20, "As though God did beseech by us." God Himself condescends to beseech sinners to be reconciled to Him; thus it needs no one to intercede for them.

Let us look at Heb. vii. 24, 25, and there we shall see for whom the priesthood is. "But this man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." For who does He make intercession? Not for the unconverted, but for those who "*come unto God by Him.*" And who are they? Saints of God, perfected forever by the "one offering." The expression, "come unto God," has given many the idea that it means a sinner coming to God for salvation, but that is not the thought in this passage. The word "come" is the same as

“draw near” in Heb. x. 22, which speaks of *saved* ones; for a sinner could not “draw near” in his sins to a holy God. Before we go further, let us see from the scripture the ground upon which we can draw near to God, as many of the Lord’s people never grow in the knowledge of the things of God, because they have never got the question of their sins settled, and do not know what it is to be in His holy presence in perfect peace.

Reader, do you know what it is to be in God’s holy presence without fear? and can you say, “I know my sins are put away forever before Him?” Heb. x. 1-22 brings out how a soul can thus draw near to God with the knowledge of the forgiveness of his sins, and it is beautiful to see the mass of evidence which the Spirit of God brings together to assure our poor hearts that our sins are put away, and that we are “perfected forever” before God, and how He invites us to draw near into His holy presence. We find the whole Trinity, so called, engaged with the question of our salvation. God, the Father, wills our salvation (ver. 10); God, the Son, came to accomplish it (ver. 9); and God, the Holy Ghost, is the witness to us that the work has been accepted, and that our sins are gone forever (vs. 15-17). If you will read verse 12, you will see, “But this man, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins” (or one sin-offering), “forever sat down on the right hand of God.” And now turn to Lev. iv. 27-31, where you will see if a Jew sinned and it came to his knowledge, “then he shall bring his offering” (ver. 28). The law said, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die,” and if the man had sinned, death was the penalty. Was he slain then? No; God provided a substitute, and told him he could bring a kid and lay his hand on its head, which meant that his sin was transferred to the kid; and God, so to speak, said, “I will accept the death of that kid instead of your death for the sin you have committed, and so “he shall slay the sin-offering” (ver. 29). The animal died instead of the man, and he could go free.

But this sacrifice was only for *one* sin, and if he sinned again he had to bring another sacrifice. How beautiful is the contrast in Heb. x. 12, "But this man (Christ) when he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." Do you, dear reader, believe that not only *one* sin, as in the case of the Jew, but *all* your sins were laid upon Christ on the cross; that He bore the judgment of them before God, and put them all away once for all? Because if they were not put away then they never can be, as there is only one sacrifice for sins, and Christ can never die again.

It is not a question of past, present, or future sins, for when Christ died they were *all* future; and by that "one offering" we read, "He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 14); not for a month or a year, but "*forever.*" Sanctified here means those set apart by God for salvation. But now the question arises, if our sins are gone, and we are perfected forever by the "one offering," what need is there of a priest?

Although we are saved, and the question of our sins settled forever, and we are "seated in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. ii. 6), we are not in the glory yet; and there is the wilderness journey full of difficulties, and trials, and dangers in between, and the power of Satan on every hand; so He is there at God's right hand to represent those who are saved before God, and to uphold them in their path through this world, obtaining all necessary grace and help in time of need, and to save them through all the difficulties and dangers of the wilderness journey, till each believer enters that "rest that remains for the people of God." He undertakes (so to speak) for every saint of God till they are safely through the wilderness journey. But mark, it is not for sins, as He is only "priest" for those whose sins are put away for ever, which He did once for all when He offered up Himself (Heb. vii. 27). In Heb. viii. 1, 2, we see that He

now is on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, and at the same time "a minister" (servant) "of the sanctuary.

It is wonderful how the Holy Ghost leads us up in the Hebrews to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and unfolds His varied glories to us! Chapter i. brings out His divine glories; chapter ii. His glories as man, and then goes on to show how superior *His* priesthood is to that under law; and then in chapter viii. He sums it up with "We have such an high priest." Reader, have you ever contemplated the glorious person of Christ as He is now, at God's right hand, a living, glorified man (although God as well), crowned with glory and honor? Can you say, as in Heb. ii. 9, I see Jesus? Where? No longer on earth, not in the grave, nor risen again on the earth, but "crowned with glory and honor" at God's right hand. There are many of the Lord's people who know about the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross, but do not think of the glorious person who did the work now, "on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;" and then, when a soul has grasped the glories of that person, how wonderful to find it written in Heb. viii. 2, "a minister" (servant) "of the sanctuary." What a thought, that that blessed One loved us, and gave Himself for us, and now actually lives to serve us in the courts above!

In chapter ix. 24, He "appears in the presence of God for us," that is, He in all the blessedness of His person represents us there, and is our abiding righteousness before God. We find a beautiful picture of this in Aaron (Exod. xxviii. 9-12). The names of the children of Israel were engraved upon the two onyx stones which were placed on Aaron's shoulders, and also on the twelve stones which were on the breastplate, and could not be rubbed out. This breastplate, with the engraved precious stones, was inseparably connected with the ephod, which was the priestly garment, so that Aaron could not exercise his office as

priest without bearing the names of the children of Israel "before the Lord continually" (ver. 29); thus Aaron could not go into the holy place without God's continually remembering Israel. The Lord Jesus, "our great High Priest," bears the name of every believer "before the Lord continually," representing us before God. A plate of pure gold was on Aaron's forehead, on the mitre, and on it was engraved the words, "Holiness to the Lord" (ver. 36). Gold, in scripture, generally means divine righteousness. Pure, unsullied, divine righteousness and holiness to the Lord was what typically met the eye of God when Aaron went into the tabernacle. And now we see Christ in all the glory of His person, in perfect righteousness before God. With what complacency does God look at Him! God's light can search Him through and through, and not find a spot or stain upon Him—nothing but what answers perfectly to the divine glory. And every believer can look up and say, "That blessed One represents *me* before God."

Many of the Lord's people are so occupied with their callings or work that they have not much time to read or study the Word of God, and necessarily their thoughts have to be much in their every day work. How blessed to know that, although we have to be occupied with things down here, yet the Lord is continually representing us before God. Some may be so weak in body, or racked with pain, that they cannot recall any comforting passage of God's word. The Lord is faithfully bearing the name of that suffering saint before God. God cannot look at Christ without thinking of you and me, because He bears our names continually before Him. If we get away from Him in our souls, or get occupied with the things here, He does not forget us, but ever lives to make intercession for us; not an occasional thing, like the advocacy in 1 John ii., "If any man sin," but "He ever lives," &c. He not only represents us before God, but He sympathises with us, and through Him we "obtain mercy

and grace to help in time of need" (Heb. iv. 15, 16); and He also "makes intercession for us" (chap. vii. 25), not for our sins—that question was settled at the cross—but for our weaknesses and infirmities, continually upholding us, for "He is able to save to the uttermost" (*i. e.* all through the dangers and difficulties of the way), "all that come unto God by Him." As in Peter's case the Lord prayed for him that his faith might not fail. The Lord has been a man here, has trod the path of faith, has been tried in every way. He knew what it was to be weary, to suffer hunger and thirst, to groan in His spirit, and to weep; He was also tempted of Satan. We are drawn away by our own lusts and enticed, because we have sins in us. He was tempted from without, never from within. It would be blasphemy to think it, as He was holy from His birth and without sin. Thus the blessed Lord, having gone through the temptation of Satan, and the trials to which we are subject while walking through the wilderness, can sympathize with us now in them; "and in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." Suppose you are led by the Spirit of God into a certain path, and Satan tempts you to give up that path on account of difficulties, &c., the Lord can sympathize with you, as He has been tempted here as man, and will succor as well as sympathize with you in the temptation. We have also access to the throne of God Himself, because "we have such an High Priest" (Heb. iv. 14-16). We do not go to the priest, but to the throne, and find it a throne of grace, and obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. What a wondrous place to get help from, the very throne of God Himself.

There is another thing connected with the priesthood of the Lord, and that is the place He occupies in our worship. Will you compare Exodus xxviii. 38 with Hebrews xiii. 15? Aaron bears the iniquity of the holy things. The christian sacrifice is praise and

worship. When we come together to worship as christians, we truly are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Still we have sin in us, and how often are their imperfections and sin mixed with our worship. But how blessed to know it all goes up to God by Him; *i. e.*, He presents our praise to God in all the fragrance and acceptability of His own person. It is not as it goes out of our lips. It may be only a few stammering sentences, but said with a true heart, which Christ takes up and presents to God. Thus a simple soul, thanking God for what He has done in blessing Him, is a sacrifice of praise, and that goes up to God by Him. When we get home there will be no need of a priest, as the wilderness journey will be over, and every son brought to glory and to that eternal rest that remains for the people of God.

May the Spirit of God, dear reader, lead you to consider the High Priest of our profession in all His glory, and to praise His grace that has loved us and given Himself for us and is unceasingly occupied with us now in leading us through the wilderness, and ever faithfully representing us before God, and living to make intercession for us till each one is brought to glory, and He will see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

F. K.

UTTERANCES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST ON THE CROSS.

Luke xxiii. 34; Luke xxiii. 42, 43; Matt. xxvii. 46; John xix. 26, 27; John xix. 28; John xix. 30; Luke xxiii. 46.

These are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ when on the cross. It is not the scene and circumstances of Calvary of which we propose to speak, but to bring before our minds what Jesus actually said when at Calvary, is what we propose. Not only are the spots which witnessed the death of the world's great ones remembered, but the dying words of such are cherished and told over and over again. More so the dying

words of loved ones. These last come nearest our hearts. So it surely should be with the dying words of Jesus above all. There is this difference though, His words were always grace and truth. There could be no variations or contradictions as to grace and truth in what He said, for He was the perfect One. Still these dying words are specially fitted to touch our hearts. He was there for the world—martyr and victim both. There is gospel in these words to the sinner and to the saint—to the one who has not received and believed on Jesus, and also to the one who has received and believed on Him. Let us look at these words in their order.

1. Luke xxiii. 34. Then said Jesus, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." He is now upon the accursed tree, nailed thereto, and then lifted up as the manner of crucifixion was, and jerked into the opened earth prepared for it, when the inaudible cry may have been made, "all my bones are out of joint" (Ps. xxii. 14). Looking around upon the priests and scribes and pharisees, and the multitude of the people, and the Roman centurions and soldiers, He prays, "Father, forgive them"—these very ones. Here was the heart of love expressing itself in the midst of His own sufferings. There was no selfishness here. Read John iii. 14-19 for the deep reason and principle of all this. It was love, and its objects all filled with hate. They taunted and jeered. This was Satan's power. Here was God and man each displaying himself according to character. Here was the wondrous contrast of the great transaction of the cross. There was communion and enjoyed relationship with the Father in this. He had come to do His will in the body He had prepared for Him. We may be sure the Father heard that prayer. The centurion soon afterwards said, "Truly this man was the Son of God." Now we do not say this man was saved, for we are not told so. But 1 Cor. xii. 3, and 1 John iv. 2 show us that confession of Christ, when by the Spirit,

is salvation, and if this was the heart's confession by the Spirit, of Jesus as the Son of God, the very thing for which He was condemned and crucified, even for affirming that He was the Son of God; if this man's heart received and owned Him as such, believing and confessing—though exactly on the ground of Rom. x. 9 it could not yet be—then he was saved, and I suppose such was the case. Then there were the thousands of these very murderers converted by one preaching of Peter. But looking at Jew and Gentile as concerned in this crucifixion, and the prayer as for both, the dispensational and full answer of it comes when they shall look on Him whom they have pierced, and a nation shall be born in a day, and when, having asked, He shall have the heathen for his inheritance. Just as John xvii. 21 will be fully and dispensationally answered at the manifestation of the sons of God. But what does Jesus mean when He said, "They know not what they do." They knew they were putting to death the One who had wrought miracles, and signs, and wonders among them. Surely they knew that by wicked hands they crucified Him, but God's part and intent, God's counsel and foreknowledge they did not know. The grace that was in and to come out of this great transaction of the cross they did not know. They surely knew that they had denied the Holy One and the Just—the man in whom Pilate, the representative of justice and of government, could find no fault, and had desired Barabbas. But God's act of substitution they did not know, nor all the possibilities of grace and salvation that came in thereby for themselves and for others, even that they might be saved by that death, they did not know. The deep principle of 1 Cor. .ii. 6-16 is here. Theirs was moral darkness and ignorance.

2. We now look at verses 42, 43. He was numbered with the transgressors, crucified in the midst of them as one of them. The two malefactors had reviled Him, but one of these comes to distinguish Him

from themselves. Whether it was the grace of His prayer, or the benignity of His countenance that arrested the mind and impressed the heart of the one we do not know, but he sees in Jesus that which had been denied to Him—His divinity, His really being what He had claimed to be—the Son of God. And though all the circumstances are now adverse, this man's faith is at once above all circumstances, and there comes forth from his soul the full faith and confession of Jesus as the Son of God—the One who, though Himself dying on the cross, could give entrance to His kingdom to whom He would. Wonderful faith and apprehension of Jesus!

This malefactor rebukes the other and condemns himself, "we indeed justly," and justifies God, "but this man hath done nothing amiss." This is complete in its way. This judgment of self is true repentance—that which, when God is really seen and known, is not an exercise of the occasion only of first believing, but an exercise and habit of mind which lasts and goes on to the very end. Now here is one of those contrasts which the word often presents which are so telling. The one malefactor rails and disbelieves, and dies—the scene closing upon him as we suppose only to be reopened at the judgment of the Great White Throne; while the other malefactor looking and believing and confessing Christ, as passing through the humiliation and shame and suffering of the cross, is saved—the first fruit of the cross historically—though multitudes before had been saved through its fore-known efficacy. That was a mighty reach of faith, unparalleled, we may believe, considering its circumstances, in its simplicity and sublimity by any other case which the history of salvation will afford.

Here comes in gospel to the sinner. These two malefactors were in like condition, the same Saviour was present to both. There was a presentation of Jesus in the same sense to both. But what different use of Jesus, if we may so say, was made. The effect

of railing, disbelieving, neglecting, having nothing to do with Jesus, was death. The reverse of this—faith positively—was life. We put you upon your responsibility to believe and accept the gospel presentation of Jesus. Grace wrought in the one case before us, and grace works in all who believe. Nevertheless, and consistently, we press upon you, sinner, your distinct individual responsibility to believe the gospel of the grace of God. Intensely individual and contrasted these two malefactors are now become. Intensely individual and contrasted is the case of each one whether perishing or believing unto eternal life—severing finally the connexions and relationships of this world, passing from the same proximity to Jesus on the cross—the sacrifice and the doctrine of the cross equally near to both—the one to heaven and the other to hell; faith in the one case, no faith in the other.

We turn to point you to Him, not now upon the cross, but as “Him whom God hath exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins.” But the malefactor owns Jesus, and Jesus owns the malefactor. Just so. Jesus is beforehand with every one who believes, and, therefore, straightway comes the response of grace. “This day shalt thou be with me in paradise”—no uncertainty, no postponement, no ceasing to exist, no purgatory, no separation from the Lord—an answer of itself this is, and refutation of much of the false teaching of the day, as Phil. i. 23 also is. This introduction to the paradise of God, far more and better than would be restoration to the paradise of Eden, this entrance into the paradise of God to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst thereof (Rev. ii. 7.)

3. We now turn to Matt. xxvii. 46. There had been darkness and silence from the sixth to the ninth hour. Doubtless in these hours the words of many of the Psalms were mentally uttered by the Lord, but there was not any audible utterance. He was alone, and He uttered nothing for man to hear till these words broke

the awful silence. And those words were addressed to God, because the sin-bearer and the great sacrifice was now alone (though offering Himself by the eternal Spirit) enduring God's judgment against sin. God was in government and righteousness here; not as the Father, but as God. God was now displaying justice and making it possible ever afterwards to display equally and in harmony, all His attributes. Sin, condemnation, curse, wrath, judgment, all centred now upon Jesus. God was executing all that upon Him. He was forsaken and alone, to bear it all—the full weight of what He had undertaken, the full measure of vicarious and assumed responsibility. Hence His cry. Communion was interrupted. He hid as it were His face from Him. This was indeed the agony of the cross. Yet Jesus knew the righteousness of it all, and so could say, "My God." He glorified God in this and was Himself really glorified therein. He came under this condemnation and realized this separation for us, so that we should know the truth of Romans viii., no condemnation, no separation. He is in all this the great Substitute, that all those who believed on Him should be free morally, legally, righteously, gloriously as to God; reckoned according to God's reckoning, crucified, dead, buried as in Him and with Him; reckoned according to God's reckoning, risen and to be glorified as in Him and with Him; and it is God's reckoning wherewith the believer reckons. This is what we who believe enter into and enjoy—evermore the light of the countenance of God.

T. M. T.

(To be continued if the Lord will.)

BROTHERHOOD—GIFTS.

I would here remark, that grace is required in these days to realize at the same time the two principles of brotherhood and the exercise of gifts; because the latter necessarily gives externally an appearance of superiority. The flesh, it is true, may use these gifts

to seek an earthly superiority, instead of the love and service of others. The humility which seeks only the good of all, makes everything easy. In worship there is an entire equality of position. More holiness may give a nearness to God in which the worship will be more true, and will be a juster expression, and at the same time nearer to God, of the wants of the assembly. The Spirit of God will there act more immediately, and will produce a more intelligent development of the links of souls with God; so that there may be in this a difference of capacity. What we have to seek is spirituality; this is the principal thing. The priest was in a higher place than the Levite; and all the priests were one, save the high priest: this is our position as worshippers. There was another position, which was very blest, and where God, as sovereign, assigned the occupation. This was the position of the Levite. The glory of the Levite was to do that which God gave him to do. A Merarite was not to touch the vessels of the sanctuary, nor a Kohathite the different parts of the tabernacle. The Gershonites and the Merarites had a more extensive charge—more oxen and chariots; but they were not entrusted with such precious things as the Kohathites.

It is thus that the apostle reasons in reference to gifts, comparing them to the members of the body. All the services, all the gifts, are inferior to worship. In the distribution of gifts God is sovereign, and puts more external honor upon that which is least honorable. The gifts, which are not set off with so many external adornings, are sometimes the most precious. If we are in a low state spiritually, we shall look at the outward appearance, and thus at those gifts which are more external. The Gershonites and Merarites will have more importance in our eyes, with their oxen and their chariots. Nearer to the sanctuary we shall discern that the Kohathites, who carry the vessels on their shoulders, are as much or even more honored

than the others. At all events, each will be esteemed happy, in proportion as he shall have accomplished the task that God has given him to do. In Ephesians iv. we see, in the first place, that which is common to all: that which is special to each comes after; and these latter things are only to accomplish the former. Let not brotherhood displace gifts, but let gifts subserve brotherhood. The sense of the presence of God will keep everything in its place.

The same Lord has said, "all ye are brethren;" and, "strengthen thy brethren." In order truly to strengthen them, some painful experience of self will always be necessary, as in the case of Peter. It is not thus that man would have appointed, but God has so ordered. To deny the Saviour, with whom he had companied three or four years—to destroy, if he had been able, His name from the face of the earth—such, as regards our importance, is the preparation through which God causes one to pass, when He is pleased to put him forward in His service; perhaps, in addition to this, a thorn in the flesh, because the other is insufficient. For what are we, and who is sufficient for these things?

May God Himself direct His Church according to her need, according to the love and the riches of grace which are in Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells in her.

J. N. D.

Love strong as death, nay, stronger,
 Love mightier than the grave;
 Broad as the earth, and longer
 Than ocean's widest wave:
 This is the love that sought us,
 This is the love that bought us,
 This is the love that brought us,
 To gladdest day from saddest night,
 From deepest shame to glory bright,
 From depths of death to life's fair height;
 This is the *love* that leadeth
 Us to His table here,
 This is the *love* that spreadeth
 For us the royal cheer.

ETERNITY.

Come, O my soul, thy future glory trace,
 If thou receive the Saviour's offered grace,
 Infinite years of pleasure thou shalt spend,
 Which never, never, never, have an end!
 Yes, thou shalt dwell where saints in glory are,
 As many years as atoms in the air;
 When those are past, as many to ensue,
 As blades of grass and drops of morning dew;
 When those are past, as many yet behind
 As forest leaves when shaken by the wind;
 When those are gone as many thousands more
 As grains of sand upon the ocean's shore;
 When those are spent, as many millions more
 As moments in the millions past before;
 When all those blissful years, exempt from pain,
 Are multiplied by myriads yet again,
 The numbers drown the thought, could I suppose
 That then my bliss in heaven would have a close,
 Thrice happy then my glorious lot would be;
 But still that would not be eternity.
 Eternity would then be just begun,
 The day of bliss just dawning, rising, heaven's bright sun;
 The concert open only, banquet just prepared,
 First greeting scarcely past, first welcomes only shared;
 The jubilee just commenced, the golden harps just strung,
 Just tuned the lute, first timbrel struck, and anthem sung;
 Just caught the strains, by east, west, south, and north!
 Their joy is inconceivable! their happiness henceforth!

Selected.

SIMPLE PAPERS ON THE CHURCH OF GOD.

I.

HID IN GOD.

There is a word with which Greeks, Jews and Christians were well acquainted, though each attached to it a different meaning. That word, which in Greek is *ecclesia*, is rendered into English by *church* or *assembly*.

The town clerk of Ephesus made use of it when he attempted, and with success, to calm the excited crowd in the theatre of the city, which prided itself on being the temple-keeper of Artemis the great. "If Demetrius," he said, "and the craftsmen which are with him have a matter against any man, the law is open"

(rather the law courts are being held), "and there are deputies (or proconsuls), let them implead one another. But if ye enquire anything concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly (*ecclesia*)" (Acts xix. 38, 39).

Had a Jew been interrogated about the *ecclesia*, the thought that would have been uppermost in his mind would have been the congregation of the Lord, a privileged body called out from the rest of the nations, membership of which by birth belonged exclusively to the children of Israel. Of this assembly Stephen made mention in his memorable speech before the Sanhedrim on the day of his martyrdom (Acts vii. 38). Into this assembly no Ammonite or Moabite could enter, even to their tenth generation forever; and the children of an Edomite, though descendants of Abraham, could only form part of it in the third generation (Deut. xxiii. 3-8). It was a privileged company indeed; for it was Jehovah's assembly, and is styled the congregation of the Lord. He had a right, therefore, to limit nationally to Israel, and to determine under what circumstances and at what time, any, who were not of the race of Israel after the flesh, should be numbered amongst it, as well as to declare who those were, not of the seed of Jacob, who must abandon all hopes of ever forming part of it. And how many in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah learnt, surely to their sorrow, that the congregation of the Lord was limited in extent, and was composed of a privileged company of which they did not and could not form part (Ezra x.; Neh. xiii). In that assembly we too have not, nor ever will have, a part.

But scripture teaches us about another assembly, called the assembly of the living God (1 Tim. iii. 15), and which the Lord Jesus Christ has been graciously pleased to call His own (Matt. xvi. 18). It is with this that christians are familiar, and of which they form part. It is of this, too, that they speak when the word *church* falls from their lips. Very frequently do we

meet with *ecclesia* applied to the christian assembly in the pages of the New Testament. All the apostolic writers but Jude make mention of it, and Mark is the only other New Testament penman who was not led of the Holy Ghost to take notice of it. But the first who applied the word *ecclesia* to that assembly, to which we in an ordinary way restrict it, was the Lord Jesus Christ, who spoke of it as something new, and not then even in existence. "I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell (or hades) shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi. 18). An assembly peculiar in its formation and imperishable in its nature—such are the characteristics of it, as here set forth by the Lord, and as He is the first in the sacred volume who speaks of it, so is He the last. In Matthew He speaks of it viewed as a whole. In Revelation He sends His angel to testify to His saints in the churches speaking that well known word in the plural, because viewing the church in its local aspect, each local company being called the assembly (Rev. xxii. 16).

There was a time then when the church, in the sense in which the Lord used the term, did not exist. The assembly, or congregation of the Lord, had been on earth, and could point to its history of about fifteen centuries' duration before the assembly to which christians belong had been once mentioned or called into being. Yet all that time, and for a far longer period than that, the church of which the Lord first spoke had a definite place in God's thoughts, and, moreover, had always formed part, and a very important part, of that wonderful plan which God is working out to the display of His own glory and that of His Son.

Of these facts we become cognizant through the writings of the apostle Paul, who alone of the sacred writers treats at length of the church of God.

That the church formed part of the wonderful plan of God we learn from the epistle to the Colossians, in

which the apostle tells these saints, that it was given to him as the minister by whom the mystery was revealed, to fulfil (or complete) the word of God (Col. i. 25). Now by this he did not mean that no further revelation on the part of God, beyond those already vouchsafed to him, were to be made. He makes provision indeed for giving a due place to fresh revelations in 1 Cor. xix. 30. Paul was not writing of what we call the canon of scripture. That was not complete when he died; for John did not lay aside his pen, if indeed he had commenced to use it, till after the departure of the apostle of the Gentiles to be with Christ. Many things were revealed to John in Patmos for which we should search in vain in the epistles of Paul. In what sense then was it given to the latter to fulfil the word of God? He, the only apostle who had persecuted the church of God, was the honored instrument selected to reveal the dispensation or economy of the mystery of the Christ. The mystery when thus revealed, completed the range of subjects of which it has pleased the Divine Being in His word to treat. Creation, the fall of man, the atonement, and the kingdom had been declared by other instruments. By Paul was made known the mystery—Christ the Head and His people the members of His body, the two making up the mystic man called the Christ (1 Cor. xii. 12; Eph. iii. 4). Thenceforth God's counsels, as far as He has been pleased to disclose them, stood all revealed, and the word of God was fulfilled or completed.

Further we are authorized in stating that the church, which was not made known in other ages unto the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to God's holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, was nevertheless no afterthought of His, for from the beginning of the world it had been hid in God, who created all things (Eph. iii. 9). The one who had planned the whole work of creation and by His divine power had carried out His purpose, had all along kept hidden in

the recesses of His bosom that wonderful secret so closely connected with His glory and His counsels about His Son. Of this, Paul was singled out from all intelligent creatures, to be the first exponent.

Revealed first to a man, it concerns man, and, as the apostle declared, it was a service given to him to enlighten all as to the dispensation of the mystery. To no christian, therefore, should God's teaching about the church be uninteresting. None can say that it does not concern them. But further, angelic beings are instructed by the disclosure of this secret, for not only are all to be enlightened as to the dispensation of the mystery, but the manifold wisdom of God is now by the church made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenlies (Eph. iii. 9, 10).

Formed, then, so late in the world's history as the church was, is it destined, it may be asked, to possess a mere ephemeral existence? By no means. For the epistle which tells us that the mystery had been hid in God from the beginning of the ages, states clearly that the church will ever abide. "Unto God," writes the apostle, "be glory in the church in (or and in) Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. iii. 21). The first heaven and the first earth will pass away; national distinctions it would seem, will cease; but the church will throughout eternity exist as something marked and distinct from every one and everything which does not form part of it.

The mystery, therefore, we learn was hidden in God from the beginning of the world, but was not spoken of till the Lord Jesus announced that He would build His assembly; yet we may well believe that it was ever present to the divine mind, though, as God has not stated that, we as creatures are not in a position dogmatically to affirm it. Remembering, however, in what terms it is described in the New Testament we seem to have adequate grounds to conclude that it was so. For it is the Body of Christ, and will by and by

be openly owned as His Bride. It is also the building which grows to an holy temple in the Lord.

Surely, then, when God acted in creative power and brought man upon this scene, a creature so different from all the others which He created and made, we may well believe that He had in His mind that man, of which our frame, as we learn, is a figure. Again, when He provided for Adam the helpmeet, formed her out of the man and brought her to him, is it too much to suppose that other thoughts than those simply of providing the man with a wife were in the divine mind, even thoughts about that bride which His Son would die to possess and would sanctify to present her to Himself for His own joy forever? And when Solomon's temple was erected, the pattern of which God had given to David (1 Chron. xxviii. 19), and Jehovah graciously and openly took possession of it by the cloud of glory which filled the house, we may well believe that He looked on to that temple which He would build, formed not of material stones, however large and costly, but of stones infinitely more precious to Him, even living stones, believers on the Lord Jesus Christ.

But if any think that by such remarks we are traveling beyond the bounds of sober thought, and entering the realms of airy speculation, such must certainly acknowledge that there was a moment in the life of the Lord Jesus on earth when the beauty of His church, His bride, came within the scope of His vision. For in the house with His disciples He spake that parable of the kingdom, which tells of a merchant man who, seeking goodly pearls, was satisfied when he had found just one pearl of great price. None at that time could have understood of what He was speaking. Afterwards they must have discerned the purport of His teaching. The one pearl of great price, its value and its beauty acknowledged by the merchantman, left him nothing to desire but to possess it. At what a cost was that done?

What then His disciples could not have understood at the first, some in these days have had opened up to them, and when reading that parable know who is intended by the merchantman, how he gave up all he possessed to acquire the pearl, and of what that one pearl is a figure.

In future papers we hope to enter more at length into this subject of the Church of God. O. E. S.

PAUL'S MINISTRY IN ACTS XIII.—XX.

The Apostle Paul, in some sense, may be said to end his ministry in Acts xx. He ceased then, formally, to be the *servant*, being soon to become the *prisoner*, of Jesus Christ. It was a transitional moment. His ministry had now continued since the time of the opening of chap. xiii.

If we look back at him; in these chapters, and review his labors as a husbandman in the field of the gospel, we shall find him using at times *the plow*, at times *the seed*, and at times *the plow and the seed together*—and all this in the skill of one who understood the character of his work, and the different husbandry, which different soil demanded. And it is happy to be able to mark such skill as this—the skill that distinguishes and understands the work that is to be done, as well as the diligence that does it.

We find this same skill, in a divine and perfect form, in the Lord Himself. The Lord is seen at times taking the nicest and most distinguishing knowledge of the work that lay before Him. In the parable of the sower, He lets us learn how He had surveyed the field in which He was working; how He knew that in one place it was but as *highway* ground, where *Satan* prevailed; in another, *stony* ground, where poor impotent *nature*, unequal to render anything to God, was disappointing His service; in another, *thorny* ground, where the *world* was hindering the ripening of that good seed which He was sowing; in another, good

ground, where toil was rewarded. Thus did the Divine Husbandman Himself take knowledge of the scene of His labors in its large and various characteristics. But His gracious, delicate, and yet keener sense acquaints itself likewise with fainter and more minute differences. He speaks of one "not far from the kingdom of God." He loves the rich young man who came to Him under some struggle between heart and conscience. He calls aside the misled multitude to teach them in gentleness and patience, while He exposes and rebukes their misleading teachers to their face. He separates between Nicodemus and the people of Jerusalem, though he and they together were moved by the same influence, the miracles which He was working. He will sit down in the midst of the twelve that accompany Him, and separate ingredients found among them at times. He will distinguish between Mary and Martha, when put to do such unpleasant work, though He will leave them both still, as with an equal love.

And how perfect all this was, in the way of a Husbandman in God's field, who will be skilful as well as diligent! And in his ministry through these chapters, I mean in the samples of his sermons, which are here recorded for us, we may trace this skill of his divine Master (and surely, by the Spirit of his Master), in the Apostle Paul.

At the opening of chap. xiii. the church are met together at Antioch, and there and then, Saul and Barnabas are called out for work in distant fields. *Saul*, soon after this, became *Paul*, the more confined Jewish name taking its Gentile, larger form (I believe, under divine suggestion), because the scene of service was now enlarging itself, and Paul was predestined of God to fill it more specially than any other, and to become the characteristic minister of this full and abundant form of grace.

In the synagogue of another Antioch, an Antioch more completely beyond the Jewish boundary, our

apostle begins his series of preachings. He is invited by the rulers to give the congregation a word of exhortation. Of course he is ready to speak to them, for he was sent forth by God with "words" for sinners all the world over. But it is "fallow ground" he finds here; a people who give no evidence that they were seeking the Lord with interested consciences—for it is such seeking that is the witness that the fallow has been already broken. "Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord" (Hosea x. 12). But where such seeking is not, the plow must be used, the ministry that convicts the conscience and lays the sentence of death in the creature. Accordingly, Paul uses the plow here. He warns the people of Israel here in the synagogue at Antioch, lest that word of their own prophet should be made good against them, "Behold ye despisers, and wonder, and perish." But since they had invited him to give them a word of exhortation, and had now quietly waited and listened, he casts in the seed as well as uses the plow, telling the synagogue of a risen Jesus, and of forgiveness and justification through faith in Him (chap. xiii. 38-41).

This, surely I may say, was skilful husbandry—husbandry such as the nature of the soil demanded.

Soon afterwards, however, we find him doing somewhat different work at Lystra in Lycaonia. He has no invitation here, no assembled, attentive audience, but a blinded, idolatrous people, who needed to be thoroughly awakened. Under the instructed eye of the apostle, the ground here was merely one of "thorns;" and the word to guide him was at the door—"break up your fallow ground and sow not among thorns" (Jer. iv. 3). We find, therefore, only the plow in the hand of this skilful husbandman. He runs into the midst of the people at Lystra, and challenges their consciences to take knowledge of their condition before God. He would fain drive the conviction deep into the ground of their heart. There

was nothing but this for it. The field demanded this husbandry. A besotted multitude, who would fain worship men of like passions with themselves, have to be arrested, if haply some light from God may awaken the conscience (chap. xiv. 15-17).

Again I say, how perfect is this in its season! Some may object, Paul does not preach the gospel here. It is so; but this was his wisdom in the Spirit. He does not cast in the seed, but breaks up, if he may, the thorny, fallow ground. As his Master at the well of Sychar before him would reach the conscience of a poor sinner; and thus, when the conscience was awakened, He had seed of the most precious quality for the soil, saying to her, "I that speak unto thee am He." Paul had the same seed at hand for these blinded sinners at Lystra, if, like her, they were convicted; but his earlier business, like that of his divine Master before him, is with the plow.

We next find him as a preacher or witness of the gospel at Philippi. Here he lights upon two distinct pieces of ground, each of which had been broken up already, and his hand is called to till them. Lydia was a seeker of the Lord, a Gentile, who had been already brought to worship the God of Israel. The Apostle meets her at the river side, where she and other women used to pray together. The soil of her heart is thus ready rather for the seed, than for the plow; and, accordingly, the Apostle "sat down and spake to" her and her companions. It was the happy, noiseless work of the sower. Gently did the seed fall into the ground, which the Lord of the harvest as gently opened to receive it. (xvi. 10-15).

So, the gaoler. The Lord breaks up his fallow ground. Rough and hard work it may have been; but it was the hand of God that did it, and did it all alone, ere the Apostle is called to enter on his work. For, amazed at what had happened, when the prison doors had been forced open by the earthquake, and yet the prisoners had not fled, though he discovered that his

life was safe, and that he need not kill himself, yet (as one standing on the brink of hell, his soul, not his life, became now his anxiety) he cries out to Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And the Apostle's only business is to tell him of Jesus. (xvi. 25-34).

This was easy work and happy work; the work of a sower in prepared ground, ground that made a sure promise of bringing forth herbs meet for Him by whom it was about to be dressed.

We have, however, still to follow him; and we find him a preacher again, at Athens (xvii. 18-31).

It is not the rough ground of Lystra that he lights on here—but it is equally a field of thorns, which needs just the same husbandry. Blinded, vain idolators, the men of Athens are, as were the people of Lystra. Refined and tutored, it is true—schoolmen of various wisdom after the manner of men; but refined or rude, Athenians or Lycaonians, the fields of these blinded idolators are all "fallow" under the eye of God, and Paul has only the plow in hand here. After exposing their folly, not so much in their *acknowledged*, as in their *real, palpable*, ignorant worship, he speaks to them of the resurrection of Jesus, in its connection with *judgment*; telling them that "God had appointed a day in which He would judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." This was using the plow. The Apostle seeks to convict the conscience. He treats this select, well-tutored assemblage, at Athens, as "fallow ground," a field of "thorns," the only thing to do with which was to break it up. It was only plough-husbandry that suited it. J. G. B.

The *more valuable and precious* in our estimation the things are which we intrust to God, the more we honour God.

STRENGTH MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS.

2 Cor. xii.

The Lord gave Paul at starting what brought his own energy to a close. It was as if He had said, "Paul, I am going to use you a great deal down here; but before I can do this I must first bring you into a condition of cripplement, in which you will feel that you cannot do without me, and which will make it plain to all that it is *I who do the work, not you*. It is for this end that I send you a thorn in the flesh. Do not ask me to take it away. I will do what is far better for *you*, and more glorifying to me: I will cause my power to rest upon you, and perfect my strength in your weakness."

Not only do we need the Lord to give us eternal life, but we need Him to guide it all the way through. He has never promised that we shall be exempt from trial and circumstances of difficulty. What He intends is that we should turn to Him in the trial, and learn that our resources are in Him, not in ourselves. All the trials of the wilderness, the rough places of the way, instead of discouraging us, should be welcomed as opportunities of proving the exceeding greatness of the power treasured up for our use in a risen, living Lord to meet us in them, and raise us above them. It is with the Lord of resurrection that we have to do. The daily petty annoyances and vexations we meet with are permitted to spring up like thorns in our path, to exercise our minds and put us to the test whether we will turn to Him in them and prove the sufficiency of His grace, enduring as seeing Him who is invisible, or just walk by sight as other men.—*Extract.*

Note how grace throws the virgins, who all slept, not back on themselves and their failure, but forward to the coming bridegroom. "Behold, the Bridegroom! Go ye out to meet Him!"

"I'M NOW TO PLEASE BUT ONE,"

That I am Thine, my Lord, and God !
Sprinkled and ransom'd by Thy blood—

Repeat that word once more,
With such an energy and might,
That this world's flattery nor spite
To shake me never may have power.

From various cares my heart retires,
Though deep and boundless its desires,

I'm now to please but One:
Him, before whom the elders bow,
With Him is all my business now,
And with the souls that are His own.

This is my joy (which ne'er can fail),
To see my Saviour's arm prevail ;

To mark the steps of grace :
How new-born souls, convinced of sin,
His blood reveal'd to them within,
Extol my Lamb in every place.

With these my happy lot is cast,
Through the world's deserts rude and waste,

Or through its gardens fair ;
Whether the storm of malice sweeps,
Or all in dead supineness sleeps,
Still to go on be my whole care.

See ! the dear flock by Jesus drawn,
In bless'd simplicity move on ;

They trust their Shepherd's crook :
Beholders many faults will find,
But they can tell their Saviour's mind,
Content, if written in His book.

O all ye just, ye rich, ye wise,
Who deem th' atoning sacrifice

A doctrine vain and slight,
Grant but I may (the rest's your own),
In shame and poverty, sit down
At this one Well-spring of delight.

Indeed, if Jesus were not slain,
Or aught can make His ransom vain,

That now it heals no more ;
If His heart's tenderness is fled ;
Were He no more His Church's Head,
Nor Lord of all, as heretofore ;

Then (so refers my state to Him)
 Unwarranted I must esteem,
 And wretched all I do.
 Ah, my heart throbs, and seizes fast
 That cov'nant which will ever last !
 It knows, it knows these things are true.

No, my dear Lord, in following Thee,
 Not in the dark uncertainty,
 This foot obedient moves ;
 'Tis with a Saviour and a King,
 Who many to His yoke will bring,
 Who ever lives and ever loves !

Now then, my Way, my Truth, my Life !
 Henceforth let sorrow, doubt and strife
 Drop off like autumn leaves ;
 Henceforth, as privileged by Thee,
 Simple and undistracted be
 My soul, which to Thy sceptre cleaves.

Let me my weary mind recline
 On that eternal love of Thine,
 And human thoughts forget.
 Childlike attend what Thou wilt say,
 Go forth and do it, while 'tis day ;
 Yet never leave my sweet retreat.

At all times to my spirit bear
 An inward witness, soft and clear,
 Of Thy redeeming power ;
 This will instruct Thy child, and it
 Will sparkle forth whate'er is right
 For exigence of every hour.

Thus all the sequel is well weigh'd,
 I cast myself upon Thy aid,
 A sea where none can sink ;
 Yea, in that sphere I stand, poor worm,
 Where Thou wilt for Thy name perform
 Beyond whate'er I ask or think.

GAMBOLD.

And there is mine inheritance—
 My kingly palace-home ;
 The leaf may fall and perish,
 Not less the Spring will come,
 Like wind and rain of Winter,
 Our earthly sighs and tears,
 Till the golden Summer dawneth,
 Of the endless year of years.

THE CHURCH AND ITS PRIVILEGES.

PART II.

WHAT DOES THE COMING OF THE COMFORTER MEAN?

[Serving as a reply to the second article on "The Church in the Old Testament" in "*Our Banner*," April 16, 1877.]

I have no pleasure in mere controversy, and as I noticed Mr. G.'s previous article on the church only at the request of those interested in the subject, I take notice of his reply for the same reason, but only of what refers to the main subject, which is all important.

I have no doubt, though unacquainted with him, that Mr. G. is a good man, and I have no wish to violate in any way the amenities of christian charity with one who is a brother in Christ, as controversy tends to do. One should ask oneself now "Is this what I should wish it to have been when I come before the Lord?" If I should fail in this I must, anticipating, beg Mr. G. to forgive me. I have no consciousness of an ungracious feeling, but Mr. G. will not deny that "What is the Church?" is an important question for us all.

I will reply, then, to his article in *Our Banner* of April 16, in what touches that question, and even so, I do it reluctantly. Positive truth is happier service. Mr. G. insists that the church was Israel. That it was at first composed of Jews, no one denies. God, as I said before, waiting on Israel in gracious patience, consequent withal on Christ's intercession on the cross (Luke xxiii. 34); the third of Acts, not the second, being the reply of the Holy Ghost by the mouth of Peter thereto. This was not only addressed to Israel but about Israel, calling them as a nation to repent and Jesus would return, the words of the Holy Ghost answering to Jesus' prayer. "When the times of refreshing" ver. 19, should be "so that the times of refreshing;" ὅπως ἂν has no other sense in Greek. The Jews' repentance would be the occasion of God's

intervention in their favor, and then the blessing and peace of the world promised in the prophets would be established, commonly called the millenium. But in this case there was no gathering. The Jewish authorities would not even allow the Apostle to finish his speech. But Mr. G.'s argument as to Acts ii. has no force whatever. The Apostle's sermon was addressed to the Jews, to Israel, if you will, but what has that to do with the Church being Israel? The effect of the sermon under the power of the Spirit was to gather out of Israel, three thousand, to form, so far, the church—to begin it among that people, though the doctrine of it was not taught till Paul's time. He was a minister of the church to fulfil or complete the word of God. (Col. i. 26). But to argue that the church was Israel, because Israel was preached to, and many gathered out of Israel to form it, has no possible force. If a missionary gathers a body of christians from among the heathen in India, converted to God by grace, are they still heathens, and christianity a continuation of their religion? No doubt they were by natural birth, as the Jews were Jews, but to say that the church is heathen, is absurd. Those called out from Israel who were saved from that untoward generation, were the church, or assembly of God. Israel remained Israel, and was, for the time, hardened in heart and cut off.

Mr. G. must allow me to complete the quoted prophecy of Joel, "The promise is unto you and to your children." There Mr. G. stops. The Apostle adds "and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord your God shall call." Now that God did not reject the Jews till they had refused to receive a glorified Christ, as well as crucified a humbled one (a measure of sin and unbelief completed in the stoning of Stephen, who sums up their conduct from Abraham to that day; where also Paul, the minister of the church, first comes upon the scene), is quite true, and hence that God waited and did not reveal all His

counsels as to the union of Jew and Gentile. But the language omitted by Mr. G. throws it open in principle, and if it does not, why does he omit it?

The promise was given to Israel especially, but by adding all flesh, the prophecy was in prospect carried out farther. It is the accustomed term for this in the Old Testament. "All flesh shall see the salvation of God." "By His fire and by His sword shall the Lord plead with all flesh." The "specially to Israel" does not exclude this. He was to be a light to lighten (to reveal) the Gentiles, and the glory of His people, Israel. Let my reader consult Jer. xxv. 15-33, where the Lord declares He will plead with all flesh beginning with Jerusalem (18-29, see Num. xvi. 22). So to Christ, power is given over all flesh. But let the reader only take a concordance, and he will at once see the force of these words, its absolute universality, and where needed, contrast with Israel. He will readily understand why Mr. G. omits it, and what is far better, how God uses it, and how, while preserving the promises to Israel, it extends blessing and judgment to all, and putting the Jew first, goes out to the Greek.

Repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in His name, beginning at Jerusalem. So even Paul, who knew no difference, for that all had sinned, yet went to the Jew first, and also to the Greek, saying that Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written. Till the Jews rejected a glorified Christ the patience of God dealt with them as a nation for repentance, and gathered the members of His assembly from that people, calling then Cornelius by Peter, that all might be one, but using Paul as the instrument for unfolding the doctrine of the assembly and the ministration of the gospel to the nations, a mission the others gave up entirely to him (Gal. ii).

Did Mr. G. see the Lord's coming and the setting up of Christ's kingdom by power, I might go further into this. Let him here only ponder this, that the little stone, cut out without hands, did not become a mountain to fill the whole earth, till after it had executed judgment. The knowledge of this would help in the understanding of Joel* and interpret many passages now obscure and falsely applied by those who do not see it. But I must now confine myself to my reply.

As regards my alleged mistake of taking organization for privilege (and christian privileges do occupy the greatest part of my paper), I shall only quote Mr. G.'s words, "To them (the Jews) pertained the adoption, glory, covenant, giving of the law, service, and the promises (Rom. ix. 4). Nothing more can be said of the church now." Any one can decide whether this applies to organization or privileges, and whether it is not an assertion that they had all that the church has now.

As to the coming of the Holy Ghost, the most essential point of all, I do mean to say that the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, did not come till after Christ was glorified. The word of God is positive and express as to this, and it is what is at the root of the question. What I have said about this, or rather what the blessed Lord and the word have said of it is quite plain. The Holy Ghost as God, is everywhere. "He inspired," I said, "the prophets, and wrought all through the divine history." But and if Christ and the divine word tell us the truth, we must so believe, the Comforter could not come until Christ went away and was glorified. "Christ," I remarked, "had created the world, but He did not come till the incarnation." "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go to the Father."

* Thus in Joel it is before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes that there is deliverance in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and with this chapter iii. is connected.

I shall repeat what the word of God says on this point as it is the real and vital question. It is a scriptural fact which constitutes Christianity, and the denial of the plain scriptural statements on the subject, or the neglect of them, is what has judaized Christianity, plunged the assembly of God into the world, and made it as it now stands, the powerless prey to infidelity. The death and resurrection of Christ are the foundations of Christianity, the presence of the Holy Ghost as personally come into the world, that is, to believers in it, is the essential living power and characteristic of Christianity and the christian.

And I add now, that Christ glorified as man, received Him (the Holy Ghost) afresh when so glorified, to shed Him forth on His disciples. Christ had not received Him to this end till after His ascension, Acts ii. 33. "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear."

I am not going to reason as Mr. G. does, but to quote the word of God. Mr. G. speaks of "pouring out," as giving in abundance, and that such only is the difference. When *was* the Spirit of God poured out before Pentecost? But I will quote the texts, and to them I can claim the submission of every child of God. I have done so, but I press this point as a cardinal one, constituting Christianity as revealed in the New Testament.

In John vii. Christ not then showing Himself to the world according to the yet unfulfilled type of the feast of Tabernacles, says on the special, last (eighth) and great day of the feast, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," and the Evangelist adds: "This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet (given), for Jesus was not yet glorified." Com-

pare Acts ii. already quoted. There is no question of a greater or fuller measure. What is said is the Holy Ghost (*πνεῦμα ἅγιον*) was not yet. That is, as come and dwelling in believers. So the baptizing with the Holy Ghost was the second of the two great works of Christ. He was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, but He on whom, as man, the Holy Ghost descended and abode, He it was who would baptize with the Holy Ghost. This took place, as regards the one hundred and twenty, on the day of Pentecost, according to Christ's word (Acts i. 5), and Christ being exalted and glorified according to John vii. shed forth the Holy Ghost according to the promise in Joel. The difference of the Spirit in the prophets, and the presence of the Holy Ghost as come down from heaven, is clearly marked in 1 Pet. i. 11-13: "The Spirit of Christ which was in them testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory (glories) which should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." There was a testimony beforehand, by the Spirit of Christ in the prophets, but with the gospel the things were, not brought, but reported with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and then we are told that the things will be *brought* to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ, for which we must wait. The distinction, then, is perfectly scriptural, and the distinction made in scripture, that distinction being marked by "sent down from heaven." But further I add the positive texts (John xiv. 16), "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter that He may abide with you for ever;" (25, 26), "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things." (xv. 26), "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send

unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth." (xvi. 7), "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you, and when He is come." And the Acts and Epistles confirm these plain testimonies. The former I have quoted. I add (xix.), "We have not so much as heard whether the Holy Ghost is." The same words as in John vii. So Eph. i. 13, "In whom also, after that ye believed ye were sealed by that Holy Spirit of promise"—till Christ was glorified, promised, but not come; but now come, and given to believers as a seal. Their unity was the unity of the Spirit; there was one Spirit and one body. They were not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God by which they were sealed to the day of redemption. (Gal. iii. 2), "They had received the Spirit by the hearing of faith." (1 Cor. xii.), "All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit dividing to every man severally as He will." "By one Spirit they were all baptized into one body." Christianity is the ministration of the Spirit, in contrast with the law (2 Cor. iii.). And it is a great mistake to suppose that miraculous gifts and prophecy were the special and most important effects. The disciples were not to rejoice that demons were subject unto them, but rather that their names were written in heaven. Men might have supernatural power (1 Cor. xiii), without being converted, and in the Old Testament we have instances of it, but if sealed with the Holy Ghost, it was as believers, and for the day of redemption. They could then (Gal. iv.) cry Abba Father, being sons by faith in Christ Jesus, they (John xiv.) know they are in Christ and Christ in them (1 John iv. 13). They know, and that by the Spirit given to them, that they dwell in God, and God in them. His love is shed abroad in their hearts by the Spirit given to them (Rom. v. 5). Their bodies are temples. The Spirit Himself bears witness with our Spirit, helps our infirmities; we are led by the Spirit,

mind the things of the Spirit: He which establishes in Christ, and has anointed us is God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts (2 Cor. i. 21, 22). He who hath wrought us for the self-same thing (the glory), is God, who hath also given us the earnest of the Spirit (2 Cor. v. 5). All this is more than power and prophecy. It is the Christian state, and is contrasted (Gal. iv.) with the Jewish believer, consequent on accomplished and known redemption. The more the reader examines the Word, the more he will find the presence of the Holy Ghost in the believer and in the assembly, essentially and distinctively characteristic of Christianity.

I may notice one passage, as it makes a difficulty to some, John xiv. 17. It does not touch the question, if we take it as Mr. G. and others do, namely, that the Holy Ghost had come down on Jesus as man after His baptism, and dwelt with them in that sense, but was not *in them*. This only confirms what I have insisted on. The Holy Ghost coming and being in them was future, "and shall be in you." That was not yet. But the truth is, I do not believe this to be the sense of "dwelling" with them." The translators had an avowed and unhappy practice of translating the same word differently in the same sentence, as in John v. "judgment," "condemnation," "damnation," are one identical word in Greek. So here "dwell" in ver. 17 is the same as "abide" in ver. 16. The Father was to give another Comforter who was to abide for ever with them. Christ could not; He was to go away to the Father. When sent, He was to abide with them, and be in them. Christ was there with them, but He could not abide with them; was with them, but not *in* them. This other Comforter would *abide*, and be *in* them. The "cannot receive" of the world is as much the present time as "abide." It is when sent. And the truth is, abides or dwells, is just as much future as present. It depends on an accent ($\mu\epsilon\nu\acute{\epsilon}\iota$ or $\mu\epsilon\nu\epsilon\tilde{\iota}$) and in the early MSS. there were no accents. But taking it in

Mr. G.'s sense, the Spirit was there in Christ as man, and so with them, but *in* them was, on the contrary, future.

The word of God, therefore, testifies positively that the Comforter did not, and could not come, till Christ went away and was glorified. There is nothing about any previous pouring out, but a promise of doing it in the future. Nor does even *shaphak* mean giving in abundance, particularly, but simply pouring out. Further, in speaking of less and more, His *personal* coming is denied; a very weighty point. "When *He* shall come." *He* is sent, comes, wills, distributes, works, and, I repeat, Christianity is distinguished by that presence of the Holy Ghost the Comforter. I repeat here the immensely important truth that God's dwelling with man is the consequence of accomplished redemption. He did not with Adam, nor Abraham, nor other saints. When He had redeemed Israel out of Egypt He did. "He dwelleth between the cherubim" (See Ex. xxix. 45, 46). So the Holy Ghost could not come, till man sat at the right hand of God, the glorified witness that an eternal redemption was accomplished. Of this we have seen in John vii., Acts ii., John xvi. 7 the positive testimony. The whole character of christianity depends on it. We are not yet in the christian state and standing if we have not the Spirit (Rom. viii. 9-11).

Mr. G. says that the work of instituting the church is nowhere ascribed to the Spirit in scripture. That the church was not yet built or building when Christ was on earth is certain, for He says, on this rock *I will* build my church. Till Christ died the foundation was not laid. Here only is the church spoken of in His lifetime, and as a future thing. But He died to gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad, and the two characters in which the church is spoken of, body and house, are both attributed to the Spirit, baptized by one Spirit into one body, and the habitation of God by the Spirit (Eph.

ii. 22). "In whom ye are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (*εν πνευματι*). There is one Spirit and one body. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, Jews or Gentiles, &c." (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13). Even if we come down to the low ground of external organization, Mr. G. says, "Christ instituted the Lord's supper, Christ instituted baptism." Well then, they did not exist before Christ, as so organized. But when Mr. G. says, "Christ gave the organization of the New Testament to the disciples," though the expression "the organization of the New Testament" be somewhat unintelligible, will he tell us when He did so? I read in 1 Tim. of such organization, and historical facts elsewhere connected with it, but for saying that any such were given by Christ, there is not a shadow of ground.

If by organization he means baptism and the Lord's supper, it is a proof that as He instituted them, such organization did not exist before, and it was when the Holy Ghost came they were carried out. Baptism to Christ's death could not be till He had died, and the Lord's supper is a symbol of the unity of the body of which an exalted Christ (Eph. i. 19-23) is the head.

As to Christ not loving the church till it existed, it is false doctrine. In its fulness and completeness in God's purpose it does not exist yet, at least we trust that souls will yet be brought in. "Yet to be made and defiled," says Mr. G. Did He not love the souls He saves now, before they existed? They were defiled in their own nature, and of these the church is made up, loved before they existed, defiled as sinners, and Christ died long ago for their purification, and they constitute the church when sealed. Christ did love the church before it existed. Did He only give Himself for what existed then? This is very sad. He

gave Himself for it *that He might* sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself, a glorious church without spot. What He will present to Himself certainly did not exist when He gave Himself for it. There could be no church but by His giving Himself for it. Its cleansing, in time, comes after this. He loved the church that He will present, glorious, to Himself.

This only shows how if one truth be given up, others, if touched, will crumble with it. If Mr. G. had given himself the trouble of examining the Greek in Eph. iii. 4-11, he would have found that as the English proves nothing of the kind, in Greek there is no ground for what he says as to the Jews being the body (a monstrous assertion, really) at all. The word is *σύνσωμα*, which could not exist till both were formed in one, according to chapter ii., to make of both one *new man*.

The concluding remarks scarcely require any on my part. There is not a word in scripture about any people using Melchisedec, not even Abraham, though he owned his greatness. Abraham acted as priest for himself continually, setting up his altar, as did Isaac and Jacob, and the family altar has been generally recognized by christians. There is not a shadow of any assembly of believers, or professed believers, before the exodus. Melchisedec is introduced as a mysterious personage whose priesthood and life were coincident, not what priests were, or the great high priest is now, to intercede for the ignorant or out of the way, or to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin as the apostle insists; but to give, and to bless the Most High God, and Abraham from the Most High God, when through His power he was already wholly victorious. And if Mr. G. had taken the pains to read that one of the songs of Zion (Ps. cx.), to which he alludes, he would have found that it was setting Christ at God's right hand *till* His enemies should be His footstool; and that the sending the rod of His power

out of Zion is future. Then His enemies will be made His footstool. Hence when the apostle shows that there arises another priest not of the order of Aaron, Christ being that priest, he makes the present exercise of His priesthood exclusively according to the analogy of Aaron's, though He be not of His order (Heb. viii. 9), because Christ is yet sitting at the right hand of God, and His enemies, if scripture is to be believed, not yet made His footstool. A priest is not the priest of a church,* unless in popery, that I know of. The essential character of the present time is that Christ is *not* sitting on His own throne, but on His Father's, at God's right hand, *till* His enemies be made His footstool, and the Holy Ghost sent down while He is there "expecting," having by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified through it. I do not admit that there was an order known as elders when Moses returned to Israel in Egypt. There were elders, but no order known as elders. If there were, let the institution be shown. There was one established when Jethro came (Ex. xviii., Deut. i.), but This was subsequent; and a special one of seventy (Num. xi. 17). But as to this I am quite indifferent. the congregation was not formed, but they were a separated people, and if there be no testimony of it, for aught I know there may have been some known elders, but no such order is spoken of. Nor even in the New Testament is any appointment of elders spoken of amongst the Jews.

But if there were a congregation connected with Melchisedec, of which there is not the slightest trace, or that there were elders in Israel organized as an order among the people, which is not said either, what has that to do with union with Christ by the Holy Ghost, with the glorious head of the body, or even with the habitation of God through the Spirit,

* The church is never spoken of unless in Heb. xii. 22, where the whole heavenly and earthly order is spoken of.

formed consequent on Christ having broken down the middle wall of partition, and set aside Judaism? Were Melchisedec's fancied congregation members of Melchisedec's body? Yet that is what constitutes the church in its truest character.

How the habit of mere human arrangement blots out of the mind the divinely given revelations of a glorified Christ at God's right hand, and a body united to Him by the Holy Ghost. A priest must have a church, an utterly unscriptural thought, instead of a glorified Christ and union with Him by the Holy Ghost; Christ, too, fancied to be exercising His power as King now, instead of sitting at God's right hand expecting till His enemies be made His footstool.

I trust no harsh word has escaped me. I do not deny it is an exercise of patience to go over and over again what constitutes the characteristic existence of the church, and Christianity itself commencing from Pentecost. My only consolation is that it brings out, clearer and clearer, for christians, great fundamental truths of their own standing. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His. J. N. D.

PHILADELPHIANS.

Feeblest worms, yet dear to Jesus,
 Weary hearts that wait for Him,
 Eyes that look upon the glory,
 Till all else is dark and dim ;
 Midst the wreck, the desolation,
 Where the glorious city stood,
 Call'd to raise the lonely altar,
 One last witness for their God.

Precious to the heart of Jesus,
 Love that keeps the word He spake,
 Knowing somewhat of the sweetness
 Of rejection for His sake ;
 Yet so little of the glory,
 Of His scorn, and cross, and shame,
 That His love can witness only,
 "Thou has not denied my name."

THE THOUGHTS OF GOD FOR US.

Ep .es. i. 1-7.

It is marvelous that we are associated with the deepest and highest thoughts and counsels of God, and that not as creatures of these thoughts and counsels only, but as now living in them, as sharers in them. We have come where all things are of God. Where could that be but heaven and the glory, in His own presence? Yes, that or nothing is our distinct place. To have any part in Christ, is to be as He is before God, to have any place, is to be where He is, linked with His glory forever.

When our Lord had got into company with "His own" (John xvii). He lifted up His eyes to heaven and you notice that the first thing, and a main thing that He spoke of to the Father, was the "glory." And that chapter is all about the glory and, the Father, and Himself, and us with Him. Now is it not a wonderful thing that He should say positively of us that we are not of this world? Consider that simple statement, that there is not a single element or movement of man here under the sun that we are responsible for, or to be in. This is purely revolutionary. And what has done this? The cross. By Christ crucified, the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world. Well, here they were standing with Christ in spirit beyond the cross, and His thought for them is that they are not at all of the world.

For what, then, are we formed? For the glory. He hath predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son, and that is in the glory, in heaven.

We never read of being predestinated to *be saved*, though that is what most think of when they mention predestination. But it is what we are saved *to*, "predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son," predestinated to be sons! This is the wonderful thing—the character and style of the salvation. Multitudes have been saved, and multitudes innumerable

will yet be saved, of whom it was never said they were "predestinated" at all. The predestinated ones belong to the present time. The Old Testament saints, and the saints after the church is caught up, that will be here during the millenium are never mentioned as predestinated to anything, though they get their position in Christ, and before God, safely enough.

But the saved of this present interval belong in heaven. We who first have to do with Christ are chosen to the praise of His glory, as He said of His own who are not of this world, "I will that they 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." Of the same He had said, "And the glory which Thou gavest me have I given them."

The animating fact is that there is nothing too good, too high, too rich and wonderful for Him to bestow upon us, and for us to receive. We get only the highest, and we are communicated with on that ground. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ according as God hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. This is wondrous and illimitable. It takes us back to what His thoughts were for His own glory when alone. As the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ only could He carry it all out. He must have Him as the first of these sons, as the pattern of this standing. Accordingly, it was when Christ had risen from the dead that He sent the amazing message to His "brethren," "I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."

Our redemption, therefore, is not a restoration to Adam's purity. It is to have not one bit of the first man in us, but to be in the new man, the second man from heaven. "All spiritual blessings" is a large compass, "in heavenly places" a boundless range; no limit, no smallness in that. "In Christ" is the coun-

sel of God, and the argument for our joy and confidence. He has no less measure than that, no lower ground for blessing now. It is altogether unique and matchless, and beyond the possible thought of man. What in other days it was said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man," we have revealed to us now by the Holy Spirit—the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages unto our glory.

Accept it then heartily and fully that God has made us as His own Son, taken us into favor, *as He is*, who has done all for us; His delight perpetually *as He is*; predestinated for the glory, *as He is*; to be exalted to the throne of the kingdom, *as He is*; to be in fellowship with all that is His, and one with Him forever. Safe as He is, blessed as He is, enriched and moving in the perpetual circle of God's most intimate gladness, the nearness and liberty of His own house. Accept this as yours, ours, now. So accept it to your apprehension as to know that not to act upon the liberty and boldness and confidence of it is really to grieve and disappoint Him, who, through all the ages past, has been dwelling upon it, and eagerly awaiting the time to bring it all out, setting aside every preceding thing as but hint and rudiment, the rough sketch and outline, it may be, in type, understood, and so pledged by Him, but to be cast aside as mutable and weak, and this, our place, our blessing brought in as His true thought, the beginning of His real creation, the starting of all in the new man. What shall we say to these things? What shall we do? Just take them in the full, happy meaning and bearing of them, and joy in God, acting like men of immense wealth—His wealth.

Our trouble is that we seek to find a reason for our blessing in ourselves. This must needs bring us down to the lowest thoughts, for He is not going to use a single element in us, as we were. He flung it all aside as corrupt and worthless, on the cross. That is the

grand thing in the cross for us that it put us utterly and forever out of the scene. How then has He acted? He has chosen us beforehand to the son-place by Jesus Christ, children to Himself, "*according to the good pleasure of His will.*" Surely, you can think of God having His own thoughts and plans, in their infinite grandeur and holiness, when there was no feeble and guilty man, no sin, no sad exhibition of disaster and woe, before all this in the pure communion of the One who was ever His delight, for whom and by whom all things were afterwards made! And now He takes up those plans and thoughts to fulfil them—now, and in us. And our blessing, ourselves, are the result?

And think, that nothing less than this will properly measure and meet the work of His own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, nor adequately tell out His complete satisfaction in that work. The earth must be the scene of that peerless work, and the heavens and the glory of God the scene of its results. As has been well said, it is all a grand superlative, a wondrous extreme, raised to the highest height from the lowest depth. And it is well proved in this epistle where we have "all spiritual blessings," "the good pleasure of His will," "the praise of the glory of His grace," "the riches of His grace," "the riches of His glory," as the fundamental principles, the elements amidst which He walks and works, and then "*the might of His power*" as that in which He wrought in raising up Jesus, and us in Him; and the purpose of the work to show "the *exceeding* riches of His grace" to the ages to come; and now, by us, the church, to make known His "*manifold* wisdom." Are these minor things, the pastime of a day, the common action of creating and keeping worlds, or are they the putting forth of all that He is, rising to the full proportions of His own being in the integrity of His attributes, as revealed in the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father?

We need not then shrink from the fact that He has placed us as far above angels as His Son is, as sons in their relation are above mere servants in the house. And well may we turn to Him to know what should be the return for all this. These are true sayings, and that they may be made good to our hearts as we stay here, coming with the reality and power of His own presence, He has given unto us, as His, the Holy Spirit, marking us off forever for all this as the distinguished ones of His grace. He, the Holy Spirit, is the earnest the reality of all this that we may know all, not alone by hearing it, and in the letter and syllables of it, but as a living, actual condition, be in it and of it, walk in the consciousness and comfort of it all, at home now in these spiritual things; knowing really more of heaven than we do of the earth, and the world. Surely His thoughts are very deep. They gather up and consummate all possible blessings. All that He can do, He has done for us, giving us in Christ redemption, and the forgiveness of sins through His blood. As thus having to do with Christ we are fit to receive all communications, to know all things, and therefore the Holy Spirit is given to dwell in us.

Amazing grace! Well may we look to the Spirit to strengthen us with might in the inner man that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, and, being rooted and grounded in love, we may apprehend what is breadth, and length, and depth, and height.

May we more and more feel the pleading of all this that we walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called, and be indeed imitators of God as dear children, that we, in nothing, walk with the world from which we have been taken; but keep ourselves for Him who so soon will come for us to take us to the only place we are fit for by our calling—His own presence and companionship forever! “Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

UTTERANCES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST ON THE CROSS.

4. John xix. 26. What were the feelings of the mother of Jesus when she saw Him on the cross can be in some sense understood, but of all the things which she had had to ponder over in her heart, this must have been to her the most inscrutable. The women of Galilee had shown themselves possessed of sympathetic, human feelings, in view of what was now going on, and they had a good deal identified themselves with the Lord, but now they "stood afar off." But Mary, the mother of Jesus, and two other Marys who were of the true remnant, "stood by the cross."

When the heart of Jesus was taking so wide a range of sympathies in the midst of His own sufferings, it was not likely He would forget His mother, nor did He; so pointing to John, the only one of His disciples who seems to have "stood by the cross," and addressing her, "Woman, behold thy son," and the disciple, "Behold thy mother"—the one was committed to the care of the other. This was perfect and beautiful. He had taken our nature upon Him, and in that nature His actings must needs be perfect. What an acknowledgment of human relationships, and sanction of the exercise of all the love and sympathy, and care and responsibility which they involve. Our title to them and to the joys of them was lost in the first Adam, all forfeited and gone really as of title, for of rights we have none, as in Him, but of death and judgment; but, in the second man, grace restores these, and while, indeed, grace allows them to all without title, grace gives redemption title to them all, in the second man to those who believe in Him. The disciple whom He loved responded, and henceforth took that mother to his own home—ready obedience because he loved Him.

5. Another cry was needed that the scripture might

be fulfilled. He had said, "the scripture cannot be broken." Now, therefore, He cries, "I thirst." No doubt He thirsted for the presence of His Father, and to finish the work He had come to do. But this was natural thirst, as when weary at the well in His manhood He said to the woman of Samaria, "Give me to drink." They gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall, of which He tasted, but would not drink. It was not fitted to allay thirst or to refresh, else He might have taken it—and that which was only to stupefy He would not drink.

6. John xix. 30. "It is finished." Affirmation, proclamation beyond compare, full of glory to God, full of peace to man. The cry "My God! my God!" had been with a loud voice. This also would appear to have been, but we are not certainly told. But it was gloriously declarative, explicit, and distinct. The work undertaken was now all performed. The whirlwind of God's wrath had swept over Him, and was gone. He had accomplished the reconciliation. He had obtained eternal redemption for us who believe.

Deep, sure, solid, enduring foundation of all the believer's hopes—of His title to life and glory. Think more of it, ye saints of God. Here, too, is the ground and title of the proclamation of the gospel of the grace of God to sinners, "It is finished." The ceremonial law abolished, sacrifices ceased, shadows gone, types over and ended. No more any sacrifice but that One already offered; no more any mediator but that One; no more any High Priest but that One. Heaven heard that cry, hell heard it, earth heard it, but earth needs to hear and heed it more. Dear sinner, hear these words of Jesus—"It is finished," and know surely that all needed for God's glory and your salvation has been done by Christ on the cross; believe and be saved.

7. Luke xxiii. 46. This also He cried with a loud voice, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit," and having said thus He gave up the ghost. This was a

real death, but before this there was restored communion—full and complete. He knew well that His human spirit was now immediately going to His Father, and that His body would be raised by the glory of the Father—that the Son of Man was to be henceforth glorified by the Father. Jesus, as substitute standing for us had met Him as God in righteous judgment, that we might not; that this we might escape. He had been just in condemning sin, and He would be just in reckoning righteousness. Yet His holiness—His consuming character of all that is unholy, comes out in that word, “our God”—yea the God of the sinner saved by grace, the God of the saints of God, “is a consuming fire.” But the wondrous harmony—as towards us, because as towards Himself, of the words, “My God and your God, my Father and your Father,” need to be more realized by us in the power of the Holy Ghost. And now it is for the believer under due title to say, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,” or as Stephen, calling upon God and saying to the Son of Man whom he saw on the right hand of God, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

And now these last words of Jesus, who is Himself the Word—the Revealer of the Father—how they reveal and expose to us the heart of God, and thus applied by His Spirit, we come to know Him. Little do we know ourselves; of our own heart we have to say, “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” And it is well if through grace we can pass the full judgment upon ourselves, and have knowledge enough of ourselves to say, “for I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.”

But God so reveals Himself to us that we know Him—better than we know ourselves. Yes, we are entitled and enabled to say that, through grace and truth, we know Him better than we know our wretched selves. We know Him, and, knowing Him, instead of trusting ourselves, who are not fit to be trusted,

can trust Him, surely ought to do so, when we can only distrust ourselves, in response to the words of Jesus, "Have faith in God," just simply because of what He is in Himself as light and love, and the only one to be safely trusted.

A word more as to the scenes of the cross. The sun had been darkened, earth shrouded, the rocks rent, the earth quaked, and the graves opened. The veil of the temple had also been rent. But man was unsubdued and unawed still. Man had not yet finished his part. The last insult—the last experience of his enmity had yet to come out. So "one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." Man's malignity is now fully shown forth—man nor Satan could do more. But God's grace abounds, "where sin abounded grace much more abounds"—there is blood to redeem and water to cleanse.

This was not Heb. vi. 6. Yet as this man adopted, so to speak, for Himself, the crucifixion, and individually pierced the Son of God, was it not in principle much the same. And what of those now-a-days and here, before whom, so to speak, in the presentation of the cross, Jesus is evidently crucified; is there no sense in which the unbeliever and rejecter of to-day in the full light of all the truth and doctrine of the cross, crucifies to himself pierces the Son of God, and puts Him to open shame?

I put you, sinner, on your responsibility to repudiate all such action of unbelief and enmity, to judge this man as representative of yourself, and thus to judge yourself, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, that you may be saved. So only can you come out from under the responsibility and condemnation resting upon man, as man, for His treatment and murder of the Son of God. So only can you be yourself acquitted and clear.

Revert for a moment to the contrast of the two malefactors. Reader, which of the two is your rep-

representative man? One or the other is; you take sides with one or the other, practically. Dost thou believe on the Son of God? Neither Jewish priest nor Gentile centurion would order a cup of cold water for Jesus when He cried "I thirst." They would add to the agony rather than refresh Him with a little cold water. Your unbelief and action are, in spirit and principle, the same thing. But the faith of the one malefactor was refreshment to the dying Saviour. His Father gave Him that.

So now there is joy in heaven before the angels of God over one sinner that repented. (There is no mistaking what repentance is with the case of the believing malefactor before us). Those three parables in Luke xv. show the same truth—the shepherd seeking the lost sheep until he find it, and the father finding his own joy in the return of the prodigal. Reader, let it be in your case like that of the believing malefactor—Jesus seeing of the travail of His soul, and the Father joying over a home-bound prodigal.

T. M. T.

SIMPLE PAPERS ON THE CHURCH OF GOD.

II.

ITS PRESENT RELATION TO GOD.

When God had brought Israel through the Red Sea as a people redeemed, both by blood and by power, they celebrated His goodness in song, and declared their wish to prepare for Him a habitation (Ex. xv. 2). The thought they expressed as the desire of their heart was a new one, but a right one; for their redemption having been accomplished, God could thus dwell, and, as we learn afterwards (Ex. xxv. 8), He would thus dwell among them. And those who shared in that redemption were privileged to provide the materials, a willing offering from grateful hearts made glad by the exercise of delivering power on their behalf.

In the wilderness God dwelt in the tabernacle, in the land His abode was the house; both habitations erected after patterns expressly given to Moses and to David, and from materials offered by His people on the first occasion, and by David on the second. Of course, whatever they brought must have borne in one way or another the impress of the Creator's hand; for they could only bring of that with which their God had enriched them. Creation, both animate and inanimate, was laid under tribute to yield what was wanted for Jehovah's habitation. Things useful, things costly, things precious, things beautiful, were provided in profusion for the tabernacle in the wilderness, and the willingness of the people to offer was only checked by the announcement, that nothing more was required (Ex. xxxvi. 5-7).

The tabernacle gave place to the temple. God, who had dwelt in the former, dwelt in the latter, till the bright cloud of glory, the Shekinah, departed from the house, as seen in vision by Ezekiel (x.) loth to go, yet unable to stay, because of the iniquities of the children of Israel. From that time to the present, God has never dwelt in His house at Jerusalem. It was His house when rebuilt; the Lord acknowledged it as such, and He graced it by His presence as God's house, His house, on the occasion of His triumphal entry into the doomed city and temple. By and by, as Ezekiel shows, the Lord Jehovah will return to it, never again to leave it, the place of His throne, and the place of the soles of His feet, where He will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever (Ezek. xliii. 7).

In Jerusalem, then, He does not now dwell. Their house was left to the Jews desolate; that was its condition when God ceased to inhabit it. To outward eyes it looked grand and imposing. In His eyes, whose house it was, it was even then desolate, and that condition cannot alter till the Jews shall see Him, and welcome His return, saying, "Blessed is He that com-

eth in the name of the Lord" (Matt. xxiii. 38, 39). Has God then now no habitation upon earth? A Jew would surely say that He has not. A Christian should answer that He has; a habitation, however, different in character, and formed of materials unlike any that Israel, Solomon, or men could provide. For redemption having been accomplished, redemption by the blood of God's Lamb, and the exaltation of the Lord Jesus to heaven having been effected, God has formed for Himself by the Holy Ghost a habitation upon earth.

Of old, men built for God His dwelling-place, now He has built one for Himself; a building to which His people cannot by their offerings contribute, yet without whom it could never have been made. And as the tabernacle and the temple were severally composed of materials provided in their natural state by the creator of the universe, so God's present habitation bears the marks of the Creator's handiwork, for in creative power in grace God has acted, and formed for Himself the stones, living stones (1 Pet. ii. 5), those who are a new creation in Christ Jesus, even believers on His name, and this habitation of God has several names, each one, of course, appropriate and expressive. It is the *house* of God, the *temple* of God, and the *assembly* of the living God. Of all these terms, when speaking of it, does the Apostle Paul make use. Let us look a little into them.

A *habitation* of God. This teaches us that God can still dwell upon earth, though the tabernacle has been for ages non-existent, and the temple at Jerusalem has been for centuries laid low.

What a delight it evidently was to God to dwell among His people! He gathered Israel around Himself in the wilderness in an order which He was pleased to appoint (Num. ii.), and issued an injunction for the exclusion from the camp of every leper, every one that had an issue, and whosoever was defiled by the dead, "that they defile not their camps, in the

midst whēreof I dwell" (Num. v. 3). Again, at the close of their wilderness life, God reminded them, when speaking of the land of their inheritance, upon which innocent blood was not to lie unavenged, that He the Lord dwelt among the children of Israel. (Num. xxxv. 34).

And as He told Moses, so He told Solomon, of His dwelling among His people. Whilst the house was building God cheered the king with the promise, that, if he was obedient, the Lord would dwell among the children of Israel, and not forsake them (1 Kings vi. 12, 13). After it was built God reaffirmed it, when He appeared to Solomon the second time, twenty years after the king had commenced to lay the foundations of the house of the Lord (1 Kings ix. 1-3). It is true the continuance of His presence was conditional on the king's obedience; yet surely God did delight to dwell among His people, and to tell them of it. But not less by deed, as well as by word, did the Lord proclaim this. When Moses had finished the erection of the tabernacle, the cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle (Ex. xl. 34). Not a day elapsed, after His earthly dwelling-place was made ready for Him, before the Lord openly and formally took possession of His habitation, to which none had invited Him, but out of which He would not consent to remain. Again, when Solomon had dedicated the house at Jerusalem, the cloud which had rested on the tent of the congregation at Sinai, appeared afresh on Mount Moriah, and filled the house; and the glory, which had prevented Moses from entering the tabernacle, prevented the priests from standing to minister; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord (1 Kings viii. 11). If God took a delight in dwelling in the midst of His people then, not less does He surely now, since He has made them His habitation in the Spirit.

The ideas, then, of God's habitation, God's house,

God's temple, God's assembly, too, are not new. Israel, in a way, could speak of them all as terms with which they were familiar, and could have turned to the written word for divine authority as to the use of them. But what was new, and is peculiar to Christian teaching, is the application of the terms "habitation," "house," and "temple" to the company of God's people upon earth. God is present upon earth, though His Son has been cast out of the world. He dwells, too, upon earth. He possesses, He acknowledges, a habitation peculiarly, really, His own. "In Christ Jesus," writes Paul, "ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 22). To this same building Peter refers (1 Pet. ii. 5). The apostle of the circumcision thus bears testimony to it in common with the apostle of the Gentiles, the one and the other reminding those specially under their charge of the privilege which was theirs. Those who had been formerly Gentiles, and therefore could never have entered within the enclosure of the temple set apart for the race of Israel—those too who had been Jews but had turned their backs on Mount Zion as well as on Mount Moriah, when they went forth to Christ without the camp—those both learnt how richly God had dealt with them in grace, in making them part of that which He deigns to call His habitation. Such was a privilege of those formerly Gentiles, far surpassing anything which they could have enjoyed as proselytes at Jerusalem. This too was the privilege of the believing remnant of the Jews, to which their fellow-countrymen, unless converted before the rapture of the saints, must ever remain strangers. It is, it must be, a privilege of a very high order to form part of the habitation of God upon earth by the Spirit.

C. E. S.

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints (Ephes. vi. 18).

THE POWER OF A LITTLE TRUTH.

“I desire to know the *power* of a little truth, rather, far rather, than to increase the *stock* of truths.”

This, beloved, is surely a “desire” which it would be profitable for us all to have, and to know the accomplishment of in our experience.

There is great danger in these days, of abundant information, of gathering mere *geological* specimens of truth, if I may so express it, and having a fine *stock* of them in our heads, instead of having them in our hearts, in the power of the unction from the Holy One, teaching us in such a way, as to humble us, and fill us with real knowledge of our blessed Lord Jesus.

Oh my soul! dost thou really know in the grace and power of the Holy Ghost, the truths which thou hast learned?—*Extract.*

LUST.

“Lust” is the stretching forth the hand to take something for *self*. If God say take, it is no lust to take. But, if the very crown prepared by God for you were there, and you took it unbidden by Him, it would be lust. God has sheltered us in Christ; “walk in the Spirit,” then, “and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” Lust is the very essence of the world. “Lo, I come to do *Thy* will,” was Christ’s way. Wherever there is a “Thus saith the Lord,” though it be even going to the stake, you will find a joy, a calmness which you will never find in stolen waters taken for yourself. A path utterly unblamable may be pursued, and yet God may say, I did not put you there; and this comes in to interfere with the sustenance of quiet peace in the heart. Is it with me, “Lord, what wouldst Thou have me to do?” “Lo, I come to do Thy will?” recognizing obedience to God as the one great thing.

G. V. W.

OUR HOPE.

Col. i.

Immediately connected with God's thoughts for us, is this subject of our hope; mainly so indeed, even more than faith. Faith receives the word of what has been done on the cross, and the result is peace, "being justified by faith." But hope takes hold upon that *to* which we are saved. The legal heart of the many has put the salvation of the soul at the end and in heaven, instead of the beginning; and hence the hope is made to be that. But this makes all confusion that is given in the word of God. Every exhortation will then be understood as having salvation for its end, and the infinitely deep thoughts of sonship, worship, fellowship with the Father and the Son, and of son-service and abounding in joyfulness, will be lost entirely. In fact, it displaces everything. Prayer is made to be for salvation, and to be mainly for self, and the assembling together for instruction or worship, but means of getting our souls secure, and therefore to take the name of "working."

How simple all becomes when faith gets its right object and result, the work of Christ on the cross, bringing eternal life and the salvation of the soul *now*. In Christ Jesus we are brought into a place of favor, wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

In the epistle to the Colossians the hope is very distinctly set forth. Having known of their faith and love, which were active, the former holding on to the work of Christ in the past, and the latter exercised in behalf of all the saints, thanks are given to God "for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel." This is that inheritance for which we are already made fit to be partakers, in *ver.* 12. It is there characterized as by the Father, as belonging to the saints, and in the light, as distinctly and dispensa-

tionally the prospect of the present saints, and connected with the kingdom of God's own Son. We are already translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love because we are linked with the King, to be manifested in the glory with Him.

This then is what is spoken of in Rom. v. 2, as our rejoicing in the hope of the glory, where the distinction is made between *faith* by which we are justified, and have *peace*, and *hope* which looks forward to the glory of God. And *love* which completes the trinity of christian characteristics is spoken of as shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given unto us (ver. 5).

In 1 Thess. i. 3, faith and love wrought in action—the work of faith and labor of love—while hope gave patient endurance. If we know our calling on high, to the glory, we shall understand that hope definitely is occupied with that. It is not *a* hope, as though one among many, which might settle on things here. It is *the* hope, the one expectation of that unto which we are called, and chosen and set apart. To have heaven, excludes the world. To have this inheritance connected with Christ when He comes, involves not having the earth as it is now. We gladly spurn it all, awaiting our time of reigning with Him. Indeed, to have things *with* Him, makes the grand difference.

He is now sitting at the right hand of the Father expecting, till all evil be put down here; so He is not now occupying this scene at all. So we sit with Him and wait. Meanwhile we patiently endure what of tribulation is here, because we are sure of what is coming. This is simple enough, and the matter has only become obscure and powerless by the failure in the statement of what faith has really received—the salvation of the soul as a present thing, "Giving thanks unto the Father who *has* made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." So much is eternally assured; now for the in-

heritance. That is to come, and He has wrought us for the self-same thing, and given us the earnest of the Spirit.

Thus then the Colossians, and we, too, are established as to the past, *i. e.*, salvation of the soul, and then spoken to of the hope, which is to form the life and keep them out of ecclesiastical and moral mischief here.

And how is it done? By presenting the risen One in all His intrinsic excellencies and His acquired glories, the image of the invisible God, and the head of creation, and of the church which is His body. All these pertain to the future. The church is only being formed now; it is to be manifested hereafter. The headship of creation is to be taken then, and we with Him the New Man—Christ. All fulness was pleased to dwell in Him, and all things are to be reconciled to this fulness. A wonderful thought, indeed, that all things are to be brought to God as fully disclosed, according to all that He is, on the new ground of redemption through the blood of the cross. And *we are already reconciled* and only waiting to be presented holy and all glorious in His sight.

This is of immense practical force, as attention and adhesion to this hope is to keep us that we be unblamable and unreprouable in His sight when we shall be presented to Him. In other words, there is no other way of walking without incurring rebuke from Him, than by knowing the peculiar purpose of His love in calling us and saving us, and living in the power of it all the time.

Surely this is of moment to us who are saved. Making efforts to give peace to conscience, or great activity in a thousand things and ways, will not meet His mind. All must proceed from the glory, and be in accordance with our hope. God is not now simply demanding moral conduct in the world, but vastly more; He is seeking worshippers to be in the holiest, fellows for His Son, sons for the glory, and the con-

duct is to be spiritual, according to the tone of heaven, now. The moral code would not do for heaven. Surely there must be vastly higher things than that. A man may be a very good Jew and a very poor Christian, as was Paul, who, as touching the righteousness that is by the law, was blameless. But a new thing came in, a new principle and a new code. He had seen and known Christ in the glory; then all things of mere moral and religious life were loss compared with that. He must win Christ, he must know Him completely, he must apprehend that for which he was apprehended of Christ.

It is minding earthly things, not to walk as he walked. It is falling below the position of fellowship with the Father and the Son, to be thinking of or trying to be good down here morally as a standard or an end. We are to be all this necessarily, but it is by being heavenly and ready for the glory by being in commerce with it. We may be anything but good here in the estimation of men, may be despised and surely will be sufferers, if we walk as citizens of heaven, as Christ who was from heaven, the man approved of God, was always counted an evil doer and as having a devil. And *we are as He is*, and so should walk as He walked, separate not only from sin, but sinners—having no link with the world.

And now let us look for a moment at the tone and volume of the prayer for us having such a hope even while walking here, in *ver.* 9–14. The first thing is that we “might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, that we might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.” Without the knowledge of His will in saving us for the glory with His Son in heaven, there can be no heavenly walk. “Worthy of the Lord” is a high standard, involving the name of Christ as the one risen and having full authority, as in heaven, the new man dominating all things in us according to that place and scene.

Then comes "being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God." Now, does the "work" that so many speak of, tend to increase in us the knowledge of God? How often is it done apart from Himself, out of His presence. This is higher culture than getting "the knowledge of His will," it is knowing *Himself*. It comes from practically acting in the knowledge of His will, both in walk and fruitfulness. How can we know God except by being with Him? And if we have not taken His word as to why He saved us at all, and where our place is, how have we yet the first syllable of the heavenly things to learn, and the first glimpse of His face to see! This is not denying the salvation of the soul, of course; but we must know that being secure, is secure for something, and that something is to meet His heart which is set on us, and give Him the joy of communion with us in His own infinite things.

But another wonderful petition is that we may be "strengthened with all might according to the *power of His glory*, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." That glory yonder to which I am bound and of which I am a native now, is to be so wrought in my heart as to be the power holding me up to suffer and be patient, and full of joy! In "Hebrews" we have the hope as an anchor cast within the veil, the very presence of God, holding us there and keeping us perpetual worshippers; as the flukes of an anchor grasp the rock and hold the vessel just where the anchor is. Here the power of His glory holds us up and becomes our might. What a thought! God counts that we shall have need of nothing short of *that*, to keep us patient and joyful here. Are we letting this have its power? Are we finding that our hearts have altogether gone over there into the presence of His own delights, into the grandeur of His own thoughts, His occupations? He has raised up His Son. His thoughts are on Him and for Him, looking onward to the heading up of all things in Him. He is

not thinking of nor liking anything here; are you? Our hope takes us up and onward to all that is of God.

It is not the patience He begets, that is content with things here, that makes me part and parcel of the world. Instead of the things here making me patient it must be the things there, of which I know I am partner, and they are waiting for me to be there before entering upon the reality of all for which I was saved.

In fine, then, our hope is just what Christ our Lord's as man, is, for which He is waiting. And that is the revelation of the kingdom of glory, of heaven and earth purged and united in, and under, Him. All His occupation is specially and only for "His own which are in the world," but who in spirit are out of the world, and not of it, at all. And we wait till He takes to Himself His great power, that we may reign with Him. We await the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is a principle of essential importance as showing our distinct and separate place. Those who are satisfied with the world and its prospects of improvement, are altogether out of God's mind and order. We await His Son from heaven who is Himself "our hope" (1 Tim. i. 1).

May these things get a grip and a grasp of us, and hold our course more and more steadily according to His purpose and grace, that we know and express practically that we have really died and our life is hid with Christ in God. In the words of another, "may the Lord give us *really*, and not only *professedly*, to be found walking (not like mere devout Jews, but) in the full enjoyment of an accomplished redemption, a rent veil, a revealed God, a risen, returning, and expected Christ, a purged conscience, a given Spirit, a completed Word, and an exclusively heavenly calling; and thus shall be assuredly be guided into all truth."

SIMPLE PAPERS ON THE CHURCH OF
GOD. III.

ITS PRESENT RELATION TO GOD.

This habitation, however, is also called God's *house*. Now, though to some, the distinction between habitation and house may seem a trivial one, it is none the less real. A house is a habitation, but a habitation need not be a house. And though the habitation of God is said to be built, and the assembly at Corinth is called God's building (*ὀικοδομή*), it is nevertheless true that where scripture uses the term house (*οἶκος*) with reference to the assembly of God, the context suggests distinctive teaching in connexion with it. God's habitation is treated of by the Apostle Paul when dwelling on the privileges of those who formed part of it. Of God's house he writes, when reminding his readers of their responsibility in connexion with it; thus, addressing the Hebrews, he says to them, "Whose house" (God's house) "are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. iii. 6). They would prove by steadfastness that they really were part of God's house. So Peter, reminding his readers that judgment must begin at the house of God (1 Pet. iv. 17), adds, "And if it first begin at us," &c.

Again, addressing Timothy, Paul writes to his child in the faith, to tell him how to behave himself in God's house, which is the assembly of the living God (1 Tim. iii. 15).

The rules, the regulations for a house are laid down by the Master, the owner of it. And since the assembly is God's house, not man's, Timothy was to learn how to conduct himself in it. Every one would reckon it a monstrous intrusion for another person to set about the regulating of a house, unless distinctly authorized by the master to do it. Men would naturally resent such an action on the part of their fellows, and no plea on the ground of taste or judg

ment would avail against their condemnation for arrogating to themselves a position and authority in a house which did not belong to them. The master, the owner, all would agree, and not a stranger, nor even an inmate, is the fitting person to say how his house is to be conducted. Shall men then be allowed their right in such a matter, and God be denied His? Now has not this been practically the case in christendom? Christians, and in some cases those not even converted, have taken upon themselves, with the sanction of the community at large, to make rules and regulations for a house, of which, if converted, they certainly form part, but which belongs to another, even to God. And such practices are openly justified, and commended as fitting and proper. Once, however, let the force of the term "God's house" sink into the heart, and the impropriety as well as incongruity of men drawing up rules for the guidance of that house will be fully apparent. Timothy even, apostolic delegate as he was, holding thereby a position, which, Titus excepted, no one else that we know of was ever called to occupy, could not make any rules himself, but received them from the apostle. Timothy surely never dreamed, the apostle never countenanced the idea of any man, or any company of men, laying down rules formed in their wisdom for the orderly government of God's house. Should not the very term "God's house" suggest to each one the propriety of learning from the Word what are God's rules for its guidance and government?

But this house is also called God's *temple*, the shrine, as it were, of the Deity who dwells in it. Twice in the New Testament do we meet with this designation, and both times it is used by the apostle Paul when writing to the same company of christians, those gathered unto the name of the Lord Jesus Christ at Corinth. The context helps us here also to determine the import of the term, and the reason of its selection. In the first epistle (iii. 16) when warn-

ing teachers to beware of what they were teaching, he writes to the whole assembly there gathered; "Know ye not that ye are God's temple, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, such (*οἴκους*, not which) ye are." With the consciousness that the assembly was God's temple could they be indifferent to the introduction of false doctrine? Should any, too, remembering this character of the assembly, be careless as to the doctrines they taught? The temple would remind all of the holy character of the assembly, and therefore of the holiness which befitted it. Again, when speaking of the general company of God's saints on earth, and not of the local assembly at Corinth, the same apostle reminds them that christians should be separate from evil and from communion with unbelievers, on the ground that believers in the aggregate are the living God's temple, who will dwell in them and walk in them (2 Cor. vi. 16). One sees at a glance that there is a force and a fitness in the term temple used in this connexion of thought, which no other word could so well set forth. Gentiles as well as Jews knew what the word temple would imply.

Here another thing should be pointed out. When the apostle writes of God's habitation, or of God's house, he knows of but one such upon earth. Where then can it be found? For it is no ideal thing, no phantom, since Timothy was to know how to behave himself in it. But where is it? Jerusalem cannot produce it; St. Peter's at Rome cannot lay claim to be it. No cathedral, no building of wood, brick, iron or stone is entitled to this appellation. God does not dwell in any such at present. He dwells in His own habitation, which in Christ Jesus He has made for Himself by the Spirit. Understanding this, we have to correct our thoughts, and to change perhaps our language, which is the index to our thoughts; for we cannot go now to God's house as those of old did, and

as saints will by and by (Ps. cxxii). We, indeed, who believe, form part of it. If, however, we talk of going to God's house, when we mean that we are about to assemble ourselves with God's saints for worship, or for prayer, do we not by our language show that we have lost the right thought of what His house really is? We are attaching to a building, or a locality a term, which now belongs only to a peculiar company of people upon earth. Distinctive christian teaching is virtually set aside or ignored as long as such language is accepted as correct. It was correct language for a Jew. It will be correct language for all who worship Jehovah by and by (Micah iv. 2). But scriptural language is not of necessity, christian language, though christian language—understanding by that what the bible authorizes—must ever be scriptural, if real.

As regards the terms "temple" and "assembly," the usage of scripture is different. They are applied to the local gathering, as well as to the general company of christians upon earth. (See 1 Cor. iii. 16 ; 2 Cor. vi. 16, for the application of the term temple ; and 1 Cor. i. 1, 2 ; Acts xx. 28, for the use of the term church or assembly). Nor are these the only senses in which these words are used ; for both the one and the other are employed when the true church universal is the subject in hand (Eph. i. 22 ; ii. 21). To a consideration of the word *assembly* let us now turn.

By God's assembly on earth is to be understood that company of people, which, professedly at least, has been gathered out from the rest of mankind unto Him. At first it was, as in glory it will really be, composed only of true christians ; for such alone at first professed to be believers on the Lord Jesus Christ. After a time the assembly of God included others besides real believers, but none who did not profess to be christians. Now, wherever the truth has spread, members of the assembly are to be found.

And in every place where a few souls professedly own the Lord Jesus Christ, there an assembly is regarded as existing. It may be like that in Laodicea, in which mere profession was the prevailing characteristic. It may be like that in Philadelphia, where faithfulness to Christ was a marked feature of it. But whatever may be the spiritual condition of the company locally gathered, if professedly called out to God, it is regarded in the word as God's assembly in that locality and has responsibilities of no mean order in consequence. How little is this understood by those who only outwardly bear the name of Christ! Profession, of course, should be true; but profession of itself entails responsibility, and all who bear the name of Christ by profession declare that they are members of the assembly of God.

Dismissing at present from our consideration of the subject the assembly as it will be perfect in glory, in which none but real christians will be found, let us confine our attention to the assembly as viewed upon earth at any one time, whether in its local or general aspect. Of God's assembly we read in the word, and by that we are reminded of a company of people as such, distinguished from every other assembly upon earth. In what varied lights God's assembly is seen. If those who composed it were before the apostle's mind, he could write of the assembly of the Thessalonians (1 Thess. i. 1), or the assemblies of the nations. If the country in which such gatherings were to be expressed, he makes mention of the assemblies of Galatia or of Asia (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 19). If St. Paul was thinking of the localities in which different companies met, he writes of the church, or assembly, in the house of Nymphas (Col. iv. 15), Philémon (Phil. 2), or Aquila (Rom. xvi. 5). When he thought of the spiritual condition of the members he writes of the assemblies of the saints (1 Cor. xiv. 33). Viewing the churches in relation to Christ, Paul describes them as assemblies of Christ (Rom. xvi. 16).

When remembering to whom the church belonged, he styles it the assembly of God. And if its security is uppermost in his mind, he can write of it as in God the Father (1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1). A glance at these different ways of describing it shows this clearly, that men's thoughts about it are not all drawn from scripture. They talk of a national church and of local churches. In scripture we meet with assemblies of a country, and the assembly or church in a town.

The assembly of God! What a thought it gives us! God connecting Himself with a company of people on earth who had need, and professedly at least acknowledged it, of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And now we would ask, How does this term, "assembly of God" strike on the ear, or impress the mind of those who hear or read about it? There was one once who evidently felt in no light way its force. Paul has left on record in the first epistle to the Corinthians what it was to him; for writing of his grievous sin before his conversion he states that he persecuted the assembly of God. Saints they were. Believers on the Lord Jesus such had proved themselves to be. Yet he does not term them saints or believers, but writes of the assembly of God, thereby exposing his former undisguised and unmitigated hostility to the company gathered unto God (1 Cor. xv. 9). Could he have expressed in a stronger way what he did in mistaken zeal for God? How far wrong must he have been when he was a persecutor of the assembly of the living God! Again, writing to the Corinthians to expose the grossness of their conduct at the Lord's supper, he pertinently asks them, Would they despise the assembly of God? (1 Cor. xi. 22). An answer to such a question should surely be prompt, and unhesitating. Could any one who professed to serve God despise His assembly? To a question so pointed, so searching, surely but one answer could be

given. How the need there was for such a question shows of what our wretched hearts are capable.

In conclusion, "habitation of God" tells us of our privilege; "house of God" reminds us of responsibilities; "temple of God" warns us of its holy character; "assembly of God" proclaims to whom it has been, professedly at least, gathered out. C. E. S.

DEAD OR ALIVE—WHICH ?

"How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" (Rom. vi. 2).

"If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" (Col. ii. 20).

"I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. ii. 20).

Death makes great changes; it levels all distinctions, it severs all relationships, it ends all plans. None are exempt from it; all must, sooner or later, pass through it. The difference between the state of the unbeliever and the believer in this is, the former has yet to die, the latter is dead already. He has met his death in the cross of Christ; there his existence as a man, as a child of the first Adam ended.

The men in the ship "rowed hard to bring it to the land, but they could not, for the sea wrought and was tempestuous against them" (Jonah i. 13). It was God's purpose to bring Jonah to land but not in that way. He will bring him through death. Jonah had accepted the sentence of death, he owned he deserved it (12), but he was yet to pass through it experimentally. So all "rowing hard" to bring the ship to land will not do, God must have him realize what death is, and then, when he has reached the bottom of himself, when he has found out that some power outside of self must deliver him, He brings him to land at once (ii. 9, 10). And thus with the believer. God's purpose in arresting him in his flight from His presence, is to bring him to "the land" (Canaan—heavenly places), but he is not going to get there by his own

efforts, he is not going to fight his way there, nor get there by striving, but by death. The sinner must meet his doom, he can only enter heaven in the new man, the second Man—Christ. *In Him* he is there already, he has passed through the water of death in the cross, and is now “risen with Christ.” This is true of every believer, but God would have him find it out himself in a practical way. Like Jonah, he must go down to the depths and find out that “Salvation is of the Lord;” vows and promises to pay what we have vowed will not deliver. Thus, “our old man is crucified with Christ,” is God’s truth. It is the statement of a certain blessed fact regarding the believer’s position. But because this is so we are told to “reckon” ourselves to be “dead indeed unto sin.” And one must learn with the “I” of Rom. vii., that there is no power in “I” either to abstain from what “I” know to be wrong, or to do what “I” know to be right, before he will despair of self and find the power for walk according to God’s mind in the new life he has in Christ Jesus. Here then we find the secret of power in a double way: First, in the discovery that the “old man is *corrupt* (not sick, but rotten), according to the deceitful lusts,” and therefore incapable of recovery, reckoned by God, crucified in the cross of Jesus, and reckoned there by faith also. Second, in faith laying hold of the blessed reality of an actual *new creation* in the soul, *God’s* workmanship, not ours, which necessarily leads one to walk in the good works which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them, the creation and the walk suited to that creation being alike His workmanship.

A young convert in bidding farewell to an evangelist through whose preaching he had found peace, expressed his fears as to not being able to walk as a christian should, to continue, &c. Said the evangelist, “Do you think you could get along if I was to stay here and be with you all the time?” “Oh, yes,”

he was sure he could. "Well," replied the servant of God, "you think you could get along if you had a poor, sinful man like yourself with you, and yet you have a Mighty One with you all the time, never leaving you, 'Christ in you, the hope of glory!'" This was just the way that Paul encouraged the saints of Philippi. "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." There was no need then for them to be cast down, because their beloved Paul who had so cared for them was away, for, after all, it was *God* who worked in them; both the "will," the desire to do things pleasing to Him, and the power "to do" were alike of Himself. Therefore, cast upon Him for everything, He would enable them to "work out" to its termination, to bear fruit suitable to that salvation that He had already given them.

Let this truth then, beloved, have its weight with us; there is no *necessity* that we sin. "I cannot help it," says one, "sin seems a law of my existence." But you do not exist—you have died. There is no power in "I" to keep from sin a single movement, but there is in Christ, and every failure (and alas! how much we all fail,) from willing and doing His good pleasure comes from lack of dependence on Him for power.

The same cross that ends one's existence as a sinner, necessarily severs also one's connexion with the world. "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world (the elements, or rudiments, or principles of the world's religion), why, *as though living in the world*, are ye subject to ordinances (touch not, taste not, handle not; which all are to perish with the using); after the commandments and doctrines of men?" Ordinances may very well suit a live man, but who would think of saying to a

dead man, "Touch not, taste not, handle not?" Man's religion reckons man alive in the flesh, to have some good principle in him, only needing to be restrained in certain things. Whereas christianity is—that the old creation is worthless, power only is found in knowing the old man as dead, and an entire new life found in Christ. Religion or ritualism (whatever you may call it, for man's religion is ritualism and all ritualism is religion—ordinances for limiting the flesh—prescribed modes of dress just as much as altar and incense,) denies this entirely. As soon then as one has received this blessed truth of being "dead with Christ," he ceases to be religious. The "touch not, taste not, handle not" ordinances of the world can have no voice for him, for death has taken him out of the world's jurisdiction; a dead man does not need those fetters, he is still enough without them. You say, "But we are all prone to evil still." True, but to *fetter* the old man is not to reckon him dead, in fact you do not believe he is dead. Faith takes God's word for it, reckons him dead, and will not listen to anything that is based on his being alive. Many there are that "get religion" without getting Christ, but when one has got Christ, one has no need of religion. *Religion's* object is to help *a man* to get to heaven (it utterly fails, of course, but that is its object); he who receives Christ by faith is there already, he *has* heaven as a starting point, he is not there *as a man*, but he is there in the new man, Christ. Further, man's religion is negative, it tells you what not to do, "Touch not," &c., but gives no power to walk righteously. On the contrary, the gospel of grace by delivering a man from self entirely and giving him a life that is already beyond death, sends him forth in the activities of grace (the love of Christ in his soul) to deliver others. Passed from death to life himself, in the midst of death he is in life, and seeks not to better men, but to deliver them entirely from the world (religious and otherwise) by the truth of the cross and resurrection

of Christ. As to power to abstain from evil and to walk in good when delivered, *Christ* is the power. I very much like the answer given as to this by a man whom the truth had delivered from the drunkard's sins. He said that "he did not think Christ in a man would drink whisky."

But a dead man is out of other things of the world besides its religion. The Lord Jesus Christ "gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. i. 4). This world is an evil one in God's estimation, whatever it may be in man's, and the death of Christ does in principle, and should in practice, deliver us entirely from it in every form. Conversing on this a few days since, one said that he thought it his duty as a christian to vote. I replied that, *as a christian*, he had no right to vote, *his citizenship* was in heaven. He might vote as a man and as a citizen, but if he did so it would be under false colors, for he was neither; he would be practically denying that he is "dead with Christ." A dead man has no right to vote, nor would he want to vote. But he did not see it, he thought it his duty to vote for a good christian man—if my friend here, Mr. M., should run for an office. But Mr. M. interrupted with, "You would not vote for a dead man, would you? A dead man cannot run for an office."

Thus this truth has many practical bearings. It forbids all association with the world in any form, its societies, lodges, institutions, &c., and when the truth is received in the heart desire for mixture with the world is taken away. But it is regarding these things especially that the doctrine of the cross is so unpopular. There are many still professing christians, of whom Paul spoke, weeping, who are "the enemies of the cross of Christ." The *cross* was disliked, the path of crucifixion to the world was not accepted. "Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, *who mind earthly things*." For our conversation (*citizenship*) is

in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Beloved! are we not only reckoning ourselves dead to the world, but are we also manifesting that our citizenship is in heaven, is *where He is*, and we wait *for Him*?

But there is a further, and yet deeper and more soul-searching application of the cross as to the spring, the motive, the will of *any* action. “I am crucified with Christ.” That was not Paul’s experience, but a truth, a fact. But Paul made it his experience (though not unfailingly) and we must do the same. “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” Self must not be allowed, our own wills must be denied. The cross has a wonderful soul-delivering power here. Trying to serve two masters is distressing work; let self go, and serve but one. All that is of one’s self, however good and fair it may seem, is not to be the motive power. The spring of action must be Christ, not self. How simple all this becomes when this is seen and received! It is no longer what suits me or what I think. He is the one to be suited, His are the thoughts to be acted on, His word, not our wisdom, the guide. Two opponents in a small place make great conflict, but when one takes the place of death, conflict ceases. If our will is in exercise there cannot be peace; let self go, let the Lord have His way (which will surely be our good) and peace and rest fill the heart. This blessed truth, then, by taking away the self we are so apt to trust in, becomes a great means of strength. If self is dead, all power must come from Christ.

“We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God that raises the dead.” We say we feel weak. *Weak? you are dead.* A dead man has *no* strength. So let not our weakness discourage us, we cannot feel as weak as we are. The more we realize our utter weak-

ness, the more we are cast upon Him who can bring life out of death. It is our strength, our self-confidence, not our weakness, that is in the way. Faith can glory in weakness, for she then counts entirely upon God's power, and the more this is realized the more confidence there is of triumph.

Dead to sin, dead to the world, dead to self, let us realize that we live, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Alas! how much we hinder the development of that life. So often alive when we should be dead, and dead when we should be alive!

" We're a pilgrim band in a stranger land,
 Who are marching from Calvary ;
 Where the wondrous cross, with its gain and loss,
 Is the sum of our history.
 There we *lost* our stand in a death-doomed land,
 As children of wrath by the fall,
 There we *gained* a place as heirs of grace,
 At the feast in the heavenly hall.

" We read of our guilt in the blood that was spilt,
 And we weep o'er the crimson flow ;
 But we joy in the grace of the unveiled face,
 Of a Father-God here below.
 And as sons of God, redeemed by blood,
 We hasten from Egypt away ;
 We cross the sand to the pleasant land,
 And the joys of an endless day."

C. H. B.

THE ADVOCACY OF CHRIST.

The question often arises in the minds of the Lord's people, especially of those who are young in the faith, "What is to be done with the sins we commit after we have been saved?" Many a child of God has said, "I know that I have believed in Christ, and see that my sins were put away in His blood; but what troubles me is, the sins I commit *now*; and what am I to do with them?" The divine answer to this question is found in 1 John ii. 1, 2, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ

the righteous;" and in chap. i. 9. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This is clearly written to believers; for the apostle addresses them as "*my children*;" that is, those who have been born of God. And again, "We have an advocate with the Father;" and it is only those who are born again who can truly call God their Father. In one sense every believer has the forgiveness of *all* his sins; as in chap. ii. 12, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake." It is very important to distinguish between our sins being once and for all put away by the "one sacrifice" on the cross, and the Father forgiving a child when he has sinned. There are two things we need in order to be happy in God's presence—the forgiveness of sins, and a new life and nature. You find these two in chap. iv. 9, 10. In verse 9, "God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (*eternal life*); and in verse 10, "To be the propitiation for our sins" (*forgiveness of sins*).

Every one is born into this world at a distance from God, ignorant of Him, and with a corrupt, fallen nature, which is enmity against Him; "dead in trespasses and sins," without a spark of life or desire Godward; as we find in Romans iii. 11, "There is none that seeketh after God." But God saw us in this dreadful condition, with nothing but death and eternal judgment before us, and loved us, "and sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." And we, through the mighty energy of the Holy Ghost, are born again, and get eternal life; as in John i. 12, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were *born*, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;" so that those who have received Christ, and have truly believed in Him, can say on the

authority of scripture, that they are "sons of God," and born of Him. So now we have a life and nature that loves God, and delights in Him, and can have "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1. John i. 3); whereas the old Adam life has no communion with God whatever. What a wondrous word that is, "Fellowship" (or communion) "with the Father, and with His Son!" What does fellowship or communion mean? Common thoughts, joys, and interests. Thus we now have a nature which can enjoy God, which will be our joy throughout eternity; and in proportion as we enjoy this communion *now* our joy is full (ver. 4.) The ground of our peace depends upon the death and resurrection of Christ, and, thank God, can never alter; but joy depends upon our walk, and how far we are living in communion with the "Father, and His Son Jesus Christ."

Fellowship with the Father! One might well say, "How could such poor feeble things as we are have fellowship (communion or common thoughts) with the Father and with His Son?" Suppose you are enjoying Christ, and you get a glimpse of His glory and perfection, and you delight in Him; well, the Father delights in Him too, so that through grace you have common thoughts with the Father about the Son, only, of course, in far different measure. And again, "no one knows who the Father is save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" (Matt. xi. 27.) If Christ reveals the Father in all His love to your soul, and then says, "My Father is now your Father," (as in John xx. 17), you have common thoughts with the Son about the Father, as far as you are able to enter into it.

Oh, if all christians knew more of this communion, which is our highest privilege, how blessed they would find it! Peace which was made by the blood of His cross, cannot alter, our standing in Christ, because it does not depend upon us, but on the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus; but our communion

and joy may be broken by the merest trifle, even a foolish thought; and if we sin, it is as though a cloud came between us and the sun; the sun remains unchanged, but we do not feel its rays. The advocacy of Christ is to restore our souls when this communion has been interrupted by our sin, not to put the sin away: that was done on the cross. We read in chap. ii. 1, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." The common thought is, that when we have *confessed* our sin, Christ goes to God and intercedes, and the sin is passed over. It does not, however, say, "If any man *confess* his sin," but, "If any man sin." There is a child of God—born again, his sins once and for all put away, and he himself, "made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light;" he has fallen into a sin, and that is not consistent with being a saint of God, and by that sin, although he has not ceased to be a child of God, his communion has been interrupted, and he has lost his joy. Well, "we have an advocate with the Father." Advocate means, one who undertakes the cause of another, one who manages our affairs. And who is the "advocate," the one who manages our affairs with the Father? No less a person than "Jesus Christ *the righteous*;" not "the loving or merciful one," as we might be inclined to think, "but the *righteous*." This is very blessed; for if he is there in righteousness before God, that is the proof that our sins are all gone for ever; for He took them on Him on the cross, and now He is before God without them, and He Himself is our unchanging righteousness there.

He is also "the propitiation for our sins" (chap. ii. 2); that is, God is satisfied about our sins when Christ "bore them in his own body on the tree." Thus, when a child of God sins, and communion has been interrupted, He in there is the presence of God our Father, and prays about us, and the consequence is, that the word of God is brought home to our conscience by the power of the Spirit, and we are made to

feel our sin and confess it to God our Father; and we have the word in chap. i. 9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Mark the expression, "faithful and just;" not "loving and merciful," and why? Suppose a child of God has sinned, Christ is before the Father, and says, so to speak, "I bore that sin in my own body on the cross, and I am here in righteousness to represent that child of God." So God is faithful and just to the work and person of Christ to forgive us our sins, because the work of Christ put them all away, and He Himself is our righteousness before God. But if when we sinned Christ had not been to the Father about us, we should never have confessed at all, but have got further and further away from the Lord. How blessed it is to think of the Lord's unchanging love and service to us! "He loved us, and gave Himself for us!" and put away all our sins; and though now He is away, and we are left in this evil world, His love is still the same, and when we sin and get away from Him in our souls, He restores us to the communion we had lost.

"My soul He doth restore
 Whene'er I go astray;
 He makes my cup of joy run o'er
 From day to day."

So now the answer is simple as to what a child of God is to do with his sins: we are to confess them to God our Father. But how blessed to know when we have sinned, and confess, that Christ has already been to the Father about us, and that we have the word, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." So that if we have truly confessed and judged the sin, we ought to believe on the authority of the word that we have forgiveness. Real confession is not merely a general confession of sins at the close of the day; that would be no *real* confession at all; but every time a sin is on our conscience it should be judged and confessed, and

not only to judge ourselves for an act of sin, but for the state of soul we were in at the time, which is a far deeper thing; for if we had been in communion with the Lord, we should not have committed it all; for, depend upon it, a child of God does not fall into positive sin when in communion with the Lord; but there has been first a getting away from Him. But what a blessed privilege, when we have sinned, to be able to go to God our Father, and confess it all out to Him; not as a sinner to get salvation, or to get converted again, but as a child to a Father who loves us perfectly, but at the same time is God who is "*Light*," and cannot have fellowship with anything that is evil or inconsistent with that light.

May you and I, dear reader, know more what it is to have "fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ," that our "joy may be full," till we enter that blessed home "where there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life," where there will be no need of "an advocate with the Father," because there will be no sin, and we shall be "holy and without blame, before God in love." The world, the flesh, and the devil, and everything that hindered our communion here, gone for ever; and to know throughout eternity what uninterrupted communion means in everlasting glory!

F. K.

THE WAY OF CAIN, AND THE WAY OF GOD.

Man, as a respectable citizen of the world, may be as separated from God as a murderer. "The remnant of them," as the parable speaks, "took his servants and slew them." The remnant! a word which lets us know that the refusers of the supper were of *one* class with those who shed the blood of the innocent. The ease and indifference with which Cain

could turn his back upon the Lord, and upon the recollection of his brother's blood, is dreadful. He got a promise of security, and that was all he cared for. And quickly, under his hand, accommodations and delights of all sorts fill the scene. In some sense this is still more shocking; this exceeds. But is not this "the course of the world?" Was it not man that slew Jesus? Does not the guilt of that deed lie at every man's door? And what is the course of the world but the ease and indifference of Cain in this highest state of guilt?

The earth has borne the cross of Christ; and yet man can busy himself with garnishing and furnishing it, and making life in it convenient and pleasurable. This is shocking when we look at it in full divine light. A respectable citizen of the world Cain was, but all the while a heartless forgetter of the sorrows of Abel. His ease and respectability is the blackest feature of his history. He went away as soon as he got a promise of security; and that promise he uses, not to soften his heart and overwhelm him with convictions of all that had happened, but as giving him full occasion to indulge and magnify himself. We read in the New Testament of "the way of Cain." It may be, nay, it is, run by others (Jude 11). And what a way does this chapter show it to be! He was an infidel, or a man of his own religion, not obedient in faith to God's revelation. He practised the works of the liar and the murderer. He hated the light. He was proof against God's word in mercy and in warning. He cares nothing for the presence of God which his sin had forfeited, or for the sorrow of his brother which his hand had inflicted. And, as such an one, he can take pains to make himself happy and honorable in the very place which thus witnessed against him. Is this "the way of Cain?" Is this man still? Yes; and nature outlives a thousand restraints and improvements. For at the end of Christendom's career, it will even then be said of a generation, "They have gone in the way

of Cain." This is deeply solemn, beloved; had we but hearts to feel it. There is, however, a rescued, separated people. Seth's family are after another order altogether. They are not seen in cities furnished with accommodations and pleasures, apart, like Cain, "from the presence of the Lord;" but as the household of God, separated from the world that lay in the wicked one, to the faith and worship of His name. There is much, I believe, in their standing and testimony which has instruction for our souls. Like all else in these chapters, it is but short notices we get, but great things are to be found in them.

This family of Seth may generally be thus spoken of; they are strikingly opposed to the way of Cain, and remarkably apprehensive of the way of God. I speak not here again of their *faith*, but of their *standing* and *testimony*. The Lord had set a mark on Cain that no one finding him should slay him. He would not have the blood of Abel avenged. This we have already seen. The family of Seth are strikingly observant of this. No attempt, or anything like it, is made by them to answer the cry of innocent blood. They know that it is heard in the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth; but, under this word of God, they are deaf to it themselves. Vengeance does not belong to them. The harvest had not come. They were not reapers. In obedience they heard, not the cry of blood, but the voice of the Lord countermanding vengeance. And they suffer it. They take the wrong done to their brother, and are acceptable with God. The innocent blood is to remain unavenged. Its cry from the earth is not to be answered, at least for the present. *That* is enough to teach the saint his pilgrim heavenly calling. The family of Seth are therefore as pilgrims and strangers here, and all their habits are those of heavenly citizens. If the earth be not to be cleansed, the elect are to be strangers in it with a heavenly calling. Beautifully true to the mind of God this is. For this is the way of God; and it was apprehended by

these saints, more in the light and knowledge of His most perfect and beautiful ways than by many of us, beloved, who, in the fuller revelations of this present age, have been so much nourished and instructed. But it is not the much schooling we get, but the capacity which sits at the lesson. David wanted capacity for this same lesson, when he talked of building a house of cedars, a fixed habitation, for the Lord, while the land was still defiled with blood. But the Lord (may I say) would be, like the antedeluvian saints, a stranger on the earth, a dweller in tents, while blood was staining it; and that very night rebuked the purpose of the King of Israel. (1 Chron. xvii.) We have many exhibitions of this way of God in different forms of it. The Lord, for instance, would have no altar in Egypt, uncircumcised as that land was. He would not have a throne in the land (in the full glory of it) till the day of Solomon, when all was sanctified for His royal presence. Afterwards the glory was grieved away by the abominations which were done in the temple. The captives, in like spirit, hung their harps on the willows of the Euphrates; for how could they sing in a strange land, or let the songs of Zion be heard in Babylon?

Separation was the rule of the divine mind. Separation was holiness. Pollution demanded it, and faith rose at the bidding. And with all this, the Seth family, the household of God in earliest days—days before the flood—are in company. They are one in spirit with Jehovah Himself in Egypt, with the glory of the defiled temple, with the harps of the captives in Babylon, and with the Church of God in “this present evil world.”

J. G. B.

“He is not here!” I wait Him every hour;
 My soul would weary of His long delay,
 Save that, like perfume from a hidden flower,
 The fragrance of His spices cheers the way;
 Yet fills my heart with more desire to prove
 The fulness of Thy presence, Lord above!

WOMAN'S PLACE IN SERVICE.

Matt. xxvii. 55, 56, &c.

The part that women take in all this history is very instructive, especially to them. The activity of public service, that which may be called "work," belongs naturally to men (all that appertains to what is generally termed ministry), although women share a very precious activity in private. But there is another side of christian life, which is particularly theirs, and that is personal and loving devotedness to Christ. It is a woman, who anointed the Lord while the disciples murmured; women, who were at the cross, when all except John had forsaken Him; women who came to the sepulchre, and who were sent to announce the truth to the apostles, who had gone after all to their *own home*; women who ministered to the Lord's need. And indeed this goes further. Devotedness in service is, perhaps, the part of man; but the instinct of affection, that which enters more intimately into Christ's position, and is thus more immediately in connection with His sentiments, in closer communion with the sufferings of His heart—this is the part of women: assuredly a happy part. The activity of service for Christ puts man a little out of this position, at least if the christian is not watchful. Everything has, however, its place. I speak of that which is characteristic; for there are women who have served much, and men who have felt much. Note also here, what I believe I have remarked, that this clinging of heart to Jesus is the position where the communications of true knowledge are received. The first full gospel is announced to the poor woman that was a sinner, who washed His feet; the embalming for His death to Mary; our highest position to Mary Magdalene; the communion Peter desired to John who was in his bosom. And here the women have a large share.

J. N. D.

PHILIPPIANS.

Chapter i.

Philippi was the first city in Europe where the apostle Paul preached Christ. It was there he was carried by the ship after he had received the vision of the man of Macedonia imploring him to come over and help them. See Acts xvi. 9-12. There he waited till the Sabbath to get the mind of God as to his work. There he attended the Jewish women's meeting by the side of the river. There Lydia's heart was opened to hear the word of God. It was there also that he and Silas got persecuted, beaten and put into prison, for exposing Satan's wiles, and casting the devil out of a woman who brought great gain to her masters by her soothsayings. There the Philippian jailor who guarded the prison was converted, and baptized with his whole family. There the Philippian assembly was planted in weakness, and amid suffering and persecution, and Paul and Silas immediately after had to leave and to go to other places. See Acts xvi. 12 to end.

Two households seem to have composed the assembly at first, but though the apostle had to leave, yet these dear Philippian hearts were ever after continually knit to him the great instrument of their conversion, and they sent again and again money for his necessity, thus proving indeed that theirs was a faith which was not barren or unfruitful, but which worked by love, a love that had taken hold of their hearts, and produced in them a new nature, whose character was indeed love. This mutual love between the Philippians and Paul seems ever to have continued. Their love followed the apostle to his prison in Rome, and Epaphroditus, their messenger, was the means of conveying to him the proof of it. See chap. iv. 18.

It is very blessed to see in this epistle the yearnings of Christ among the early Christians, and in a day when those holy affections have grown cold and well nigh dried up among many, how sweet to be

brought back to the word of God and to hold in our hands a letter from the apostle Paul where these blessed affections of Christians are reproduced, so that our cold hearts may be warmed up by them. Divisions and worldliness in the church have well-nigh destroyed these affections. What can reproduce them but the apprehension over again of God the Father the source of all unity and fellowship (Eph. i. 3.) Christ the head and centre of it (Ephs. i. 19-23) and the Holy Ghost the bond of power and unity among the members of Christ one to the other (Eph. ii. 22. iv. 3-4). The Lord will then gather those who have come to the apprehension of these blessed truths, back toward Himself at the Lord's Table where the outward symbol of unity, the one loaf is exhibited (1. Cor. x. 16-17), and we shall there seek to walk together in love showing that love to every member of Christ's body wherever they are, only remembering that the real love is tested by our keeping His commandments. (2. John 5).

In Philippians i. we have before us Christ for life and service, as also fellowship with Him in that life and service and sufferings; in Phil. ii. we see Christ come down to the earth to die, as our pattern, and we are called to fellowship with His mind thus exhibited. In Phil. iii. we see Christ in glory as our object to view: and here we are called to fellowship with Paul, who is the great example as to this mind; a man of like passions to us. See chap. iii. 15-17. In chapter iv. we see Christ for joy and strength, and a man (Paul) lifted up above all circumstances through fellowship with Him in that strength.

The great subject, then, of the epistle is Christ put before us practically for our life and walk, and the secret of happy fellowship among saints is to be followers of Him, and of His servant Paul. It is the epistle, then, for our walk, the very highest kind of walk. As remarked by another, sin is not mentioned in the epistle, the flesh once, and then as good flesh and not bad

flesh. The man who is walking at a Philippian level is a man above sinning, at least habitually in practice, and above circumstances. Paul was in prison but could rejoice that the counsels of God in regard to His Christ were furthered thereby. Death stared him in the face, but he could say, to depart and be with Christ is far better, and truly such a stream of truth flowed out of that prison that has comforted and established the church through all the years since. It the same with Luther: the enemies headed by the Pope thought to kill him. He was in consequence shut up in the castle of Wartburg by his friends, but forth from that retreat flowed the long pen that the Elector of Saxony had seen in his dream, and spread the Gospel truth of justification by faith far and near. There also the German translation of the Bible went fast ahead which has brought life and liberty to the nation ever since.

The apostle joins himself with Timothy in his address to the Philippians—they were the servants of Jesus Christ. The Philippians are addressed as saints, or those set apart for God's use, as holy vessels in His sanctuary, separated from Jew and Gentile according to their position in Christ Jesus. For He was the true saint, God's separated man. There on high in God's heavenly sanctuary that golden and silver vessel shines, and it is in Him as partaking of the same life, nature and position, that Christians get their place as saints. It is the common place and title of all believers. In each assembly it was the apostolic custom to appoint elders and deacons, as those qualified to oversee, rule, and minister to the temporal needs of the flock. See 1 Tim. iii. Titus i. Acts xiv. Men with the necessary qualifications were chosen by the apostles to the offices. There were evidently several of these men in every assembly, as here at Philippi. What a different office to that of the present bishop of a diocese! One man over several assemblies instead of several bishops in one assembly. Elders and bishops

were evidently the same office. See Acts xx. 28. The Holy Ghost had made the Ephesian elders bishops of the flock. It was only when men began to usurp power in the church, that the title "bishop" began to be applied to the head man of the assembly, and he naturally began to be looked up to by all the country assemblies around. Thus the power of the bishop of Rome began.

But at Philippi and in most* of the primitive assemblies there were several bishops and deacons in one assembly—and they were by no means addressed apart from the whole body of saints, in fact they are put second here.

The apostle after saluting the saints with the usual salutation of grace and peace, bursts out in praise to God for his dear Philippians. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day till now. See chap. iv. 15, 16. They had shown their love and fellowship with him in the work from the very first, after his first memorable visit to them. Thus was the good work that God had begun in their souls, manifest by its fruits, and this encouraged the apostle to have hope in the reality of the work, which would assuredly be completed in the Philippians, by the faithfulness of God, at the day of Jesus Christ. Blessed confidence for the servant of Christ for his children in the faith!

It was just for him to think this of them all, because he had them in his heart,† inasmuch as in his bonds, as well as in the defence and confirmation of the gospel they were all partakers of the same grace. There was perfect fellowship between the apostle and

* I say most, for I do not read of any such men in the assembly at Coriuth.

† Or rather "Ye have me in your hearts," as the corrected versions give it. This would indicate more than personal regard; it would be valuing the apostle of "the mystery"—the church in a day when already many were slipping away from his truth, and God's ground, and would be all the more noteworthy, and precious to the apostle, and to the Holy Ghost.—(ED. S. W.)

the Philippians in life, service, and sufferings. How could he feel otherwise than encouraged on their behalf?

The love of Christ, expressed in ver. 8 by His "bowels," was burning in his heart toward them, and thus he prayed that their love, (fellowship again) might abound yet more, in knowledge and in all judgment, that they might try things that differed, so as to be sincere* and without offence, till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruit of righteousness, which was from Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. This shows how love needs to be regulated by that knowledge of Christ, which, bringing Him in, causes true discernment between good and evil, and prevents love from degenerating into mere fleshly affection. Sincerity and unblameableness would be the result of this test.

This letter thus begins with expressions of thanksgiving, confidence and prayer, which brings out too the perfect fellowship the apostle had with these beloved saints, in life, service, love, and suffering. He now proceeds to comfort their hearts by assuring them that what had befallen him in Rome, (namely, in his being put in prison,) had all turned out for the furtherance of the gospel; so that his bonds in Christ were manifest in Nero's palace and in all other places. And is it not wondrous to see the power of God's grace working in a poor prisoner's heart, so that in the most dismal place, when all that earth holds dear was shut out from him, and nothing but death stared him in the face, this wondrous vessel of God's grace could send forth from his prison letters full of praise, thanksgiving, and heavenly joy, for the comfort of others. He knew the Philippians had been grieved when they heard of it, and indeed it was a solemn and sad thing to all appearance for the minister of a dispensation of

* *Ειλικρινεις*, from *ειλη*, sunshine, and *κρινω*, I judge, examined by the sun's light, tested and found sincere.

God, this present dispensation, to be shut up in a prison. But "no," says the apostle, "do not be grieved, these things have turned out for the furtherance of the gospel." The testimony was carried on by other hands, some indeed might preach Christ of contention supposing to add affliction to the apostle's bonds, others of love, knowing that he had been set in defence of the gospel. What then? Notwithstanding every way, Christ is preached, and therein I rejoice, and will rejoice. For Christ to be preached everywhere, even in the imperial palace of Rome, was no small advance surely, and yet the chief instrument was in prison. How God overrules everything to the advancement of the glory of His Son.

And this gave the apostle confidence, instead of disturbing him. He knew that it would all turn to his salvation through the fellowship of the saints' prayers, the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ according to his own expectation and hope, that in nothing he would be ashamed, but that as always so now Christ might be magnified in his body either by life or death. For to him to live was Christ, to die gain.

Let us pause now, dear reader, one moment, and consider these words. The apostle, as we have seen, was already in prison awaiting his trial before Nero, the Roman emperor. There was apparently nothing but death before him, recantation or death, and yet it was his earnest expectation and hope that in nothing he would be ashamed. He had faced human rulers before, had had their scourges on his back, and yet through it all had found Christ's sufficiency. He trusted then for the future as for the past, and more, he trusted that that Christ who had carried him through the prison house at Philippi, and the hatred of the Jewish nation would be magnified in his body, whether by life or death. He seems as if he had been introduced to our modern telescopes and microscopes; and to put himself in the place of these instruments, so that if only men would come in contact with him and

look through the instrument, they would see a Christ very far off to them, or very dimly seen, brought quite near like a magnifying glass magnifies distant objects. And indeed, dear reader, ought it not so to be with us? Should we not seek so to manifest Christ that He might be magnified in our bodies before our fellow men whether in life or death? The one object of our life to live not ourselves but Christ, to die, gain.

And is it not gain, dear believers? Let us encourage one another by the words of scripture, for we are none up to the mark as we ought to be as to our actual realized state. Is it not gain to be with Christ, is it not real gain to lose these sinful bodies the only thing that hinders our full enjoyment of Him?

The apostle now seems in a maze; he has here the fruit of his labor, that Christ should be magnified in his body—to live Christ; he has on the other side the prospect of being with Christ; he does not know what to choose, to depart to be with Christ was far better, to remain was more necessary for the saints, and having this confidence, he knew he should remain for their furtherance and joy of faith, that their rejoicing might be more abundant in Jesus Christ for him by his coming to them again.*

Only he desired that the Philippians, general deportment might become the gospel of Christ, that whether present or absent he might hear of their affairs that they stood fast, in one spirit, with one soul, striving together for the faith of the gospel and in nothing terrified by their adversaries, which to them was a manifest token of perdition; but to the Philippians of salvation and that of God. For unto them it was given on the behalf of Christ not only to believe on His name, but also to suffer for His sake, having the same conflict (in fellowship) which they saw in the apostle and now heard to be in Him. Blessed fellowship in life, service and suffering.

* Is this confidence of abiding the "I know" "and salvation" he alludes to in v. 19?

SIMPLE PAPERS ON THE CHURCH OF GOD.

IV.

THE BODY OF CHRIST.

In the closest of earthly associations, connected too by the nearest and dearest of ties known to man, does the Church stand in relation to Christ. It is His body. Nothing can be closer than that. It is His bride, with the assured prospect of being manifested as the Lamb's wife. Nothing can be dearer and nearer than that.

And first, as to His body, God has given "Him to be head over all things to the assembly, which is His body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. i. 22, 23.) Of assemblies, God acknowledges now but one, called here *the* assembly, the same which is elsewhere termed the assembly of the living God (1 Tim. iii. 15), and is claimed by the Lord Jesus Christ, as we have seen, as His own. (Matt. xvi. 18). But this assembly is also the body of Christ, which, viewed in this character, has Him for its head.

Now the headship of Christ is by no means an unimportant subject in the Scriptures, nor is it one in which but few have any concern. Far and wide throughout the universe does the headship of Christ extend. Further than the eye of man has yet penetrated is that headship to be acknowledged; for to three distinct spheres does the headship of Christ appertain. He is the head of all principality and power, as we learn from Col. ii. 10. Headship in this character has of course to do with His place in creation; and the mystery of God's will, now disclosed to us in Eph. i. 10, but not yet carried out, has made known the divine purpose of heading up all things in Christ. Again, as the Christ, He is the Head of every man, the man being in his turn woman's head. (1 Cor. xi. 3). There is however a third character of headship in which the Lord is presented, "is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence." (Col. i. 18). The head over the universe

is He who died, and He receives it who created all things, being the first-born of all creation, and that by virtue of having called it all into being. (Cor. i. 15). His headship over every male as distinct from the female flows from His incarnation, who, as man, is the Christ. His headship in relation to the assembly only dates from His resurrection; for until He had died the assembly had no existence; but since He has died and has risen, He stands as head in relation to it. He is head of the body, the Church (Eph. i. 22; iv. 15; Col. i. 18; ii. 18); He is also head of the Church, as the husband is head of the wife. (Eph. v. 23). Of Christ's headship of the assembly, the New Testament alone treats, and that only in the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians. This is a much more circumscribed sphere of course than that of headship over the universe; but we are taught, that it is He who is head over all things, whom God has given to the Church which is His body, the fulness of Him that fills all, in all. His relation to it, and by consequence, its relation to Him, as viewed in this character, was both new and peculiar. Nothing of the kind had Israel, God's earthly people, ever known; nothing of the kind will they ever enjoy.

To the Church, whether viewed as His body or His bride, He is head, not Lord. Lord of course he is; God made Him such. (Acts ii. 36). Every knee in heaven, on earth, and under the earth (*i.e.* all intelligent creatures), must ever know him as Lord. (Phil. ii. 11). The Church too knows him as the Lord; but He is head to, not of, the Church. Headship and Lordship both belong to Him, but they are not convertible terms. As Lord He stands out apart from all others; as head, He is in close association with that to which He is as such connected. Scripture then never speaks of Him as Lord in relation to the Church; for that clause in Eph. v. 29, when rightly read, stands thus: "Even as the Christ, the Church."* Of this assembly He is the

* Attention to the phraseology of Scripture on this point will

head, and it stands to Him in a relation altogether new, being His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all, in all. Paul alone of the New Testament writers, treats of this branch of the subject, and to him was the truth of it first made known. The foundation on which the assembly was to rest, was announced, as we have seen, to Peter in the audience of the twelve. The existence of His body upon earth, Christ first revealed to Paul (Eph. iii. 3) when in the company of his fellow-travelers, though in words they did not understand. The Lord Jesus was speaking to Saul, but He did not address them. How near were they to the speaker from heaven, and yet remained strangers to the communication, embodied in the single sentence, "Why persecutest thou me?" No question surely was ever asked more astounding to anyone than this; no interrogation was ever addressed to a prisoner more condemnatory than this. From One whom Saul had never seen, and from that One in heavenly glory, the light of which the whole company beheld, came that startling, penetrating question to the impetuous opponent of God's saints. All that Saul was doing, was known to his interrogator. What Saul was doing, was unknown to himself. To turn aside the question was impossible; so personal it was, so heart-searching it must have been. To answer it satisfactorily was equally impossible. It convicted him of ignorance of God's mind, and a hatred to God and to His Son. Paul evidently never forgot it, nor the truth by which it was revealed. As proof that he never forgot it, we find that question recorded in all three accounts of his conversion, two of which are related by himself. Writing to the Corinthians, he tells them

help us to form a judgment as to the dispute arising in Acts xx. 28, where many good authorities represent the apostle as having said "the assembly of the Lord" instead of "the assembly of God." The former reading we may dismiss as contrary to the phraseology and general teaching of the Scripture. "Assembly of God" is a Scriptural term; "assembly of Christ" is a Scriptural thought; "assembly of the Lord," we believe, is neither the one nor the other.

too of his sin. (1 Cor. xv. 9). Exhorting the Philip-
pians, he makes mention of it (iii. 6); and when un-
bosoming himself to his child in the faith, he again
refers to it. (1 Tim. i. 13). The truth too which was
thus revealed took a firm hold on him. He taught it,
he contended for it, he suffered for it. (Eph. iii. 1).
Further, by that question the Lord threw a shield over
His persecuted ones, who were dear to Him, and
arrested the arm of the self-constituted inquisitor of
the saints. But He did more. By the form of His
question He revealed the truth, that His saints were
part of Himself. Of old, Jehovah had declared of Israel
that those who touched them touched the apple of His
eye (Zech. ii. 8); *i.e.* that which a man guards most
carefully. Here the Lord announced, that in perse-
cuting His saints, Saul was persecuting Him. Thus
the mystery was disclosed of a body upon earth, which
belonged to a head in heaven.

For teaching about this body, we must turn, as we
have said, to the epistles of Paul; not that he was the
only one who knew about it, for to God's holy apostles
and prophets was it revealed by the Spirit (Eph. iii. 5);
but to Paul was it made known first by revelation.
(Eph. iii. 3). A body on earth, its head in heaven, this
constitutes the mystery of the Christ, the two making
up the one mystic man—the Christ. And this body is
His complement, or fulness who fills all, in all. (Eph. i.
23). Without it, as the ascended Christ, He was not
complete; with it there is nothing left to be desired.
The divine conception of the Christ thus stands forth
in all its completeness. But what a conception! His
fulness the body is, who fills all in all; thoughts, state-
ments, a revelation, we have about the Christ which far
surpass our small intelligence to grasp in their fulness.
This however is simple, and within the power of our
mental faculties to take in, that great as is His glory,
who is God as well as man, when looked at as man,
though He fills the whole universe with His divine
glory, He, the Christ, is not complete without His body,

the Church. What an interest He must take, He does take, in that which stands in this relation to Him! It is His body. How close to Him! how really a part of Himself! How full of meaning, then the question, "Why persecutest thou me?"

C. E. S.

THE EVENNESS OF THE PERFECT MAN.

This meat offering of God, taken from the fruit of the earth, was of the finest wheat; that which was pure, separate, and lovely in human nature, was in Jesus under all its sorrows, but in all its excellence, and excellent in its sorrows. There was no unevenness in Jesus, no predominant quality to produce the aspect of giving Him a distinctive character. He was, though despised and rejected of men, the perfection of human nature. The sensibilities, firmness, decision, (though this attached itself to the principle of obedience), elevation, and calm meekness, which belong to human nature, all found their perfect place in Him. In a Paul I find energy and zeal; in a Peter, ardent affection; in a John, tender sensibilities, and abstraction of thought, united with a desire to vindicate what he loved, which scarce knew limit. But the quality we have observed in Peter predominates, and characterizes him. In Paul, blessed servant though he was, he does not repent though he had repented. He had no rest in his spirit when he found not Titus his brother. He goes off to Macedonia, though a door was opened in Troas. He wist not that it was the high priest. He is compelled to glory of himself, in him in whom God was mighty towards the circumcision, we find the fear of man break through the faithfulness of his zeal. He who would have vindicated Jesus, in his zeal knew not what manner of spirit he was of, and would have forbidden the glory of God, if man walked not with them. Such were Paul, and Peter, and John. But in Jesus, even as a man, there was none of this unevenness. There was nothing

salient in his character, because all was in perfect submission to God in His humanity and had its place, and did exactly its service, and then disappeared. The hand that struck the cord found all in tune: all answered to the mind of Him whose thoughts of grace and holiness, of goodness, yet of judgment of evil, whose fulness of blessing in goodness were sounds of sweetness to every weary ear, and found in Christ their only expression. Every element, every faculty in his humanity, responded to the impulse which the Divine will gave it, and then ceased in a tranquility in which self had no place.

J. N. D.

FELLOWSHIP AND TESTIMONY.

1 Kings xiii.

In these days of deep delusion, and when the Christian is thrown entirely upon the "light shining in a dark place," a few words on such an important subject as this, from the word, may be welcome to one who has been exercised on the question, as God's way of presenting fellowship is different from man's thoughts of associations and unions.

God had brought a people out of bondage, taken them to Himself, giving them laws and means by which they could know His mind, dwelt among them and promised to grant them blessings of such a character and scope as to leave them nothing to wish for. They were placed in the land, after witnessing God's care of them, and gracious forbearance of their sins during the wilderness journey. The temple was built by the loved son of a loved king chosen of God. The building was accepted (God placing His name there, and only there), in which His worship was truly established, and the whole land was blessed with peace and plenty.

After the revolt of the ten tribes Jeroboam sets up idolatry. *It was not far from the true ground of worship, being only about sixteen miles from Jerusa-*

lem. There are then these two altars. At one of them, Jerusalem, we have the word of God that He had set His name there, and that those who would worship Him must do so there, coming from the other end of the land. And so important was this point that it was mentioned six times in one chapter (Deut. xii. 5, 11, 14, 18, 21, 26). But there were few who recognized its importance.

On the other hand, at Bethel was an altar. The slightest departure from God's ground of worship introduced the Jew to a worship attractive in every way. A visible God, made of the finest material, like unto the gods round about, so that he would not seem peculiar to his neighbor. The king himself burned incense to, and worshipped at, this altar. And, besides this, it was the popular worship among those who had the same claim to being God's people—the most of them, ten of the twelve tribes, being its supporters.

This is the condition we find them in at chap. xiii., when a man of God comes out of Judah. His testimony is specially against the altar or worship.

Jeroboam, bad as he was, is not noticed, as there is no question here of good or bad men, God's children or not; it is the worship, for he says, "O, altar! O, altar! thus saith the Lord." He came specially as a testimony against the idolatry with specific instructions, and the knowledge before he started that it called for privation and separation, for he was told he was not to eat bread or drink water, and that he was not even to return by the way he came.

Now the application of this is very striking. God at Pentecost set up a precious testimony in the establishment of the church, "A building builded together for the habitation of God through the Spirit, in which God was truly worshipped in an acceptable manner to Him," for it was "with much power the apostles gave witness of the resurrection;" "the Lord working with them *confirming the word* with signs following." In this temple the Spirit of

God *dwelt*, and was certainly separated from all the heathen, idolatrous worship around, so that one who was a living stone in this temple was so distinctly different from his neighbor that persecution was the inevitable result (1 Thes. ii. 14; 1 Tim. ii. 12). But suppose all they of Asia turn away from this, God's centre, and soon after, the rest following, the woman Jezebel allowed to teach, and the doctrine of Balaam is held, the false altar is here set up and one has to depart but the slightest degree from God's ground to find himself at the false idolatrous altar, for it was the *Church at Thyatira*, recognized professing christians, not heathen, that is here addressed, and the "Man of God" *has* cried out against it, saying, "I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds, and I will kill her children with death." There is no question here of good or bad men, it is the worship and doctrine the testimony is against.

To return to *Kings*, after the testimony against the altar, came the question of fellowship in the case of the two men, the king and the false prophet, and the difference of His treatment of the two is wonderfully instructive to us. Jeroboam was a supporter and the institutor of the false worship, so his case is not so difficult. We find the prophet peremptorily refusing to eat bread or drink water *in the place with him*, for that is what expresses fellowship. Although he could pray the Lord to heal his hurt, and give him his authority for his actions, he positively refuses to have anything to do with him, and after testifying to that for which he was sent, he, in obedience to the word of the Lord, returns by a different way from which he came. So far so good. Any one with a thought of the honor of the Lord, would refuse to have fellowship with an idolator, who, in defense of his position, refused to accept such miraculous proof as was given, and but little intelligence is required to separate from known evil and professed defiance and turning from

God, so the Christian to-day deserves no credit for refusing fellowship with the Mussulman, materialist or atheist; but farther on a more difficult position meets us.

In obedience to his instructions, he was departing from evil when he meets one who also asks him to eat bread with him, and this time it is a trying case. It is one who is really a prophet (ver. 20) with a claim of also knowing the mind of the Lord, one who plainly acknowledges the true God. One who is a brother (as a Jew), a prophet, recognizing the commission of the true prophet, and with the alluring bait that he also has the word of the Lord *by an angel*. Ah! here is the test, and where man has always failed.

Did the Lord mean what He said when He started him on his errand? or does the Lord change with circumstances? The charge was *by the word of the Lord* not to eat bread or drink water, or return by the way thou camest. Now which is greater? the *specific word of the Lord*, or the word of the Lord *by an angel*, and that through a man in the very evil he was called out to condemn?

Now how this does direct us if the Lord has called out a few in a great house, to purge themselves from vessels unto dishonor, departing from iniquity, holding fast the word of His patience, not denying His name, but having little strength, and so in the very place they occupy, cry against that which dwells where Satan's throne is, holding the doctrines of Balaam and of the Nicolaitanes, suffering Jezebel to teach, and are rich, increased with goods, having need of nothing. Look at the contrast, and remember that it is when grievous wolves should creep in, not sparing the flock, and men arise speaking perverse things, is the time we are commended to the word of God's grace, which is able to build up (Acts xx. 32), and is given for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction, and is a light shining in a dark place. Now

those gathered in such a place of testimony against the false altars have just as specific directions to have no fellowship with the "unfruitful works of darkness," as the prophet had to eat no bread and drink no water.

The difficult case is the false prophet, or one who is really of God mixed up with the idolatry. Now the course for one in a place of testimony is to adhere closely to the word of God, and one who wishes fellowship with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart must *first follow* righteousness, faith, charity and peace with such.

If one of the Lord's children says, "Why can you not go with me? I am Christ's just as much as you are, and I believe all my church are converted." I answer, "The question is not you or your brethren, *but your altar*, and the word says follow not a multitude to do evil." Again he says, "Why may I not eat with you and remain where I am." I say, "He that bids any not having the doctrine of Christ, God-speed, is partaker of his evil deeds." I say again, "It is not a question of you, but of your worship," Is it at Jerusalem, or at Bethel? Is it what God set up at Pentecost, the body of Christ, or that which was afterwards set up by man in any of its different stages, found and condemned in Rev. ii.-iii.? If you are at Bethel, although a prophet, I depart from the word to eat with you, and you may be used of the Lord to condemn me, as he was.

Now these things happened unto them, but were written for our instruction, to which it would be well to take heed.

I have given but a slight degree of what the chapter teaches, but it is written with the desire that the Lord may use it, if but as a finger-post to point the direction.

S. B. C.

It is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

THE PATIENCE OF GOD.

Nahum. i.

Scripture speaks of the world in three different ways or characters. Three names found in connexion with the history of God's people describe it. EGYPT: the world in its natural state, out of which the people of God have been redeemed. BABYLON: the corruption of power in its activity. Corruption of power enslaves the conscience, the heart, the mind. NINEVEH: the pride of the world, in its thoughtlessness and indifference to God; because of its pride throwing off God. We get the judgment of the world in this latter phase here. Nineveh was a place of large resources. It was lifted up by the greatness of itself, and it threw off God, and here we have the judgment of God upon it, the greatness of God's power which will be manifested when He judges the scene which has rejected *Christ*. Two things are connected with this: He will come to judge this world where the pride of man is running high against Him, and it will not only be the display of His power in judgment, but He is pleased to link with this display of power in the day when He will judge the pride of men, the emancipation of creation; it will be the day of its liberty (Rom. viii. 19, 20).

The sons of God have a creation waiting upon them! Have we the sense of this? If we are sons of God, creation waits upon us. Who hath "subjected" it? Adam. He was placed at the head of creation. He fell; consequently all under his headship must be subjected to vanity. "In hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." It is beautiful to see the connexion between the display of power and the liberty of that which is now under thralldom. God *will* come and put down evil with a high hand. Now it is the time of His grace and long-suffering. *Patience* is the great quality or attribute

of God which is prominent at this present time—patience in the presence of impudent evil. Our poor hearts are impatient; nothing tests us as to this like the presence of sin and self-will and obstinacy.

We get here (ver. 2, 3) a beautiful blending of attributes. We find the same characteristic in the New Testament, “The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the *patience* of Christ” (2 Thess. iii. 5). We are in the kingdom and *patience* of Jesus Christ. This is the character God assumes at this present time, when evil is rife on every hand. He will soon judge unsparingly; it is the patience of One who is omnipotent. I believe the reason why the apostle places patience first in 2 Cor. vi., when he shows what is to signalize the ministers of God, is because it is the quality or character of God that is prominent at the present moment (2 Cor. xii. 12).

There were certain characteristics which marked all the apostles, but in none was this divine quality so prominent as in Paul, and none had greater pressure on him. What must it have been to him to see the Corinthians, with all their light and truth, so fallen into evil?

It is worthy of note, that whenever we see Paul's *doctrine* touched, his apostleship was questioned. In most instances, when the truth was refused, the vessel through whom the truth was communicated was rejected.

How did Paul prove his apostleship to them? By being patient in the presence of evil (2 Cor. xii. 12). When he looks on to the days now present (2 Tim.) *patience* and gentleness are to characterize the servant (see chap. ii. 24). Nothing tests us more than to be surrounded by evil. A sense of righteousness and truth of itself will not keep us. It is not that we are to be *indifferent* to evil, we ought to feel it; but *feeling* it is one thing, *acting* on our feelings is another. Acting on our feelings is little better than mere impulse. The character to be manifested by us when

the world is growing hoary in crime is "gentleness, meekness, patience." In Heb. x. we find this quality is looked for in the saints generally, as in the apostle and the servant (2 Cor.; 2 Tim). "Ye were made a gazing stock. . . . ye became companions of them that were so used (ver. 33). It requires a greater energy of faith, and a greater exercise of patience to be the companions of those so used.

If we are for *God*, we shall have all against us; yet it is our joy to be able to say, "He knoweth them that trust in Him," and "I know whom I have believed." The blessed, perfect man Himself, the faithful witness was left alone; and yet He was not alone, because His Father was with Him. If you are standing for God in these days, you will have the accumulated hatred of Christendom against you. Every religious body in it, however diverse, and in other respects opposed in doctrine and practice, will shake hands over their united and common opposition to that which, Antipas-like, is a condemnation of all. There is nothing more blessed to behold than the patience of Christ, which in faith is contented to wait. Are you patient? Have you a sense of *superiority* in the presence of evil? That is patience. If you are not patient, it is because you are not superior.

How good it is to see one pressed and tried, and harassed, yet going on quietly and peacefully. Of such we can say, "Superior to everything," because they can endure. What a stay to have the *truth* on our side, and the God of peace with us? The apostle could say, "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion (Nero), and the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom." Our hearts need to be fortified in order that we may stand, and thus be prepared for what is coming. If we have the sense that God is with us, we are prepared to stand, solitary and alone, on the blessed truth of the word of God; happy to have company with us on the road, but independent of it.

It is enough for the heart to have the Lord's presence; the sense of this works patience. How enduring we should be if we only knew that God was with us. We *may* be left alone, maligned, despised, "All men forsook me; but notwithstanding the Lord stood by me." We have one blessed, mighty Friend, and He is un-failing and unchanging.

This chapter properly expresses the circumstances of the remnant; and though it may not apply *directly* to ourselves, yet the moral principles of it are true with us. It is very blessed to see how all comes out from *God's side*. It was the stay of the heart then; it is equally so now. Every child of God is in circumstances of trial and pressure, because we are still in the wilderness. Our comfort is, "The Lord is *good*." This is *His nature*, His power, omnipotence, omniscience are His *attributes*; but He Himself is *good*. When we get the light of the New Testament shining upon it, what do we find. He gave His Son—He gave His Spirit. It is only as we know the heart of God that we know the purpose of His ways; judging of God by our feeble sense leads to infidelity. His ways are no interpretation of Him. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." God manifest in the flesh is God's revelation of Himself.

"God so loved . . . that *He gave*." Here we have the expressed revelation of the heart of God through the Son of His love. He came and revealed the secrets of that bosom. There is not a secret of His heart that is not manifested. Nothing but *love* marks Him. You must bring the nature of God to shine on His ways, otherwise we shall bring our own puny reason to account for them. "His way is in the sea," &c. Is that all? "Thou leddest thy people like a flock." Here we have His tender, watchful care and interest. *We* are led by the hand of our great Shepherd, not by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

“He is a stronghold in the day of trouble.” It does not say He will take us out of the trouble, or that He will lighten it; but it is what *He Himself* is—“a stronghold in the day of trouble.” Have we learnt what it is to have a *resource*, and not only *relief*?

We are so often looking for relief *merely*, we need as well a *resource*; it is what *He Himself* is—“a stronghold,” &c. What a blessed thing to have a *resource* before *relief* comes; and the relief is then no less sweet to us. A person who is looking only for relief is always *impatient*, because he desires to have the weight removed, the difficulty taken away, and the will of man is apt to clothe itself in the deceiving garment assuming good, viz., how much more freely and happily I could serve and follow Him if this weight were removed. “For this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me;” but when Paul heard the voice of Jesus announcing the sufficiency of His grace, and how His power worked, he accepts unmitigated the thorn, in order that the power of Christ may pitch its tent over him.

Again, observe how those who count on God are described. He does not speak of what they have left or what they have obtained, but they “trust in Him.” They make everything of *Him*. Observe, too, it is not *their* knowledge, not that they are *devoted*, blessed as that is; it is they trust in Him, and He *knows* it. It is a blessed thing to be satisfied with the knowledge of God about us. It is strikingly seen in restored Peter, when the Lord tested him as to the point he had boasted in. He says, “*Thou knowest* all things; *Thou knowest* that I love Thee.” He had confidence in himself before; he now retires on his Lord’s knowledge of him; he had found out *what* he was, and he has not a word to say for himself. His solace is, “*Thou knowest.*” In 2 Timothy, when the apostle describes the last days, it is the same blessed principle which is put forth to guide the faithful heart. To the

one who departs from iniquity, what a comfort it is, “The Lord knoweth them that are His.”

May our hearts be so with Him as to find out the reality and sustainment of this word, “The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him.”

W. T. T.

“NO MORE CONSCIENCE OF SINS.”

Hebrews x.

The object of redemption is to bring us nigh to God. Jesus suffered “the just for the unjust to bring us to God,” yet it is impossible that we could be happy even then, were there still a thought of God’s being against us. There can be no happiness unless I have the perfect, settled assurance that I have no sin upon me before Him. God’s presence would be terrible if the conscience were not perfectly good; the sense of responsibility makes us unhappy where *any* question of sin stands against us. We see this in the case of a servant with his master, or of a child and its father—the conscience is miserable where there is the sense of anything upon it which will be judged; so if there is any happiness in God’s presence, it must be in the sense of His favor, and of the completeness with which we are brought back that He sees us without sin, the perfect assurance of the “worshipper once purged, having no more *conscience* of sin.” The condition of a believer is that his conscience is so purged *once for all* that he has “no more conscience of sin,” and the result of this “boldness to enter into the holiest.”

God speaks to us according to *His estimate* of our standing; it may not be our heart’s experience. There is a distinctness of the operation of the Spirit of God in bringing me unto Jesus, bearing witness *to me* of God’s love, of which Jesus was the manifestation, and of the efficacy of what Christ has done, and of His operation in my soul in producing *in me* the love of God. That which is the subject of experience is what is produced in my own soul, whereas that which gives

me peace is His testimony to the work of Jesus. A christian who doubts the Father's love to him, and who looks for peace to that which passes in his own heart is doubting God's truth.

The gospel is the revelation God has given of Himself; it displays the love of God towards us and what is in His heart. I can trust the declaration of what is in God's heart, and not what I think of myself.

The apostle speaks of a *due time*: "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." It is almost always true that there is in us a terrible process of breaking the heart, in order that *we* may be brought to the ascertainment that we are lost and rained sinners; but the gospel begins at the close of God's experience of *man's heart*, and calls us from that in order that we should have the joy and peace of the experience of what is in *His heart*. "God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Men left alone before the flood, put under the law in Canaan, indeed under all and every trial of his nature and tendency up to the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, was just God's putting to the test man's power.

One would have thought, after Adam had been turned out of paradise for transgression, that would have been a sufficient warning; but his first-born became a murderer. We should have supposed that the flood, which swept off the workers of iniquity, would have repressed for a time at least by the terror of judgment, the outbreak of sins; but we find immediately afterwards Noah getting drunk, and Ham dishonoring his father. The devouring fire of Sinai, which made even Moses fear and quake, seemed sufficient to subdue the rebel heart and make it bow beneath God's hand. But the golden calf was the awful evidence that the heart of man was "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Again in Canaan a part of the world was tried to the utmost to be cul-

tivated, but it would not do. A bad tree producing bad fruit was the only type by which God could set Israel forth (See Isa. v). He might dig about it and dung it, but after all these efforts it could only bring forth more bad fruit. At last He said, "I have yet one Son, perhaps they will reverence my Son; but man preferred having the world for himself, and crucified Jesus. Looking to His cross, He said, "Now is the judgment of this world" (John xii). Man may brave the judgment of God, but a day is coming when God will settle that; all one day shall bow to the name of Jesus.

At the crucifixion of Christ, the veil was rent, the holiest opened, and what God was within the veil was then shown out in all its fulness. When grace reveals this to me I get confidence. I see God holy and expecting holiness—true; but the peace of God is in knowing what He is to us, and not what we are to Him. He knows *all* the evil of our hearts. Nothing can be worse than the rejection of Jesus. Man's hatred is shown out there, and God's love, to the full. The wretched soldier who, in the cowardly impotence of the consciousness that he could with impunity insult the meek and lowly Jesus, pierced His side with a spear, let out, in that disgraceful act, the water and the blood, which was able to cleanse even such as he. Here *God's heart* was revealed, what He is to the sinner, and this is our salvation.

Death and judgment teach me redemption. God judged sin indeed in sacrificing His well-beloved Son to put it away. It must be punished, Jesus bore the blow—this rent the veil, and showed out what God really is. The very blow that let out the holiness of God, put away the sin which His holiness judged.

The perfect certainty of God's love, and the perfect cleansing of the conscience, are what the defiled and trembling sinner needs. "By the *grace of God* Jesus Christ tasted death." In Jesus *death* is the consequence of *grace*. "Out of the eater cometh forth

meat, and out of the strong sweetness." All sin is put out of sight by Jesus.

Faith always rests on God's estimate of the blood of Jesus as He has revealed it in His word—faith rests on no experience. There is frequently the confounding of what faith produces, and what it rests upon. Faith rests on God's estimate of the blood of Jesus as the Paschal Lamb. The Lord said, "When *I* see the blood, I will pass over." Could there be hesitation if we were in a house marked with the blood on the door-post? Should we not *know* that He would pass over?

In real communion the conscience must be purged: there can be no communion if the soul be not at peace. "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Jesus said, "Lo, I come to do *Thy will*, O God." "By the which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." It was the good will of God to do it; and the work is done to bring our souls back to Himself. Jesus said, "It is finished;" but there must be the *knowledge* of this in order for us to begin to act. You might have a person willing to pay your debts, and you might even have them paid; but if you did not *know it*, you would be just as miserable as before. We are not called upon to believe in a promise that Jesus should come to die and rise again. The work of Jesus is done—"He sat down on the right hand of God" "when *He had* purged our sins;" but that is not sufficient, *I must know* that the work is done, and therefore He sent down the Holy Ghost to be the witness that God was satisfied. He remembers my sins no more. Knowing perfectly their guilt and amount, He has purged them *all* away; for "by one offering He hath perfected *for ever* them that are sanctified, whereof the Holy Ghost is witness." Faith rests on this—"God is true"—"He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." Faith is always divine certainty. On this ground we enter into the holiest.

If any one were to demand of me a proof of God's love, I could not give more than God has—His Son: none other could be so great. But then may not my sin affect it? No; the “blood cleanses from *all* sin;” God knows all, and He has provided for it.

God has found His rest in Jesus; our peace and joy depend upon knowing this. Were anything more necessary, it could not be His rest; God is not seeking for something else when at rest. None else could have afforded this. God looked down from heaven to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God; they were all gone out of the way—there was none righteous; no, not one. But God bore witness unto Jesus, “This is my beloved Son, *in whom* I am well pleased.” God is well pleased in Christ; God rests in His Son, not merely in His life, though that was holy and acceptable unto Him, but in His work on the cross. Jesus said, “Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” And that meets our need. When He shows His glory to the angels, He points to what has been done by man. In *man* was God glorified, as in *man*, the first Adam, He had been dishonored. Christ reversed all this. “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified *in Him* ;” which God recognizes in *straightway glorifying* Him. Righteousness cannot be looked for from the world, but the truth of righteousness will; the thing itself is only in Christ.

God is not a grudging giver. Did Satan, tempting Eve, question this in the forbidden fruit? He has given His Son; He rests in Him. The sinner likewise rests there. What can man do for me? Nothing. If I were to come to Him to deliver me from death, could He help me? He might fill my hand with those perishing things which could only swell the triumph of death and decorate the tomb; but there his power ends.

In Jesus God has found *His* rest. This is *mine*

also; I know it from the testimony of God's truth. Have *you* found rest in God's rest? If you say, I have not, will you say that God has not found His rest there? Will you look to your own heart? In that you can never find it; it is only in Jesus. Jesus said, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." Would that all knew the *perfect rest* to be found there!

"THAT I MAY WIN CHRIST."

"I have casten this work upon Christ to get me *Himself*. I have His faith, and truth, and promise, all engaged that I shall obtain that which my hungry desires would be at, and to esteem that the choice of my happiness; and for Christ's cross, especially *the garland and flower of all crosses*—to suffer for His name—I esteem it more than I can write or speak to you. I need not run at leisure, because of a burden on my back; my back never bare the like of it—the more heavily crossed for Christ, the soul is still the lighter for the journey.—*Samuel Rutherford, 1637.*

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

The great thing that God calls upon me for, is to admire and delight in, and learn more and more of the love of Christ. What is the effect? Love to Christ is produced in the very same ratio that I know His love to me.

What is it that judges self, and keeps it down, and raises a person above all groveling ways and ends? Entrance into the blessedness of His love. w. k.

The world may pass and perish—
 Thou, God wilt not remove;
 No hatred of all devils
 Can part me from Thy love.
 No hungering nor thirsting—
 No poverty nor care,
 No wrath of mighty princes,
 Can reach my shelter-here.

PHILIPPIANS.

Chapter ii.

Now what the apostle was proving in prison was that there *was* consolation in Christ, the comfort of God's love and the fellowship of the Spirit of God, which gave him power in the most dismal circumstances to be a man totally above them. Christ sympathized with him in all the power of that life that had now every kind of scorn, ridicule, trial, suffering and death, and risen victorious over it all. The love of God had placed him in union with that Christ in glory, who had communicated to him His own victorious life over sin and death, and the Holy Ghost was his companion in these sufferings, and trials, and griefs. It was all a reality to the apostle. If there was any such then, the apostle would have the Philippians fulfil his joy that they might be *likewise* having the same love, the same soul. He would have them be followers together with him, in enjoying the consolation in Christ, comfort of love fellowship of the Spirit, bowels of mercies. It is all fellowship in practical life and walk. The great hindrance to this was in unjudged self. He besought them then that nothing might be done in strife or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind to esteem each one better than themselves; not to look only on their own things, but the things of others.

How necessary this warning to us, dear reader. How apt we are to let self drive the thin wedge in; then, as far it is allowed, it will have the first place, and think of its own things, instead of the things of others.

The secret for the true maintenance then of this blessed enjoyment of fellowship is what follows vs. 5-12. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Christ came down here as the dependent and obedient man, is put before us as our pattern, and fellowship in this practical mind; and following in His path, is what the apostle desires for his dear

children in the faith. We have three fine examples of following in His mind and footsteps later down in the chapter, in the apostle Paul vs. 17, 18; Timothy 19-23; and Epaphroditus 25, 29, and he desired the same mind for the Philippians, vs. 12-16. Wondrous chapter! but easier to take hold of with the intellect than to be held by the heart.

In one sense we can say we have the mind of Christ (see 1 Cor. ii. 16). The faithful have learned that, at the cross, all their human wisdom and strength have been judged (1 Cor. i. 22-29), that Christ glorified is their wisdom, and that they are *in Him* as to their standing in grace (1 Cor. i. 30, 31). The Holy Ghost, too, has been the preacher and communicator to them of this Christ the wisdom of God, so that they are in actual connexion with the mind of the heavenly man (1 Cor. ii. 6-16). They have the mind of Christ; but this is Christ's practical mind manifested here before, a mind that manifested itself in absolute subjection to God's will, that was manifested in a perfectly dependent and obedient man even unto death; and it is on account of this humility, dependence, obedience and subjection that God has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every head should bow, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ was Lord to the glory of God the Father. He got the Lordship as man after he had manifested His absolute subjection to the Father's will.

He being in the form of God, it is said, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. This was His first grand step down. He became a man; He took the place of dependence as a man. But to do God's will in reference to sin he must take a further step, he must be obedient, and *obedient unto death*, the death of the cross. First. He who was God became man, taking

the place of dependence. Second. As man perfect in every way, yet He was obedient unto death; that death the death of the cross, the most shameful death in existence. So it is on this ground that He is exalted, and that every tongue shall confess Him Lord as now exalted, whether things in heaven or on earth, or in hell. Everything will finally bow and own His authority as Lord. And now, my dear reader, have you bowed to the Lordship of Christ? You say, Why should not I; He is my Saviour. Why I rejoice to bow to Him as my Lord. Thank God, then you are saved; only remember the path and your profession will be tested. But anyhow, if any do not bow to the Lordship of Jesus now, they will be obliged to do so in hell. But, oh think of the awful agony of conscience to think you might have been saved, but it is now too late.

I would have my reader mark that the whole subject here is subjection to Jesus as Lord, and following Him in His path of subjection to God's will. It is not the reconciling of an enemy to God. That subject is treated of in Rom. v. 1-11; 2 Cor. v. 16-21; Col. i. 19-23; Eph. ii. 11-18. Reconciliation extends to all things in heaven and earth in the world to come, and it is never spoken as a present thing except in reference to the church (comp. Col. i. 20-21), never that Christ has reconciled the world by His work. It is a deceit of Satan, and the foundation of the lie of universalism. God was in Christ reconciling the world when He was down here (2 Cor. v. 19), but the world would not be reconciled, and the message still goes on "Be ye reconciled" (2 Cor. v. 20). Why so, if the world is reconciled? Do you find it so, dear believing reader? Is your next door neighbor who is unconverted reconciled to God? Is he at peace with God, or does he hate God? It is all a monstrous delusion of Satan! But the truth is people do not know what reconciliation is who talk like that, which is simply an enemy towards another who loves

him being turned to be at peace with the same person, who, of course, now rejoices over him as now reconciled, but who always loved him. This loving Being is God, of course; the enemy, man. He believes the gospel of God's love is and reconciled, the other rejects and is damned.

But here, as we have seen, the subject is *subjection*. The whole teaching is that way; Christ is an example for us here, which He could not be in reconciliation. He stands alone in making atonement, the foundation of reconciling sinners to God; we cannot follow His example there. But here He is a dependent, obedient man, subject to the will of God even unto death, and the same mind is to be in us that was in Him. He is now exalted, and every tongue is to confess Him Lord to the glory of God the Father. May God give to us increasing fellowship in His mind. It is exactly the opposite of what Adam did. He became independent of God and disobedient, and death was the consequence. He also wanted to be God, whereas He who was God became man, and the only man who had a right to do His own will, became obedient unto death, the death of the cross.

Now these dear Philippians had obeyed in measure in following Christ in this wondrous path. Paul had been with them, and they had obeyed as in his presence, but now he would have them prove the reality of their obedience; and now much more in my *absence*, he says, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that it is *God* that works in you, both to will and do of His good pleasure. He would have them rise in simple faith to the truth of God's presence in each of them and among them corporately. What if Paul departed to be with the Lord, they had God there working in them. That is the great point pressed here. As to the salvation here, I take it in the fullest sense as to the past, present and future. He could not say to the Philippians *your own* salvation, unless it was a present possessed thing

by them. Besides I cannot *work out* a thing unless it is mine first to work out, but then I work it out actually in the trials and difficulties of the road, and it is not accomplished as to the body till Jesus comes. Thus it embraces the past, present and future; I work it out, too, on the basis that God works in me both to will and to do everything that relates to the working out of that same salvation. Consequently the spring and prime mover of the working out of salvation in the christian, is God. The believer's place is to be perfectly dependent and obedient in regard to the God that dwells in Him.

But I must dwell a little longer on this passage, for people are so ignorant of the word of God ordinarily, and many will not read it for themselves. What I wish to say is that this passage is only addressed to Christians. It is no question of showing a sinner the way of salvation. These words are addressed to the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi (see chap. i. 2), to those who were already saved. It does not say, "Work *for* your own salvation," that would be to put salvation verily on the ground of works; but it says, "Work *out* your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

Now God was the spring even of Christ's holy life, and dependence and obedience, and so He is the Christians, and blessed be God for it; as the little hymn says:

" And now I cannot please Him
 In aught I say or do,
 Unless He daily helps me
 His glory to pursue.
 Still helpless and still feeble
 On His strong arm I fall,
 My strength is pressing onward;
 Yes, Christ must do it all."

A. P. O.

If we meet for testimony, we shall but prove our own failure; if we meet for Christ, we shall be a testimony.

J. N. D.

REMNANT REWARD, AS ILLUSTRATED IN
THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah present to us very bright, touching and instructive delineations of remnant testimony, which call forth and guide the affections of those who have heard the voice of Him, who, Himself outside the fold, is calling His sheep round Himself. But the close of each book sees clouds gathering and obscuring that blessed, whole-hearted testimony. The worship of Jehovah began to be mixed again like that of the Samaritans, and many of those who had out of love and zeal for the honor of the Lord left Babylon, had mixed with Gentiles, and the danger became great that all the reality of the testimony would be swamped by individuals among them, these following their own desires, pursuing their own selfish ends. For the present, however, it is saved by the faithfulness of Ezra and Nehemiah, and thus each book closes.

What will become of the testimony? Have we no further picture? Is this all? No, we have one more view. In the book that closes the historical portion of the word of God we have another sweet picture, and one that shows the reward in the days of the Kingdom.

The name of God is not mentioned in Esther for here it is not God working outwardly, visibly, but secretly by His providence, though none the less by His power; but the power is only recognized by faith. And this imparts an additional sweetness to this beautiful history, for thus it more strikingly illustrates the very closing days of this era, when it needs an exercised ear and a loyal heart to discern and walk in that path that surely narrows, the nearer the end is; to hear the knock of Him who in patient grace desires to satisfy the longing heart, and give it the exquisite joy of sharing His place both here in rejection and there in manifested power. In the days of persecution, when "Behold, the devil shall

cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. ii. 10) applied, the path of every believer was exceedingly plain. But, since then, Satan has changed his tactics. It is not now prison and death that he uses, but the "ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. xi. 15). Alas! sometimes a real godly man is Satan's best tool, for by him he can best deceive saints. It is the serpent, more than the lion, we have to watch against, the *wiles* rather than the force. Now the reward held out to the overcomer is not simply a crown of life, but a special place in God's temple, a special association in Christ's glory, a seat on His throne when He reigns. The value of faithfulness in His eyes is surely not thus diminished but enhanced, for the object held out is not life, but Himself.

The opening verses (1-8) serve, as usual, as an introduction to the character of the book. They show us that it is of the kingdom that it speaks. The glory and joy of the kingdom. The call of Vashti to increase that glory, her refusal, consequent rejection, and the calling of Esther present a powerful and precious picture of the present testimony and its reward.

The greatness of the kingdom is spoken of, showing it is a picture of the time when the Lord shall rule this earth, and then the great feast of Ahasuerus' reign, "When he shewed forth the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honor of his excellent majesty many days." That time has not yet come; it is presented here, the first thing in the book as to that which Vashti is called but declines, as that which faith, however, grasps, and accepts poverty and contumely here, that she may share in the riches and honor of the Lord when His time shall have arrived.

The glories of the palace—the place where the feast was held—are described, "where were white,

green and blue hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen to silver rings and pillars of marble. The beds were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black marble."

We need not call imagination to our aid to discover meaning in this; it is plainly suggestive of the moral glories that shall surround those who share in the reign of the Lamb. The purity, freshness, and heavenliness that characterize those true to the Lord now, shall then be displayed in honor to the glory of His grace. Fine linen are their robes now, then righteousness and royalty shall be linked together; connected here in figure these two things are connected also in doctrine in Rom. viii. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 11-13; Rev. iii. 18-21. The fixed purpose of God which upholds all, and the redemption by which that purpose is carried out is not forgotten, for all these beautiful hangings were suspended from silver rings in pillars of marble.

The joy of the kingdom is then set forth: "And they gave them drink in vessels of gold (the vessels being diverse one from another), and wine of the kingdom (margin, 'in abundance'), according to the state of the king. And the drinking was according to the law; none did compel, for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure." Each vessel is of diverse workmanship—no two alike. When that time spoken of by the Lord—"But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom"—shall have come, undoubtedly each vessel shall be filled to its utmost capacity with the wine of joy; but some vessels will be larger than others; vessels which are now being enlarged by fellowship with Christ's sufferings, for a fuller fellowship in His joy, when the "wine of the kingdom" is poured out. Then shall that blessed picture of the "manifestation of His glory" given in John ii. be realized.

The servants go forth at His bidding now, pouring forth the water of the word; when the feast time comes it will be found that He has turned the water into wine, and "the servants that drew the water" shall know and rejoice that they have been counted worthy to have fellowship with Him in that happy service. "The drinking was according to the law; none did compel." The employment and the joy of the glory will not be in going through a fixed routine of service, a perpetual singing and a perpetual harping as some vainly imagine, but in the realized joy of each in His presence; that power to understand, to have fellowship in the joy of His reign, there being in proportion as we have been faithful to Him here, and have learned the secrets of His counsels in the cross.

But now the scene changes. We have to turn our eyes from this picture of the glory and joy of the kingdom to the actings of the disobedient queen. "Also Vashti, the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to King Ahasuerus." No word as to this feast being of the king's commandment, or done in fellowship with him. It was a feast that *Vashti* made, using the king's house for her own pleasure. What wonder, then, that when the king sent "to bring Vashti, the queen before the king with the crown royal, to show the people and the princes her beauty" that "the Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment." Engaged in gratifying herself she cares not to gratify her lord; and yet his desire was to honor her, honoring also himself in the display of her beauty, and in manifesting the share she has in the glory of his kingdom. Alas, this is easily applied! The church, occupied with that which ministers to her own pleasure, loses all desire for the manifestation of her glory in the kingdom; she is glorying down here, she forgets her place of obedience (Eph. v. 24), and responds not to His commandments by His servants, calling her away from her own pleasure to Himself in glory. What fol-

lows? The rejection of Vashti, and the calling out of another.* “Then the king said to the wise men which knew the times: What shall we do unto the Queen Vashti according to law because she hath not performed the commandments of the King Ahasuerus by the chamberlains?” and Memucan answered: “If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, that Vashti come no more before King Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate to another that is better than she.”

The second chapter gives us the calling out, and installation of the new queen; it is full of interest.

The call was general; many were called, but one was chosen. Let us observe in what condition the call found that one. “Now in Shushan, the palace, there was a certain Jew whose name was Mordecai (bitter bruising), the son of Jair (enlightened), the son of Shimei (that hears, or obeys), the son of Kish (straw forage), a Benjamite, who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah, king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had carried away. And he brought up Hadassah (‘a myrtle, or joy), that is Esther (secret, hidden), his uncle’s daughter, for she had neither father nor

*I do not take Vashti as a type of the church in its Ephesian character, for *there* there can be no rejection, for she is His body, but as of the professing church in the place of responsibility as in Revelation. Surely it becomes her who is, *by profession*, His bride, to act according to that character, to seek *His* pleasure, to answer *His* call, to keep the place of subjection to Him in everything. Neither do I take Esther as a type of the bride in her Ephesian character, but as of a remnant. But though the remnant are not, in an exclusive sense, the bride, it becomes them, surely, to maintain that holy, affectionate and obedient character. The confounding of different lines of truth leads to much confusion; and failing to observe them we cannot understand God’s purposes and ways. To prevent this, I make this note.

mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful, whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter." Affliction had prepared her for that obedience, that she afterwards so sweetly showed. Death had severed the dearest ties of nature, she who was Hadassah, now becomes Esther. The Lord was there in His secret providence, preparing her for glory, for death makes obedience easy, and only death can make it thorough. The ties of nature may, and often do, make the ear deaf to the call of separation, but when the truth of death lays hold of the soul, when it is seen that by the cross, we are crucified to the world and the world to us, and when we let the cross of Christ have its own power over nature's joys the name Hadassah (myrtle, joy) can be dropped, and that of Esther (secret, hidden) accepted, for the word is "ye are dead, and your life is laid with Christ in God." "Risen with Christ" we are called to "set our affection on things above;" but the affections never will be set there till the truth of death, *our* death is received into the soul, therefore the apostle adds, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 1-3). Let this truth be accepted, and we are prepared to walk in the path of obedience, for, the world being dead to me, has no claims on me, and I being dead to the world have no hearing to hear its dictates; a risen Christ, in whom our life is hid, then becomes the supreme object of affection, the One alone to obey. At the time the call reached Esther she was under the guardianship of Mordecai; the meaning of his name and his ancestors (and surely the Holy Spirit has given them for a purpose), are full of instruction, and supply some connecting links here. He was carried into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, and his ancestry stands thus: Kish, Shimei, Jair, Mordecai.

"Straw forage" is the food for the soul one gets in Babylon, but the word is "heard and obeyed," and the soul becomes "enlightened," and "contrition and

bitter bruising" follows, for the light makes the darkness manifest. Death must then extinguish nature's joys, and then as Esther (secret, hidden), we are waiting to hear the call and be gathered under the care of Hegai (separation, word), and finally under the care of Shaashgaz (he that shears the sheep), and the purification is complete.

The maidens being gathered and delivered into the custody of Hegai, he is pleased with Esther, and "she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her her things for her purification, with such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens, which were meet to be given her, out of the king's house."

None are called to provide anything for themselves, all is given by Hegai (word) out of the king's house, and where there is submission the things needful for purification are given speedily. Twelve months thus passed, and then, where the time came to appear before the king, "whatsoever each maiden desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house." But when Esther's turn came "she required nothing but what Hegai, the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favor in the sight of all them that looked upon her." Obedience and giving up her own desire is what characterizes Esther in contrast with the self-gratification and disobedience that marked Vashti. She was *called*, it was not of her seeking, and she obeys the call, and accepts just that, and all that, that Hegai appoints. Her obedience was tried and proved ere she takes the place forfeited by Vashti. Do we wonder that the Lord tests the reality of our reception of the truth, of our obedience and of our love?

Having passed the due course of purification according to the word of the king's commandment, Esther is presented to and accepted of the king. He sets the crown royal upon her head and makes her queen instead of Vashti. "Then the king made

a great feast unto all his princes and servants, even Esther's feast." How much better thus to have him make the feast, than like Vashti, to make one for ourselves? Foregoing all self-pleasing here, let us walk the path of obedience; let our hearts be set upon that which pleases Him, studying alone to find "grace and favor in His sight," and when the due time comes He will fulfil that precious promise, "He shall gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them" (Luke. xii. 37).

In her new place of fellowship with the king, Esther forgets not her people, but becomes their intercessor, and through her intercession, their salvation. And here again we see our place, for only those who are outside of man's system can pray for "all saints." The peculiar place of fellowship should not weaken the grand bond that exists between all the saints—one body, one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father. Delivered from that which denies this unity, occupying a place of nearness to the Lord, intercession for "all saints" with "prayer and supplication" becomes our work.

The commandment is sent forth to destroy the Jews, but at Esther's intercession that word is reversed; happy shall we be if we also can rescue from judgment, of some having compassion, making a difference, plucking them as brands from the burning, and bringing them, like Mordecai, into a share of the glory of the kingdom.

Esther sought not her own glory, she was "secret, hidden," and when she had that glory she used it not for herself, but for the salvation of those with whom her former years were spent. Bright and blessed example! Precious lesson! May it sink into our hearts, and shape our life. "How can I endure to see the evil that shall come upon my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?" said Esther to the king, and surely we also should feel the sad state of those with whom we were, and

wait with prayer and *supplication* on the Lord, that the wiles of Satan may be overthrown and His own delivered.

The king extended to Esther the golden sceptre, and promised to grant her request even to the half of his kingdom, thus, indeed, assuring her of the place of *fellowship* she had with him. And have we not got as much encouragement from *our* Lord? Has He not said "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do?" To ask in His Name is to draw near, as having fellowship with Him, indeed as being in Him, or as though He Himself was asking. Let us then come boldly to the throne of grace, and urge our suit. It has been often remarked that all the agonizing in prayer in the epistles is for others, not for one's self. Assured of His love, and walking in obedience to *His* will, may we learn to leave ourselves entirely to His care, and use the blessed place of intercession we occupy for the deliverance of others who are where we ourselves were.

In its strict application as a type of the deliverance of the remnant of Israel, the closing portion of the book is very striking. Haman is himself hanged upon the gallows he prepared for Mordecai, and the destruction plotted for the Jews turns out to the destruction of their enemies. The book of Revelation unfolds these things for us, and shows us the oppressors of God's people, destroyed in that destruction they attempt against God's people and the holy city.

C. H. B.

PAUL'S GENERAL EPISTLES.

In the Acts we read the labors of an *Evangelist*; in the Epistles, the instructions of a *Teacher*, addressed to those who have already been brought in by the evangelist.

I say this, as being the characteristic difference of the two writings; and very suitably, therefore, the

Acts of the Apostles come before, or take precedence of, the *Epistles* of the Apostles.

But then, again, the epistles have their own distinction, each one of them. And in a general way, it is easy to perceive this, and as far as Paul's epistles to different churches go, this I would now do, though very briefly.

In that to the *Romans* we get a full and orderly writing upon the gospel, that most precious mystery or counsel and way of God, by which He has provided for wretched, self-ruined sinners, displaying His own glory, securing holiness, and excluding boasting, while putting the sinner who believes in Jesus into the highest and dearest relationship to Himself. This is done in chap. i.—viii. Then, in chap. ix.—xi., we have a wondrous volume on prophetic or dispensational truths; and then, to the end, moral exhortations to the saints, addressing them personally and relatively very largely.

Very suitably does this first of the epistles thus fulfil the office of a *teacher*. To the quickened ones already brought in, the Spirit, by Paul in this epistle teaches the way of God more perfectly. This is the Epistle to the *Romans*.

In the Epistles to the *Corinthians*, which follow, we are introduced to corruptions in the saints, and to the reproofs, rebukes, and corrections of the Spirit in the apostle.

The *Corinthians* were a scholastic, reasoning people, more Sadducean than Pharisaic (if I may thus speak of Gentiles in the language of the Jews) in the tendencies of their mind. They were tempted to take advantage of the gifts they enjoyed; by them to exalt themselves, rather than to minister to the edification of their brethren. They had got into a sad state of moral relaxation and speculative discussion of doctrines, rapidly tending to ruin; and had been beguiled by some one who had advantages in the flesh, in his worldly circumstances and conditions, and who was

withdrawing their regards away from Paul to himself.

This state of things may be discovered in the two epistles to them. And the meeting of this state of things, and the answering of certain questions which they had sent to him (in the curiosity, it would almost seem, of a Corinthian intellect), form the materials of these epistles.

But corruption works variously. The man of God has to look forth from many a watch tower, if he would know, as he ought to do, all the approaches of the enemy. Therefore, in *Galatia* we see a very different form of corruption from that which we have thus seen at Corinth. There was no Judaizing at Corinth—none of the leaven of the Pharisee, as I hinted, but much of that of the Sadducee; yea, and of Herod too, which is worldliness. But among the brethren in Galatia, on the other hand, it was the leaven of the Pharisee that was working, and working powerfully.

The religion of ordinances had been revived among them. The law, in some of its subtle forms, was returned to. A fair show in the flesh was sought. Having begun in the Spirit, they would now be made perfect in the flesh. They were observing days, and months, and times, and years—the rudiments of the world, the elements of the legal economy; and the apostle is afraid of them. He has to labor again for them, that Christ may afresh be everything to them, “formed in them;” and that they may escape from the fascinations and entanglements of a carnal, worldly sanctuary.

In the Epistle to the *Ephesians*, we have another condition of things, quite another. It is not a state of things of comparative ignorance which needed orderly instruction, as we got it in the Romans; nor is it a state of moral relaxation, as is contemplated in the Epistles to the Corinthians; nor a state of doctrinal error approaching dereliction of Christ, as in

Galatia. All is right and calm, and undistracted at Ephesus, as far as the epistle assumes: and, consequently, the apostle is free to unfold further and highest truths to the saints there. And this he does. He opens the prerogatives of our calling in Christ, unfolding the mystery of the Church, and addressing the saints as to their duties, and services, and virtue according to that calling, and their relationship one to another in it.

In this epistle, therefore, we rather see the *prophet*, the one who, under the Holy Ghost, discloses the deep things of God, and takes this place and measure amid the gifts; as we read, "And he gave some apostles, and some *prophets*, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." It was surely all *inspiration*, but it takes, in this epistle, the form of a prophet.

In the Epistle to the *Philippians* we get the *pastor* in Paul. There was a very loving personal link between him and them. Personally, I believe, the Philippians were the nearest to him of any, as John had been to the Lord. Above all others, they had communicated with him, from first to last, during his preaching abroad, and now in his bonds. His heart was very tenderly affected toward them. But he had reason to fear that some breaches had begun among them, some personal jealousies, and reserves, and distances (alas, too common to this day!) and he writes to them a pastoral letter with this apprehension on his heart. But, because of his intimacy with them, and the closeness of their fellowship; because of the love that he had to them, and the grace that was in them, he writes to them with marked tenderness and consideration. In no epistle is there such fervent expression of personal attachment.

And being pastoral rather than instructive, there is no order of doctrinal thought in this epistle. It is written after a freer method.

In the *Colossians*, who come next, we see a people who had been, like the Galatians (in measure, at least), ensnared by Judaizing principles. But with them this was not in so gross a form as with the Galatians. These principles had been withdrawing the saints in Galatia from that simple faith in the Lord Jesus, which as *sinner*s we must have in Him; these same principles were withdrawing the saints at Colosse from using Christ, and going on with Christ in such ways as *saint*s are to do. The apostle, therefore, very seasonably instructs them in the fulness of Christ; warning them (as was needed), but likewise teaching them their perfection in Him, that they wanted nothing but what they could get in Him; and that having begun with Him, they ought to go on with Him; being rooted in him, so ought they to be built up in Him.

This is the pastor and the teacher together (under full inspiration of the Holy Ghost), both warning and instructing: What variety! Surely these epistles to the Romans, the Corinthians, the Galatians, the Ephesians, and the Colossians, let us learn how various the need of the saints may be, how deep the subtleties of their enemy, and how many the watch-towers the Spirit has graciously erected for our use, that we may mount them, and get on vantage ground in the face of the approaches of our adversary! And they further let us learn, that if the Spirit of God be as an evangelist in the Acts, He variously imparts Himself, or fills His vessels in the epistles, as a Prophet, a Teacher, or a Pastor, according to the necessities of the saints.

We have still, however, the Epistles to the *Thessalonians* to consider. They stand the last in the series or succession of these general epistles of Paul, or his epistles to the churches, and they have their own character, like each of the others.

In the people to whom they are addressed, we see an eminent, distinguished faith—a faith which had

been tested by sufferings for the truth's sake beyond any. Accordingly, they are very encouraging. The apostle, characteristically, is an *exhorter*, as I may call him, and in these epistles (as Rom. xii. speaks) "waits on exhortation." He encourages the suffering Church of the Thessalonians by speaking very much to them of the coming of the Lord, which is the due, appropriate comfort of those who suffer with Him and for His sake in this evil, revolted world. There is, accordingly, no doctrinal method in these two epistles. They are written chiefly in the spirit of sympathy, according to the grace of one who was exhorting or encouraging a tried and suffering people. But they convey instruction on this great truth of the coming of the Lord beyond what the Thessalonians had already reached; instruction, too, most fitted to carry on the comforting, sympathizing ministry of an exhorter, such as the apostle is in these Epistles.

He has, however, in the midst of all this, to erect a new watch-tower. He has to warn his honored Thessalonians against allowing "the blessed hope" (the coming of the Lord) to be corrupted or abused among them. For true it is, and no uncommon thing, that the very best things, as well as the very best people (I speak as a man), are still in danger. There were no companies of saints more fresh and promising, and abundant in blessedness, than those in Galatia. They would have plucked out their eyes for Paul. But when he wrote to them, he had to rebuke them sharply, and to tell them to their face that he stood in doubt of them. So, there is no truth more precious for the saint than that which the Thessalonians held, the prospect of the Lord's coming, and the soul's longing for it. But even that was in danger, lest the flesh should take advantage of it and corrupt it, and the saints who held it and loved it become idle, and careless as to present duty and honest, needed industry. So that here, again I say, we have another watch-tower erected, and another warning voice raised

in the midst of corruptions by the Shepherd of Israel, who never slumbers nor sleeps, but eyes his flock night and day.

I have thus taken upon me to look rather rapidly at Paul's general epistles: I mean his epistles to congregations or churches of saints, and not to individuals, as Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. Each of them, I may say again upon this review of them, serves a distinct purpose: but the man of God wants them all, living, as he is to do, by every word that has proceeded out of the mouth of God.

The personality of the writer of these Epistles is apparent in each of them, the attitude of his soul, as I may speak, formed, no doubt, by the condition of the Church he was addressing. He is *occupying the chair of a master*, while writing to the Romans. He is the *aggrieved spiritual father*, as he addresses himself to the Corinthians. He is the *heated, and zealous, and indignant reprover*, as he writes to the Galatians, rescuing and defending a prized and precious treasure which he saw was in danger from those who should have kept and guarded it. He is on high, *seated in a world of glories*, gazing at it and thinking of the love that brought him there, while he writes to the Ephesians. He is the *earnest-hearted lover* of the Philippians, fearful of the least thing that threatened to soil or disturb so loving a people. He is the *anxious watchman* in the midst of the Colossians. And he is the *deeply-interested, sympathizing counsellor and comforter*, as he was writing his letters to the Thessalonians.

The style and spirit that would suit these different characters, or these different attitudes of soul, may be discovered in the apostle as he thus writes. And all this surely tells us that, through the Spirit, he was *alive* to his subject, as well as *master* of it—not a mere penman, but a *living* one. And this casts me upon the recollection of the words of another which I have greatly enjoyed before now. Speaking of the

different scribes, from Moses to John, employed by the Spirit of God for the writing of the Scriptures, he says, "We are far from being unmindful of these human features throughout impressed on the sacred writings. It is with profound gratitude and ever-increasing admiration that we regard this living, actual, dramatic, philanthropic character which shines with so much power and beauty throughout the Book of God. We have the uncultivated and sublime simplicity of John—the affecting, elliptical, soul-stirring, and argumentative energy of Paul—the fervor and solemnity of Peter—the poetic grandeur of Isaiah—the lyre of David—the ingenuous and majestic narratives of Moses—the sententious and royal wisdom of Solomon. Yes, it is all this. It was Peter, Isaiah, Matthew, John, or Moses, but it was God. It is God who speaks to us; but, cast in earthly mold, it is also man. It is man, but it is God also. How greatly does this abounding humanity, and all this personality with which the divinity of Scripture is invested, charm us, reminding us that the Saviour of our souls, whose touching voice they are, Himself bears a human heart on the throne of God, although seated on high where "angels serve and for ever adore Him." And he adds, "Such ought to be the word of God; like Emanuel; full of grace and truth; at once in the bosom of God and in the heart of man; powerful and sympathizing; celestial and human; exalted yet humble; imposing and familiar; God and man."

I much enjoy this, I own. But I will now add only one other thing, at the close of this short word on Paul's epistles to the churches.

It is after the pattern of divine grace from the very beginning, to wait in patience upon man. These Epistles are a further witness of this. The Spirit of God is waiting on the churches found, as they were, in different forms of error and danger, and seeking to recover, correct, and restore them: just as the hand of God was doing in the earlier days of Israel, as we

see in the Book of Judges, and again (with the house of David) in 2 Chronicles; and also, as the Lord Jesus Himself had been doing with His generation in the Gospel by St. Matthew, waiting in patient ministry on the worship of the Lord. And thus it is in these Epistles. Evil and error are in the churches; but the Spirit by the apostle admonishes, rebukes, instructs, if haply He may restore. The digging and the dunging again goes on. But there is measure, even in the patience of God. Righteousness demands this; and so, in the Second Epistle to Timothy we may see the house, the great house (in some sense the house of God), a ruined and disowned thing. But "the counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations." The vessel is marred on the wheel in the hand of the Potter; but the Potter, in His sovereign right over the clay, makes another vessel as it hath pleased Him.

Let me add, lest I should be misunderstood, that when I speak of the apostle being in one epistle as a teacher, in another as a pastor, in another as a prophet, and the like, I merely mean that the inspiration, which filled and guided him in every thought and word, gave him that character on each occasion as was suited to it. He wrote, not as a *gifted* one merely, but as *inspired*. That I surely know and own.

J. G. B.

When the hours of day are closing,
 And the sun has reached the west,
 Sweetly in Thy love reposing,
 I would lay me on Thy breast.
 Jesus, Lord, I thirst for Thee;
 Thou art all in all to me.

Thou hast taught me of the union
 Of my new-born soul with Thee,
 And in hours of deep communion
 Thou hast spoken, Lord, to me.
 Jesus, *now* I thirst for Thee;
 Thou art all in all to me.

FAMILIAR LETTERS ON THE SECOND
COMING OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

MY DEAR E.: You seemed startled when I spoke of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ as very near, and at my joy in view of this event, and desired to know my reasons for saying so. We are told to be always ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us, with meekness (Pet. iii. 15), and I shall ask your patience while I enter into this matter some little in detail. Next to the matter of the salvation of the soul is this subject, presenting an object to our hearts, a comfort ineffable, and a spur to our lives.

But let me say, in giving these few considerations to you, it is that you may not simply be informed in an intellectual way, but that you may have fellowship with me in the blessed hope, that your heart may be taken up in the fullest way with the person of Christ and may be able to say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

One great mischief in all the adventism against which you have taken exception, is, that its adherents and advocates have not started with the simple and clear assurance of salvation now in Christ. Hence they have not been drawn to Him first of all, with delight in His presence, and a confidence that He delights in them. And moreover, they have not had Him as the centre of all their thoughts, and all God's thoughts and revelation too, the grand meaning of all that is past, and the purpose of what is future: hence the matter of His coming has been rather the study of prophecy to feed the mind, as a theological topic, having little grasp of the heart, and less power over the conscience. Once sink the things of God to intellectual propositions merely, and, however true they may be, they are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

And now pardon me if I press this upon you as of immense importance, because the whole matter of Christ is a revelation from God to His children, and

none but they can understand it, and they only by the Holy Ghost. I want to know if you are at all able to receive what I give, whether you have the Holy Ghost, for otherwise I would be but propounding riddles to you. *Do you know that you are saved?* I do not ask this question to be answered on the ground of some doctrinal tenet that you may subscribe to, as "once in grace, always in grace," as if it were sufficient that you could say you hold to the perseverance of the saints. *Are you a saint?* Are you confident on the authority of God's word that you have eternal life, that you are a child of God?

I do not say I doubt that you are a child of God, only I want you to see that the matter should be clear to yourself on the word of God. Has He not connected the salvation of the soul directly with believing on the Lord Jesus Christ as crucified for you, your sin-bearer? In not believing solely on the word of God that we are saved, as believers on Christ, we make God a liar, for this is the testimony He gives concerning His Son Jesus Christ, that He has given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. The warrant for this confidence is clear then, for "these things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may *know* that you *have* eternal life." Thus it is distinct and simple, and if you have this confidence, know that it is just what God wants you to have, and is most honoring to Him.

Another matter that I desire to have you know clearly is, that as saved, you belong to God, as His child, and are marked off as His by the Holy Ghost, dwelling in you. This is distinctive of Christianity; it involves the Christian state. If any man have *not* the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And He is the power of intelligence in the things of God, as it says in 1 Cor. ii. 12: "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, *that we might know* the things that are freely given

us of God." He is giving us other revelations than He gave Israel or the prophets, vastly richer and higher things—the things of Christ, the Risen Man in heaven. He has told out for our ears and hearts the deep things of God, the hidden matters that were kept secret from all the ages, and, that we may have them, the Holy Ghost dwells in us.

This you will see removes all that we hear from Him from the region of reasoning, and brings it into the place of simple faith. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. x. 17). We learn that if the word preached is to *profit* us, it must be mixed with faith. And, surely, all Scripture is given for our *profit*, not for speculation, nor merely intellectual information.

In looking into this subject of the coming of our Lord, I desire you to turn to the Epistle to the Ephesians, as a starting point spiritually, and to have our hearts engaged legitimately in the matter. It may seem peculiar that the one Epistle that does not mention the subject should be the first one taken up. But the reason is, that it most clearly tells us our place and our consequent interest in the subject, because of our interest in, and relation to, Christ Himself. If a kingdom had been in revolt against its lawful sovereign, who for a time was banished as the consummation of their hatred and rebellion, amidst the most dreadful expression of evil and insult, and if he were about to return, there would be a vast difference in the emotions of those who had heaped all this wrong and outrage upon him, and those who may have been all the while really loyal to him, and for his sake borne reproach among his enemies. But if his espoused bride were there, taunted and scoffed at for his name's sake, how differently beyond them all she would thrill, as she heard from himself that he was coming to take her to himself forever. Her heart would be most of all engaged with himself, and then with everything pertaining to his kingdom.

and reign, because of her association with him, and everything that was linked with his name would of itself be attractive just for that reason.

Now, in Ephesians we learn our own place in connexion with the Lord Jesus Christ and with our God and Father, and all His purposes. See how richly it opens in the third verse of the first chapter: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who *hath blessed us all with spiritual blessings* in heavenly places, in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace."

Is it not a wonderful statement of a specific design on the part of God, before the world was formed, to have certain ones in a place and relationship of peculiar blessing and nearness to Himself, and that it is now in action? We *are* blessed already according to that purpose. We *are* children of God in Christ Jesus. We are brought nigh, as near as Christ is, for we are in Him.

And the infinite blessing that we have now is up to the full measure of His highest thoughts and designs for His Son, according to what His longings were, whose desires were with the sons of men, whose delight was in the saints. As God saw and provided for Adam a companion fit for him in contrast with the creation over which he was to be head, so did He take up the divine need in His own heart for fellowship, and in His Son for a companion to stand with Him as one with Him, and meet it by us, purposed as sons for the glory, and His body, the glorious church, the bride which He will present to Himself presently in heaven, the place to which we are called and for which we are formed.

And He has done this for Him at the time of His

intense satisfaction in Him, who, having accomplished redemption by shedding His blood, is raised and seated at the right hand of the Majesty.

But now look at the succeeding verses, and especially verses 8-10. There we see that in the same riches of His grace in which He has dealt with us in forgiving our sins, and giving us redemption through the blood, He has abounded unto us in *all wisdom and intelligence*, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to His good pleasure, which He has purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times, He might gather together in one, all things in Christ both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him in whom we have obtained an inheritance.

This is an astounding announcement, explaining the object of God in redeeming us, 'to bring us into heavenly places now, to set us down before Him, and tell us *all about Him*, in whom has been His own delight from before the foundation of the world (see Prov. iii. 22-31, especially 30).

Yes, the animating truth is for us that God has taken us into companionship with His own Son to share with Him all the glory of the heavens and the earth under Him, that He will have us for the special praise of His glory. And now, as fitted for that and coming to that, He unfolds all about Him, His infinite purposes for times that are to come, the wonderful glory of His person, the grandeur and splendors of His work and its results.

The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is that He may enter upon these. It is immediately connected with them. Surely it were to disappoint our God Himself, not to be gladly interested in all that pertains to Him. This, you will see, is one reason why I wanted to have it clearly settled that you are saved, since so many are occupied with getting saved that they can give no time nor attention to the only object that God has before Him and us, the exaltation of Christ.

Will you understand then, dear E., that we are to know ourselves sitting at the feet of our God and Father, while He pours out the story of joy with which His heart has been full for ages, and for which He has had no fit auditors, among the angels, nor in Adam, or Noah, or Abraham, or Moses, or David, or Daniel, —though, through the latter, He told things pertaining to the earthly glories—that to us it is said He has made known these very things?

This, then is our warrant, our invitation to look into these things. And, surely, if we have a heart to grieve over the dishonor to that wonderful One, that has been so patiently borne by the Father all these centuries of the sad and guilty history of the world, it must, it will be, a joy to take from Him, as only He can tell it, what He will do for the honor of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us!

It must be a peculiar delight to us that He has decreed that all shall honor the Son as they honor the Father, that He Has exalted Him already to His own right hand, and will bring Him forth crowned and glorified, as Head of all things; all things in heaven and earth reconciled unto God through Him, and all things in heaven, earth, and under the earth under Him.

It is with such thoughts that I desire to give you, as I gather from His word, a mere outline in the simplest way, of what He has said concerning the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ. To what God has revealed we cannot, we dare not, add our thought or speculations. They are simply an impertinence, and must profit nothing. Much more true is this of things to come, concerning the One whom He delights to honor according to His own estimate of Himself and His work. May he keep us looking to Him and looking for Him, the more full His disclosures, the more eager and earnest our longings, till the heart is wholly taken up with Him!

Yours in Him, * *

PHILIPPIANS.

(Continued.)

Chap. ii. 14-iii.

Thus we see how God is the true spring of all that is Christ in us, but there is also the flesh there, consequently the warning, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings, 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, that the apostle might rejoice in the day of Christ that he had not run in vain nor labored in vain."

Thus the Philippians are, as it were, seen in the same path as the Lord Jesus, and energized with the same life. He was the Son of God; they the sons of God. He was blameless, harmless, and without rebuke in the midst of a perverse nation; they were to be the same. He shone as the light of the world; they were to shine as lights. He held forth the word of life; they were to do the same.

Ver. 17. Paul now presents himself as willing to be offered up as a sacrifice unto death upon the sacrifice and service of their faith. And he would have them rejoice in this same thing in which he would rejoice. * Blessed, unselfish devotedness to God!

But he trusted in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly to them, that he might be of good comfort when he knew through him of their state. There was no one the apostle had with him like-minded who would naturally care for their state. All sought their own, not the things of Jesus Christ. Sad state of things for the early church of God to have got into! Alas, how much worse is it now. Oh, my dear reader, which is it with you? Christ first and self second, or self first and Christ second; or, still better, which is it, I say again, Christ all and self nothing, or self everything and Christ nothing? Or is it half

and half? Wretched, lukewarm, Laodicean indifference to Christ!

The apostle then commends Timothy to his dear Philippians (vv. 23, 24), and then speaks of sending Epaphroditus, another brother, and fellow workman and fellow soldier of the apostle. Besides, he gives him the honorable title of being the apostle of the Philippians, the minister to the apostle's temporal wants from the same saints of God. He assured them how this blessed man was following Christ in the same lowly path; apparently in seeking out the apostle, or on his journey to him he had got sick nigh unto death. He was the conveyer to the apostle of the Philippians' love gift of money, their token of fellowship in the gospel (see chap. iv). This the apostle calls the work of Christ. For that work, he says, he was nigh unto death, to supply the Philippians' shortcoming of service towards the apostle.

Thus, though self was quickly manifesting itself and its claims over again in the early church, it is blessed to see men like Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus, and many doubtless among the Philippians themselves following in the lowly, downward, subject path of Christ. But, dear reader, it is the true way of exaltation. He that exalteth himself shall be abased, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Satan thought to exalt his throne above the stars of God, to be like the Most High, and fell from his first estate. From the heavenlies he shall fall to the earth (Rev. xii.), from the earth to the bottomless pit (Rev. xx.), from the bottomless pit to hell (see chap. xx). Man followed suit, listened to his lie, thought to be as God, but, in consequence, became disobedient unto death. Oh what an opposite path to that described in this chapter! Reader, which is best?

Chap. iii. We now pass on from the consideration of the blessed Lord's lowly and subject path here below to His position of exaltation in the glory. There He was best seen in chap. ii. 9-11. The christians are

now finally exhorted to rejoice in that same Lord, once humbled, but now exalted; to rejoice in Him where He is, for He is now at the end of the path. Ah, dear reader, that is the real spring of joy, and when you see that this same Lord of glory who has gained the end of the path has apprehended you for the same thing, that thought will fill you with joy. It was needful to press the same truths on the saints though they knew them, on account of the evil workings of the enemy around:

“Dogs,” who took the place of shepherds, that could not bark or warn any one of danger, that went to sleep, lazy do-nothings, that cared nothing for the flock, greedy dogs which would feed themselves on the saints and their love and make themselves rich by them; of such the saints were to beware (Isa. lvi. 10, 11). False professors, too, false teachers, perhaps, who had once made a great show of religion, and now turned away from it, like dogs to their vomit again, and sows to their wallowing in the mire. Of such the saints were to beware (2 Pet. ii. 20–22).

“Evil workers,” too, who would build wood, hay, stubble in the walls of the house of God, bringing in unconverted people, gaining large accessions as they would say to the church, such, too, they were to shun (1 Cor. iii. 12–15). Of those too who would practice austerities on the flesh, and talk of mortifying it, with the idea of making it better, without putting it off as an evil thing altogether; of such also they were to beware. These were the “concision,” chiefly the Judaism of that day.

The apostle would not give such people the name of the circumcision. True circumcision was the putting off the body of sin altogether for faith, by the death of Christ (see Col. ii. 11). It was *death* to the old man (*not so concision*), and christians were now the true circumcision with these three blessed marks on them: First, Worshipping God in spirit. Second, Boasting in Christ Jesus. Third, Having no confi-

dence in the flesh. For Paul and christians, according to him, the old man was dead, buried and gone in the death of Christ. Christ risen and in glory was all their boast; the Holy Ghost come down from heaven gave them their christian place and character and power for worship.

Paul then sets himself before the Philippians as an example of a man having no confidence in the flesh, taken hold of by Christ in glory, and running forward to win Him there. As we have seen in chap. ii., the subject is Christ come down here as the christian's pattern and example, but in chap. iii., it is Christ risen and glorified as his object to win. Of this latter, Paul is the great example to us (see vs. 15-17).

From vs. 4-6 he goes through all his natural advantages in the flesh that he might have trusted to as a man.

Ver. 7. Everything is counted loss for Christ.

Vs. 8, 9. He counts everything as a present thing loss to win Christ as his object, and be found in Him, not having his own righteousness, but that which is of God by faith. This is the objective side of his course. He runs forward to win Christ as his object, and be found in Him in that day with the righteousness of faith as his covering.

Vs. 10, 11. This is the subjective side of his desires; first, he desires to know Christ; second, the power of His resurrection as applied practically to him as a present thing as he runs; third, the fellowship of His sufferings; fourth, conformity to His death, if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead, that is when the power of resurrection would be applied to his body. It is the subjective side of Paul's race.

Vs. 12-14. He shows that he did not count himself as having attained, in fact he had nothing, only Christ had apprehended him for the glory, and he was running on if he might apprehend* that for which he

* The word means to take hold of, seize hold on.

had been apprehended of Christ Jesus. He waited to take hold of one after another of the many things that he had been apprehended for by Christ. And is not this, beloved reader, what real christian attainment is? It is just taking hold, as it were by bits, of that glory of Christ for which we have been apprehended. It is all ours already in Him; all assured to us, but how little of the many parts of God's wonderful counsels of grace have the best of us taken hold of? Many are as yet but mere babes in the knowledge of God, and may not *ver.* 14 be a special reward to those who have made special attainments in the knowledge of Christ. If so, first, there is the objective side of the race, Christ to win. Second, There is the subjective side (*ver.* 11), the resurrection from among the dead to attain. Third, There is the prize of the high calling of God in Christ. There is a reward held out as well as Christ and salvation. He would have as many of the Philippians who were perfect to be thus minded; to have one aim, one object, like he had, namely, to win Christ in glory. The "perfect" were those who understood what Christ had apprehended them for, and He would have such to be like minded with himself, and if in anything they were otherwise minded God would reveal this to them too; but whereunto any had already attained, whether perfect in their apprehension of their standing and calling for the glory or not, He would have them walk by the same rule and mind the same thing. Christ was the rule, and according to their several apprehensions of His glory so he would have them walk, having Him as the only rule.

He would have the saints then to be followers of him, and to mark those that walked, so that they had Paul and his companions in ministry before them as an example. For many walked of whom he had told them before, and now told them again even weeping, that they were the enemies of the cross of

Christ, whose end was destruction, whose god was their belly, whose glory was in their shame, who minded earthly things. Alas, these people had already got a foothold in the church of God! But the christian's citizenship was in heaven from whence he looked for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, who should change his body of humiliation that it might be fashioned like unto His body of glory, according to the power whereby Christ was able to subdue all things to Himself. Blessed ending to the path of the saint who made Christ as his pattern, and Christ in glory as his object to win. We look for the Saviour, blessed be God, not for the Judge, and His whole power will be exercised in that day in fashioning our bodies to be exactly like His own.*

A. P. C.

* NOTE.—Salvation is always linked with the thought of the coming of the Lord for His saints. He first comes for them, then returns as Judge to the earth with them.

SIMPLE PAPERS ON THE CHURCH OF GOD.

IV.

THE BODY OF CHRIST—CONTINUED.

Now this in common in this respect with the assembly of God, is presented in the word in three different lights. All the saints from Pentecost to the rapture of 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17, form part of it, and together compose it, according to Eph. i. 23; Col. i. 18. And, although as saints, they will reign with Christ and as the assembly, the Lamb's wife in glory will be the metropolis of the kingdom, the new Jerusalem, it would nevertheless appear, from the revelation of the body being His complement, who fills all in all, that this relation of the church to Him, its Head will forever abide; for viewed as the risen man He is not complete without it. The body then will not, like a dissolving view, merge into the bride, the former disappearing when the latter is publicly displayed.

These two characters of the church are distinct now, and will be forever.

Again, all the saints upon earth at any one time between Pentecost and the rapture are viewed as the body of Christ. Of this we learn from Eph. iv. 16; Col. ii. 19. Hence at no time of its existence upon the earth does it ever lack a limb. It is never, as respects its members, defective. A maimed body, a defective body, forms no part of the scripture teaching about the assembly or church of God; and it should be noticed that only when the scripture treats of the body as wholly in existence upon the earth, do we read of its members or of its joints and bands. Without all its members it could not of course rightly grow nor properly discharge its functions.

But we are plainly taught that it should grow, and, as occasion requires, should act, and it is to do both upon the earth. Hence it is regarded as at all times fully furnished with its members while here below. Had we simply man's thoughts about the body of Christ, we should probably have had it depicted as fully furnished with its members, only when viewed in its most comprehensive character embracing all the saints who do, or will, form part of it. This, however, is the only light in which, when viewed in the word, the existence of its members is unnoticed. The wisdom of God in speaking of the members, when the body is looked at as on earth, all may discern. The absence of all mention of the members when the body is viewed as complete in glory, we may surely account for satisfactorily.

Further, each local assembly, meaning thereby all the saints in a given locality, has the characteristic in scripture of Christ's body (1 Cor. xii. 27). We must say it has this characteristic; for the language of the passage by the omission of the definite article before the noun "body," while defining the character of the local assembly excludes most carefully the thought of independency. The local assembly is charged with

the responsibility which belongs to the body of Christ. Yet it is not the body of Christ to the exclusion of any of the saints elsewhere; for the saints in any given place are really only part of the body of Christ though viewed in their local character they are responsible to act for Christ as His body in that place. And whether they understand it or not, whether they act accordingly or not, scripture regards all saints in any one place as together Christ's body, however many and diverse may be the names which they give themselves. For there is but one body, as of course the Head can have but one. Now this truth, when apprehended, deals a death blow to any denominational position or association. "There is but one body and one Spirit" (Eph. iv. 4).

Of this body Christ is the Head (Eph. iv. 15; Col. i. 18; ii. 19), and from Him as such "all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together increaseth with the increase of God." One learns from the word; of a double work constantly going on. By the gifts from the ascended Christ, laborers in the word and doctrine, (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) souls are reached and the body edified. But beside this we are taught of another work, the increase of the body. For this the service of all the members is requisite, but in connexion with and in subordination to the Head. "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part maketh increase of the body into the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. iv. 16). Thus does the Head care for His body and provide for its edification and growth. The body is to increase, and that according to the effectual working in the measure of each one part. Are all christians alive to this? By the gifts of Christ souls are converted, the body is edified, the saints can be perfected (Eph. iv. 11, 12). The increase of the body, however, is

only mentioned in connexion with the proper working of each one part. Surely there is something here which is too much forgotten. Edification by gifts of ministry is generally understood. Is the increase of the body by the effectual working of each one part as generally acknowledged? Is it generally remembered that to "every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ? (Eph. iv. 7).

Now were this the case would there not be a marked difference in the outward aspect of the church of God? Instead of casting all the responsibility of the assembly on those who labor in the word which has too generally been done, being content just to receive from such what they may have to give, would there not be more real fellowship and more general care for the increase of the body? Now, where this is forgotten, can it be said that christians have entered in a broad, catholic way into that which interests Christ upon earth? Are there any contented with seeking their own profit merely? Are any satisfied with, in addition to that, helping on in the spread of the gospel of God's grace? A happy, blessed service that surely is. But is that all that is put before us in the New Testament? Are we desirous of, and helping forward as far as we can the increase of, the body of Christ? Has the truth of the increase of the body by the effectual working of each one part, dawned upon the reader, if a christian, as that which very closely concerns him?

There is a circle of interest very dear to God, within the limits of which the whole race of man upon the earth is included. This the Lord Jesus set forth on the day He rose from the dead, when He commissioned His disciples to preach repentance and remission of sins among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Nothing less extensive than this for evangelistic work should bound the sympathies and desires of God's saints. There is, however, another circle of interest less extensive in its limits, yet not less im-

portant, and very dear to Christ. Within its range none but true christians are numbered. It is the body of Christ, the increase of which He desires, and in the work of which each part of the body should take its part. Again we ask, has the reader acknowledged his responsibility in connexion with it?

The lack of apprehension as regards this is, however, of no recent date. Denominational differences have but fostered it and strengthened it. The language, too, of men accepted as perfectly proper bears witness to it as they talk of "this cause" and "that cause," or "our cause." Yet, however widely extended may be the cause for which they plead, or which they support, it is far less comprehensive than that of the body of Christ. But to a much older date than that of Luther or Calvin must we trace back this evil. For we see it in those communities in which the clergy are looked upon as the church, and in which they arrogate to themselves all church action and authority. Herein they are wrong. Those who minister the word are not the church, though part of it. The distinction between those who do minister and those who do not is perfectly scriptural, and all should maintain it. But the delegating to the clergy all church power and action resulting very probably from the decline of spirituality in early days, this it is which has deadened the sense of general responsibility in reference to the increase of the body, till what scripture says upon it has been wholly and for centuries forgotten.

The question then may be asked, what am I to do? How can I contribute to the increase of the body? The Head, we would reply, will surely teach each member what is its place in the body. To Him we should look for direction, for it is His body, and He knows the part which each can take for the increase of the whole. How often have christians looked to men for guidance as to their line of service. How often have godly men set others to work, instead of

leaving that to the wisdom of the Head, thus practically ignoring the Head. Brotherly counsel is one thing, human direction is another. Apollos, as a servant of Christ, would not be directed even by Paul. Paul acknowledged the freedom of the workman from human control.

But if we have to own failure in so little apprehending scripture teaching about the body of Christ, if from the natural selfishness of the human heart we have hitherto restricted our interest to a less range than that of Christ's body; the Head, we have to thank God, has never ceased to care for anything less than all His members. And His unwearied devotedness is seen afresh in recalling the attention of His people to important and practical truths so long forgotten.

How small, how narrow, how contracted are men's thoughts compared with the relation of the body on earth united to the Head in heaven!

What it is to have such a Head, and who is the Head, the apostle Paul dwells upon in the epistle to the Colossians. What becomes those who are members of the body, is set forth in Ephesians. To study these epistles under the teaching of the Holy Ghost we recommend all who desire full instructions on the subject.

Nothing can be closer to Christ than being a member of His body. A privilege indeed; but a privilege connected with great responsibilities.

As thus connected with Him, sectional distinctions should drop, and denominational position be surrendered.

As members one of another there are responsibilities likewise. On these we hope to touch in a future article. Meanwhile we here close for the present, hoping in our next to look at the Church as the bride of Christ.

C. E. S.

Prayer is God writing His own thoughts and purposes on my heart, and my bringing them to Him.

TOLERATION.

There is a great cry now-a-days against intolerance and bigotry; and a proportionate laudation of tolerance and liberality; and people are frightened by hard names, and deceived by soft ones, and at last, from mere habit, believe what they assert, or what others assert to them, and think that toleration must be the right thing. Progress in the search after what the world calls truth is said to be hindered by dogmatic opinions or teaching. In secular things, however, such as natural science, &c., dogmatism may be admitted. In spiritual things, and in those which concern the truth of God and the salvation of men's souls, dogma is, they say, inadmissible. We are told that what men on these subjects think to be true to-day, may to-morrow be found susceptible of modification, or be proved altogether erroneous; that doctrines and practices, good and true in one age, are unfitted for a succeeding period of the world's history, and may be pronounced "obsolete"—what would do very well in times past as the foundation of a man's hope for eternity, is quite unsuited to this more advanced age—the doctrine of to-day will in turn pass away, and be succeeded by others more advanced, and so on. In the face of such a state of things, we are told that it is presumption for any man to express conviction in a settled opinion upon any religious question or doctrine. Many, indeed, are asking, "What is Truth?" and "Who will show us any good?" but very few wait for an answer.

Toleration then is the order of the present day; and men may hold what they please, provided they will not interfere with their neighbors' opinions, and will limit the suitability of their own opinions to themselves. But it was not always so, neither will it always continue, but it is the cry of the moment, and therefore is worthy of examination.

What, then, is toleration, and why and what are we to tolerate? The very word implies a state of imper-

fection. If all were of one mind, there would be no toleration needed. If good universally prevailed, there would be nothing to tolerate. If evil were universal it would certainly be, in one sense, intolerable, though for all that it must be endured, as it will be in the "place prepared for the devil and his angels." Toleration then implies the co-existence of good and evil, in which evil is tolerated by (or by that which assumes to be) good, for toleration must necessarily be by the superior towards the inferior.

That in a sense and in degree toleration is right, none of course would deny, for God Himself tolerates, exhibits patience and long-suffering. His own word, and our own experience teach this. But with God, toleration has a limit; and it must be so; for though in grace for a time He may "endure with much long-suffering," He could not always do so without a denial of His character. A being who eternally tolerated evil would not be good, holy, or righteous; and a state in which toleration was eternally called for would not be a perfect one. Toleration, even on God's part, must therefore be defined and limited, both in its extent and its duration.

But there is another side to the question. For though in patience and grace a being who is perfectly good may for a time, and for an object, tolerate evil; toleration, if exercised by beings in themselves not good, but evil, assumes another and very different aspect. If a being who is perfectly good tolerates evil, it must be for a good end, or he would not be good; but if an imperfect being exercises toleration, we must suspect both the motive and the end. To speak of evil tolerating evil sounds paradoxical, yet as a matter of fact we meet it constantly in the world, and it is the spirit of that which people call "agreeing to differ."

Toleration then, on the part of fallible or imperfect beings, springs from one of two or three motives. First, from such self-condemnation as to render the judg-

ment of others in like doubtful circumstances impossible. Secondly, from inability to force their own views and opinions, owing to a balance of power in those opposed to them; or thirdly, from lack of certainty, and conviction of the truth of what they do hold.

Now, whilst the first is true of man in his natural state (Rom. i. 31, ii. 1), and the second undoubtedly underlies all systems of erroneous doctrine, whether infidel or superstitious; the third, we are assured, is the motive of much that is called religious toleration now-a-days. Men are uncertain in their opinions, have no solid foundation for their belief, no sure prospect for their hopes. In things which concern the soul's salvation (that which the world itself admits to be the most important of all subjects) men hold opinions as wide as the poles asunder, and few dare say in their hearts, much less with their lips, "I have found the truth."

One system of religion alone in Christendom has emphatically claimed infallibility. While that system had the power, it not only asserted infallibility, but, consistently therewith, it exercised intolerance. Its power, however, is gradually waning, and everywhere is being questioned. Its assumptions no longer raise fear in men's hearts, but rather a smile on their lips. Another spirit and a superior power has been slowly developing. Man's reason is asserting its claim, and the charity and toleration of our day are mainly the fruit of the co-existence and conflict of the spirits of superstition and infidelity. The world will yet experience again the intolerance of an overbearing power of evil. As the influence of superstition still further wanes, and the present necessity of mutual toleration ceases (for toleration will always lessen as the balance of power tends more and more in one direction, and will cease when such power can assert itself), so will the tyranny and selfishness of man uncontrolled by religion, whether false or true, be developed in the Au

tiehrist—the man of sin, the lawless, the wicked one, spoken of in the scriptures. (Dan. viii. 23, xi. 36; 2 Thess. ii.; Rev. xiii).

Hitherto we have been speaking of the character and spirit of the toleration now abroad in the world, but we also desire, if the Lord will, to say a few words for the help of those who, desiring to know and do the will of God, are yet in difficulty as to what to allow and what to refuse.

On this subject, as on every other in which the professing people of God are concerned, we can go nowhere for instruction but to God and to His word. His ways must be our example, His word our precept. All will admit that if there be any revelation of God, there must also exist in connection with it a standard of right and of truth, if it be but apprehended. But while this is admitted in a general way, there is the greatest hesitation on the part of men, either to grasp this standard for themselves, or to admit that others may have attained to it. All Christendom acknowledges Christianity as God's revelation, yet for the most part argues as if the arrival at a divine certainty of God's truth were impossible—as if, in fact, God, who gave revelation, had not intended, or was unable, to bring it home to the hearts and understandings of those to whom it has been made. Hence dogmatism is deprecated, and strong convictions generally demurred to. Even the one system which in its own self-assertion dogmatizes unhesitatingly, ceases to be dogmatic, or even confident, directly it attempts to deal with the real and primary object of a divine revelation, namely, the bringing together into acquaintance, confidence, and peace, the holy God and His sinful creatures; and denies that this end can be attained in this life, asserting by the mutilation and misapprehension of an Old Testament scripture, and in direct opposition to the whole teaching of the New Testament revelation of grace and love, that “no man knoweth whether he be worthy of love or of hate.”

But for our own part we are confident that God has given an unerring and perfect revelation, wherein He himself may be infallibly known, and His truth infallibly grasped, all the failure of His people, and the diversity and uncertainty of men's opinions, notwithstanding.

Before then we can venture to be tolerant or intolerant, the first point to be settled is the confidence and ground of the individual soul. Unless we know and are persuaded that we have the truth, it is certainly impossible for us with any decency or power to exhibit intolerance of the opinions of others.

What therefore is needed is individual personal assurance, founded on a divine, and therefore perfect authority, and when this is possessed, what, and what not, to tolerate may be soon arrived at. God's truth is the standard of doctrine; His ways, of practice.

That christian men may not, without terrible risk and responsibility, tolerate that which is contrary to God, His word distinctly teaches. Toleration of sin and of evil doctrine are denounced in many and many places, such as 1 Cor. v.; 1 Tim. v. 22; 3. John; Rev. ii. 14-16, iii. 15, 16. The warnings of Christ to the churches are solemn words in the present day, when men tolerate every form of evil under the common name of Christianity, and deprecate the judgment of opinions and teaching the most dishonouring to Christ, and His work. How do the words of Mal. ii. 17 apply to such? "Ye have wearied the Lord with your words; yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied Him? When ye say that every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delighteth in them." When professing Christians are asked to judge and separate from evil doctrine and practice, they reply, "How are we to judge that to be wrong which is conscientiously held?" or more often they retort, "Who are you, thus to judge others?" And why is this but that men calling themselves by the name of Christ, hold not in their own

souls the power of Christianity as God's full and final revelation of Himself? and on this everything turns. If I hold doctrines as mere matters of opinion, how can I contend against contrary views held by others on the same ground, and by the same right.

But when the heart and mind are persuaded and pervaded by the truth of God, we do not speak of "my opinions" or "my ideas" and we do not, and ought not, to set up our opinions against those of others. It is not that "I think one thing and you another, and we shall never agree," but it is that I believe *God*, that I have submitted to His word, I have accepted and adopted His thoughts, He has answered every question of my heart, and He alone can answer truly any question of any heart. What may be advanced to the contrary is not against the believer's opinions merely, but against the word of the God in whom he has believed; and thus false doctrine or opinions contrary to such an one's faith cannot be tolerated, or admitted as having any weight or claim whatever. In dealing with them grace and wisdom are, however, needed, and the believer has to judge, and has the ability also to judge (1 Cor. ii. 11-15), the spirit in which they may be advanced. He will make a difference between the teacher of evil doctrine, and those taught and deceived thereby. Whilst after admonition he will reject the former, and tolerate neither the teacher nor the teaching, he will have compassion on the latter—the one who is ignorant and deceived; and while refusing and correcting the error, will in no wise reject the person. The believer will "have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; he will lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for the feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed." In meekness also he will endeavor to instruct those that oppose themselves. Here, however, there is danger of failure. Often we lack patience with those whose

hearts are truly upright, but who are unskilful in the word of righteousness, or have been deceived by false teaching. Or, again, in tolerating the person who is ignorant we go too far, and tolerate, or appear to tolerate, his opinions and ways, and thus are unfaithful to the person, and to God and His word. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity;" and if the believer sees one in ignorance linked with that which in any degree is contrary to the mind and truth of Christ, he must not touch the evil which *he* knows to be evil, out of any consideration of love for the other. For instance, one dear to us may be linked with a false system of religious doctrine, which we know to be contrary to God. Are we to say that he believes it, and therefore we must acknowledge his right to practice it, and aid him in doing so? Surely not! We must no more acknowledge for another the right to believe and practice error, than for ourselves. We may not be able to persuade, or even to interfere on the subject, but we can no more aid and abet in it, than we could in facilitating the suicide of a friend, who assured us on his word of honor that he was weary of life.

But we are well assured of this, that the more our own souls are imbued and satisfied with the truth of God, as it is revealed in Christ, the less tolerant shall we be of all that is contrary to it, and yet the more able are we to exhibit the patience and grace of Christ Himself, towards the *persons* who may be involved in error. For while in a sense there is nothing so intolerant as truth, yet the one who has truth, knows that both "*Grace and truth* came by Jesus Christ," and he does not therefore separate what God thus joined together in the revelation of Himself. On the other hand, error knows not grace, and cannot shew it. When unchecked by a conflicting power, error propagates itself by force, fraud, and cruelty. So was Romanism in the darker ages; so will be infidelity in the latter days (1 Tim. iv.; 2 Tim. iii.; Rev. xiii. 14, 15).

To be persuaded in our own souls that so far as we have attained (for we only know in part—1 Cor. xiii. 9; Phil. iii. 12, 13), we hold the truth of God Himself, gives us an immeasurable superiority in dealing with the souls of others, and enables us, while unsparing towards error, to manifest the toleration and long-suffering of God towards those who are deceived thereby. Compassed ourselves with infirmity, having nothing but the grace of God to boast in, we have not to assert ourselves, but simply that which is due to Him who has left us here to be witnesses for His truth.

With regard to toleration of the religious opinions of others, which is so strongly advocated now-a-days, we would observe that nothing is more resented by the majority of professing Christians than to have their profession judged. They claim for themselves the liberty which they profess to accord to others. Their position is, however, untenable if judged by God's word. However great the confusion may have become, there is in scripture a distinct recognition of a "without" and a "within." In Christendom no doubt the line is all but obliterated; but, nevertheless, all who take Christ's name and call themselves christians, unquestionably assume the *inside* place, and are therefore liable to be judged by their fellows. "Do ye not also judge them that are within?" The christian is not called on to judge the world. "Them that are without God judgeth;" but we are often in difficulties now-a-days from finding those who call themselves christians, and thus claim to be "within," so linked with the outside world, that it is impossible to know how to class them. All we can say is, that while they make very bad christians, they are a very good imitation of what is commonly called the world.

Every professing christian is therefore liable to have his profession judged, and all that such can require is that he may be judged by the word of God, and not by the measure of another's, or even of his

own, conscience. If we can bear that test, we can say with the apostle that with us it is a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment (1 Cor. iv. 3). We fear, however, that much of the tenderness we find abroad on this point, arises from inability to do so.

Finally, we ask our readers to examine their own position and practice as to toleration, and to ascertain whether their own hearts are persuaded by, and satisfied with, God's revelation, we do not say with man's interpretation of it, but with the revelation itself: Christ, the Son of the living God—Him who has the words of eternal life, God manifest in flesh, crucified in weakness, declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection of the dead, and now by the right hand of God exalted? Is He so the ground of their peace and confidence? Has the word which reveals Him so laid hold of their souls that they can say, "Let God be true, though (if need be) every man a liar?" Do they believe God rather than man, and know and recognize the immeasurable claim which He has, not only on our love, but on our obedience and life? Lukewarmness is a hateful thing in the sight of One who has spared nothing for the benefit and blessing of those He loves. Where love in one is "strong as death," how hateful to find its objects careless and indifferent! To such Christ says, "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." But even this is not His last word to them; for He adds, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. . . . He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

H. O. G. B.

To be taken entirely out of self is the next thing to having Christ set up in me.

“THY WILL BE DONE.”

I.

Father ! how oft with careless lip,
 Or ignorant of what is fit
 While we are choosing our own way,
 We trip along and fearless say,
 “ *Thy will be done !*”

II.

But when the ills of life prevail,
 In various forms our steps assail ;
 When hopes, all blasted, prostrate lie ;
 When love's fair blossoms withering die ;
 When every cup of pleasure sweet
 Does but our happiness defeat ;
 When want, disease, or death appear,
 To stay our course, arouse our fear ;
 When mental powers grow faint and ill,
 Unable to control the will—
 When gloomy clouds obscure the sky—
 Hiding Thy face (Thou, ever nigh) ;
 When He, the Way, the Truth, the Light,
 Our blessed Lord seems hid from sight ;
 When God the Spirit, Heavenly Guest,
 Sheds forth *no* ray within the breast ;
 Oh ! then how feeble is our cry,
 As, faltering, we tearful sigh,
 “ *Thy will be done !*”

III.

Most gracious Father ! nature's moan,
 For wilfulness can ne'er atone :
 Thy wisdom and Thy holiness,
 Thy purposes all fathomless,
 It cannot comprehend and love,
 Or Thy true faithfulness approve !
 Chafing, it fain would guide Thy hand,
 And bow *Thy* will to *its* command ;
 It hates rebuke, scorns to obey,
 Nor *can* it, for it *will not* pray,
 “ **THY WILL BE DONE !**”

IV.

Spite of ourselves, our state of death,
 Life from the Son—His living breath—
 Thine own pure gift, *to us is given,*
 Making us heirs of *Thine and heaven ;*

Life from His death, brought from His grave,
 That life, Christ's life, from death doth save.
 'Tis born of Thee, by Thee it lives—
 Thy word, its food, the Spirit gives.
 The work is Thine—the life is Thine !
 In Thy true character divine,
 Of Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
 Thou hast revealed the priceless cost
 Of our release from Satan's chains,
 And *heirship* to the Saviour's claims.
 This new-formed life, in every saint,
 Though oft through trials weak and faint,
 To Thee by faith, lifts up the eye,
 And fully trusting, earnest cries,
 "THY WILL BE DONE !"

V.

Oh, may Thy gracious, sovereign will,
 Towards us Thy purposes fulfil ;
 Our dross consume, the gold refine,
 Till we with thy reflection shine ;
 And while the furnace-fires we prove,
 Sustain us by Thy conscious love ;
 So shall we learn Thy will, Thy way,
 And from the heart devoutly say,
 "THY WILL BE DONE !"

VI.

Develop all Thou canst require,
 Bring all our aspirations higher ;
 Our will, our ways conform to Thee,
 That they fresh praise to Thee may be .
 Perfect Thy work in us begun,
 To bear the image of Thy Son.
 "THY WILL BE DONE !"

S. H. B.

The great thing in service is to keep in company with the Lord Jesus. Paul when he speaks of service does not tell of the number he had converted, or of his success, as men call it, but of the things he had endured, the number of times he had been put down. Think of the Lord sending out a man, and saying "I will show him how great things he must *suffer*," not do.

FAMILIAR LETTERS ON THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

NO. II.

In taking up this precious subject, dear E., the chief difficulty is to make a selection from the vast amount of scripture that crowds upon the heart and mind. There must needs be a great limitation, and probably only a few items can be given, and this in the most elementary manner. The first intimation of the coming of the Lord, is in the word addressed to Satan in the garden in Gen. iii. 15, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." Here we may use the rendering of the Hebrew that Gesenius gives, "He shall crush thy head and thou shalt bite His heel," or, as it is given in the Holy Spirit's interpretation, "That He through death might annul him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. ii. 14).

You will bear in mind that there are two men whose histories are fully given in the scriptures; Adam and Christ, the first man and the Second Man. The first man was of the earth, earthy. In Gen. ii. 5, it is said there was not a man "to till the ground." Then God formed man for this. He was not made for heaven, but for the earth. Before and after the fall he was "to till the ground" (Gen. iii. 23). He was placed in responsibility here with a single command, which he transgressed and fell, showing himself unfit for anything. It was here that the Second Man was announced as the seed of the woman who should overcome him who had brought all the ruin. So from that moment He is seen as the man of all God's counsels. God could not trust man, is the reason of the coming of Christ the chosen, the anointed, who, when He was here, instead of losing by all testing, did nothing but gain victories. The Second Man was from heaven, as distinctively as the first one was of the earth.

The first man was a living soul, and, as breathed

into by God, would live forever, but his whole history, culminating in the cross, demonstrated that he could never be trusted. The Second Man was a quickening spirit. He did not take our nature; though truly a man He was not of Adam, or He could not have been trusted either. He was made of a woman, was the woman's Seed.

It is easy, when once the eye is directed to Him, to trace this wonderful Person throughout the earliest scriptures as the meaning of every symbol, as the resource into which God retreated upon every failure of man in all the ages in which he was being tried, as the bringer in of every purpose of grace and glory either from or before the foundation of the world, so that we can understand that all things were made for Him. During all the successive dispensations wherein man's incorrigibility was being proved, they who accepted the fact of failure and sin, found refuge in God Himself, who was leaning on Him who was to come, and reckoned them in Him. Thus Abel took the ground of the ruin of the first man, and brought death as the expression of it, with the fat expressive of the energy and sweetness of that which God could accept—the New Man. Enoch took his place with God apart from the earth cursed with a murderer; and Noah became heir of the righteousness that is by faith siding with God, that the end of all flesh had come before Him. Faith always was leaving the first man and going over to the Second, according to the measure of the revelation of God. He was the one God meant, under whatever form He appealed to faith. With Abraham it was leaving his country and kindred when man had sunk into idolatry. With Moses and the children of Israel it was leaving Egypt, and under Joshua entering into the land of Canaan. But it was taking God's journey away from the old man and all his works. And so through all the line of those who obtained a good report whether judge, prophet or king, or men and women in unofficial walks whose walk was with God's mind.

I would not weary you with this strain which, however, is important and pertinent to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is indicative of man's total worthlessness that in every new position in which he was placed he failed, and at once, in the beginning, rather than after a prolonged faithfulness. You see this in Adam, Noah, Abraham and Israel as marking great epochs, such as being placed in innocence; and then, after the flood, with the responsibility of human government, having the sword given into his hand; or being called out in separation to the Lord of glory as Abraham was, who, after so slowly going into the land, halting on the way, soon went down to Egypt; or Israel under the law breaking it at once, and forfeiting all for which He had led them out and their lives too. Adam failed as a man having headship of creation, Noah as governor, Abraham as separated, Israel as a servant.

There never was a more terrible wreck than that of Israel. All nations of the earth were to experience the benefit of its being taken up, as all had been located with especial reference to this one people (Deut. xxxii. 8). It would seem as though the world, lost in Adam and broken into fragments in the Noachic age, was again to be gathered under blessing, and God down here holding court among men would demonstrate a better condition than Eden's innocence, a richer rule than Noah's, perfect laws perfectly administered by the present God, the Lord of the whole earth.

He found them at the time of their utmost weakness, when they were no nation, not when they had an organized commonwealth with all its traditions and established customs. Everything was emptiness and He began to build at the bottom. But ere the foundation was laid, the materials crumbled in His hands. They altogether forsook His ways. They began with making a golden calf and worshipped it, and ended with putting the Son of God

to death, and with that came the crash and doom of all man's hopes as built up in the first man. They could not stand, for there was no good thing in them.

So on the part of the nations. As their blessing was vested in Israel's, what interests were involved in the latter's enfranchisement and establishment! Yet all nations opposed them; Egypt at the beginning, Amalek through the journey in the wilderness, Bashan and the Amorites at the end, the seven mighty nations in the land, and then when settled, all the surrounding people and kingdoms made them a target for their hatred and envy, and a prey for their greed. They seem to have been the one people whom all determined to remove from the face of the earth. Could man be entrusted with his own blessing or be charged with any of God's thoughts?

Israel seemed always bent on opposing the will of God. When He led them to the place from which He told them to go into Canaan they refused utterly; when He said, "Well, you shall stay in the wilderness for forty years," they at once responded, "Now we will go up." If God liked a thing, they lost interest in it; if He wanted anything, they went the other way. A nation called out to testify to the one God, and to the happiness of the people whose God was Jehovah, shaming the most degraded with the multitude and grossness of their idolatries, and making the name of God to be blasphemed among the Gentiles (Rom. ii. 24), and becoming, in the end, the most unhappy and wretched of all, a people scattered and peeled, a hissing and a by-word.

And this was their way throughout their history. As soon as the law was given they failed under it. At once upon the consecration of the priests they offered strange fire and were cut off, and Aaron alone allowed to come into the presence of Jehovah, and he but once a year and not without blood. Their choice of a king was only the acting of rebellion, and under the kings all the fearful elements of ruin were dis-

closed and their dispersion consummated. Alas for the world, if Israel is the almoner of its gifts, the vessel of its blessings, standing in the first man!

I need scarcely mention the Gentile authorities in showing that the first man and all his works are a failure. Found in utter selfishness and violence in a consolidated form, the enemy of God and His nation, they were not commissioned for blessing for the world, but rather left for a time to develop all that would verify the title of "beasts" that was given to them viewed from God's side (Dan. vii). All through their course it was a time of ignorance which God winked at, until at the beginning of His work by the exaltation of the Second Man "He commanded all men everywhere to repent," and that would be without exception to abandon the man of the earth, to confess his ruin, and, of course, their own individual sinfulness and guilt.

My object in these suggestions is only to illustrate the worthlessness and untrustworthiness of man. God cannot make use of him to accomplish His purposes in regard to the earth, and I have dwelt most upon Israel as His instrument, because it was an earthly people and special overtures were made to it.

Now God has not made this creation that He pronounced "very good" to be a disappointment and a failure, for He declares that creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God (Rom. viii. 21). Nor does He account that man's efforts are moving on to this. He sees no progress under man's hand; "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. viii. 22). He purposed that man should be head of creation, giving Him dominion over the beasts of the field. But when He put Israel in their land He said He would not drive out the nations all at once, lest the beasts of the field should multiply against them (Ex. xxiii. 29). Surely the subjection that man exercises over a few

animals now is not the fulfilment of that purpose, for "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them" (Isa. xi. 6).

So also He did not commit government to man to be a mere spectacle of wrong and outrage and concentrated selfishness. But His purpose is that righteousness shall be exalted everywhere, and the result quietness and peace forever. Here, in the very scene of all the woe and wrong and untold calamities that are the outcome of man's actions in all the centuries of his trial, He is to set up a kingdom, not by the work of man's progress, but which shall break in pieces and consume *all* these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever (Dan. ii. 44). The entrance of sin, and the total ruin of the first man, opened the way for the bringing in of the Second Man. It showed the need, it developed the thought and purposes of God as He proposed one thing after another.

And He, having put His mind and hand to these various displays, having projected and pledged that which shall be a testimony and revelation of His wisdom and love in each of them, *waits* for the Man of His right hand. The burden of all these things is upon HIM, to undo and to do, to bring forth beauty for ashes, to assert the divine idea of MAN, to make all things new. He must accomplish to the fullest possibility of glory and renown all that God has invested in MAN, the KING, the SERVANT, the SON of God whom He has appointed heir of all things.

I have but glanced at the earth in these paragraphs. But as God in the beginning made the heavens and the earth, the heavens have their interest and their future, too, and surely the first man could do nothing there. As yet Satan dwells in heavenly places, the prince of the power of the air, and is the prince of this world, the god of this age.

Yours in the Risen Man,

* *

PHILIPPIANS.

Chapter iv.

The thought of the Lord's return, and its glorious results seems to have filled the apostle's heart with fresh affection for his dear children in the faith. He calls them his dearly beloved, and longed for, his joy and his crown, and exhorts them to stand fast in the Lord. Further down he would have them *rejoice in the Lord*. And dear reader it is no small matter for saints to stand fast in the Lord, in the full sense of what true christianity is. For christianity is not the systematic order of things we see around us. There is what is true in it, but mixed up with much that is false. What the faithful have got to do is to stand separate from all evil, and to be witnesses only to what is good and true, and that is Christ. But to witness for Christ only as Saviour, that is not the whole of christianity. There are many individual witnesses to this in Christendom, which was the grand truth revived at the Reformation. The grand truth of justification by faith without works was then restored. But is this all the truth of Christianity? Did Christ merely come down here that sinners might be justified and go to heaven instead of to hell? Was that all the thought of God in regard to His Christ? Surely not, and so He has exalted the Man who has done this blessed work with the purpose of making Him the *centre* of all His purposes of glory.

Yes, *Christ* Himself and His glory, is the thought and purpose of God. To have a heavenly family for Himself is another thought of our Father, and this heavenly family He is now calling out. To call out a Bride for His Son is another of His chief thoughts, then to clear these heavens and earth of sin, and hand them over to the dominion of Christ, is all in the thought and purpose of God. All these things are in the mind of God, and He wants a witness to these things in this world. The church was to have

been that witness, but alas, Christ's glory has been well nigh forgotten. His present position at the right hand of God, as head of His body, the church, has well nigh been lost. His lordship claims have been quietly laid aside, and a new order, system and rule, reigns in the professing bride of Christ on earth who ought to be entirely separate from the world, and awaiting the Lord from heaven. Where do we see on earth a corporate body, acting together as if testifying its living link of union by the Holy Ghost with Christ in heaven? Where is the witness that for the church the only bond of union between its members and the Head in heaven is the *Holy Ghost*? Where is the waiting together in the expectation of the return of the Bridegroom from heaven, as a living reality? These were the grand truths witnessed to by the church when first set up on earth. It was a witness to Christ being its head, the Holy Ghost in the assembly witnessed to His lordship, and ruled in the house of God; and all the saints were looking forward with longing expectation for the return of the Bridegroom, knowing that their hopes were linked with that return, and that then God's glory would be fully manifested, in Christ having His heavenly Bride with Him, and in Christ taking the kingdom over Israel and the nations in this world, after first clearing it by judgment on the wicked.

It was in view of such truths that the saints at Philippi were to stand fast. They were to stand fast, not only as justified ones, but as those that had a position in connexion with the Lord in glory, who was head of His body, the assembly. They were *in the Lord*, the Holy Ghost gave them that place, constituted them heavenly men, as the word said, whose citizenship is in heaven. They were to stand fast as rejected by this world, and in the heavenly Man, who was the last Adam, the Quickening Spirit. This means that I am to hold fast my union with Christ. I am to stand fast realizing continually my position *in*

the Lord, as no longer in the flesh. This is of all importance for the weak. And I cannot rejoice in the Lord continually unless first I stand fast in the Lord. If two saints, for instance that have been quarrelling like Euodias and Syntyche,* give up their position at the Lord's table, where the saints manifest that they are members together of the one body of Christ, these are not standing fast in the Lord; at least certainly not before the saints. They give up the place where the manifestation of their full standing in grace is manifested; for the sake of a quarrell. The result is worse departure. But the apostle would have these saints be of the same mind in the Lord, and submitting themselves to the rule of the Holy Ghost to bring them to the same mind. He entreated also, a true yoke-fellow to help certain women who labored with the apostle in the gospel, with Clement also, and other of Paul's fellow laborers, whose names were in the book of life.

Finally he would have the saints rejoice in the Lord always. This is more than the boasting in Christ Jesus of chapter ii. 3. The latter was one of the essential marks of true christianity. But this is the result of walking with the Lord, and communion with the Father; only that here the Lord is the object. It is the privilege of obedient christians to rejoice in the Lord always; to rejoice in what He is for us, and in union with ourselves, to rejoice in His Person, in all that the Father finds to delight in Him. In this chapter it may be in His all sufficiency for all the circumstances through which we are passing as christians, giving us favor to rise superior to all. Compare 1 John i. 3; John xv. 2 as to joy being the result of fellowship and obedience. Boasting in Christ Jesus (Phil. iii. 3) is the portion and mark of

* Note.—I do not mean that Euodias and Syntyche did do this. I only bring it forward as an illustration for the benefit of the saints in the present time.

every true christian. The apostle would have the saints' gentleness known unto all men. The Lord was at hand, about to descend into the air, as He had alluded to in chap. iii. 20, 21. In view of that day, he would have the saints careful for nothing. Not to let opposing circumstances and trials through which they were passing trouble them, but on the contrary making them all an occasion of putting all these troubles in the hand of God, in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, to make their requests known to God, and then the peace of God would keep their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Blessed result of casting our cares on God, of putting everything that troubles us into His hands, and then even though He should not deliver us from the trouble, yet having left the trouble with Him, His peace takes possession of, garrisons our hearts. For indeed, God is not troubled by every little thing as we are. He sees the end from the beginning, is perfect love and overrules everything for His glory and the good of His own dear children. The reader must not confound this peace here with Rom. v. 1. There it is a certain unalterable state we are introduced into toward God, as the result of being justified by faith. But here it is God's peace taking possession of our hearts as the result of our casting our cares upon Him. All saints have peace with God, but all saints do not have God's peace garrisoning their hearts, unless they fulfil the conditions of Phil. iv. 6, 7.

But the saints were not only to put their trouble and cares, the result of passing through a world of evil, into God's hands, the apostle would have them occupied with what was good. (v. 8.) "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any **I**rtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

is not well for us to be occupied with evil ever; we

have to be, if it is there, in order to judge it and keep separate from it, but to be occupied with good and that is Christ. There is nothing good out of Him, and everything true, honest, pure, just, lovely, and of good report was of Him. Those things also which the saints had learnt and received and seen in Paul, he would have them do, and then the God of peace would be with them, for He uses the source of all the truth, which had been communicated to them through the apostle, a special line of truth as has been remarked before, so that Paul could even set himself before the saints an example to be followed. The God of peace was the source of the good, the new creation; to be occupied with the things that related to the Lord Jesus Himself, and the truths specially connected with the ministry of the apostle Paul in regard to the new creation in the church, and the consequent practice resting for it, could have as its result the God of peace as their companion. He could be with them.

And now beloved reader, let me ask you, do you habitually take every care to God, putting it into His hands, and leaving it there, so that His peace keeps your heart? and do you seek to be occupied with what is good around you, to follow out Paul's doctrine and practice, so as to have consciously the God of peace as your companion. What a wondrous result of walking with God! God's peace keeping the heart, the God of peace our companion. O! for more reality! What can more glorify God than for a saint walking through a scene of trouble, ruin and death, yet walking superior to it, and occupied with good, occupied with Christ. Reader, remember the little words: 1st. Stand fast in the Lord. 2d. Rejoice in the Lord. 3d. Be careful for nothing, &c. 4th. Whatsoever things are true, &c., think on these things. Then you will be a man above circumstances like the apostle.

He takes occasion to bring this out in the following verses in reference to the care the Philippians had

been showing him, in reference to sending him money to supply his need. He rejoiced greatly in the Lord that their care for him had flourished again, wherein also they had been careful, but they had lacked opportunity to send the help. But he did not speak in respect to want, for he had learnt, in whatever state he was in, to be therewith content. He knew how to be abased, and how to abound; everywhere and in all things he was instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. He could do all things through Christ that strengthened him. He could rejoice in the Lord even in a prison. With death staring him in the face, Christ was his joy, Christ was his strength. The Lord had passed through all the circumstances he had been passing through, and had triumphed over them all, finding in them all the joy of His Father as His strength, so it was with the apostle. Christ was His life, and Christ lived in Him, the power and strength that had gained the victory and proved itself superior to all adverse circumstances was his, and thus the apostle practically triumphed as he realized it. Blessed indeed if any of us realize it just a little. Perhaps we would not quote the passage so often as applied to our little victories over circumstances, if we realized the great victories the apostle had gained, and was gaining. He reminds his dear Philippians of their care of him from the beginning; when he departed from Macedonia no assembly had helped him but them; even when he was in Thessalonica they had sent once and again to his necessity. He said these things not because he desired a gift, but he desired that fruit might abound to their account. Blessed unselfishness to be manifested among the saints of God! The apostle for himself had all and abounded; he was full having received of Epaphroditus the things the Philippians had sent, which were an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice well pleasing to the Lord.

But Paul's God would supply all their need accord-

ing to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus, to Him the Father be glory forever. Amen. Precious comfort for the saints of God ! To all appearance often unable to make ends meet, perhaps without a crust of bread in their houses, but the God of Paul who had helped him, supplied all his need, would supply their need, not according to it, but according to *his riches* in glory by Christ Jesus. He sends his greetings to every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who were with Paul saluted them, as well as all the saints in Rome, some even Cesar's household, such was the manifest progress of the gospel. He ends up by writing that the grace of the Lord Jesus might be with them.

A. P. O. ,

SIMPLE PAPERS ON THE CHURCH OF GOD.

v.

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST.

As the assembly of Christ, the church is told of its everlasting security ; as His body, it is reminded of its responsibility ; as His bride, it even now enjoys in a special manner His love ; "for Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (Eph. v. 25). To her *present* position of bride the attention of the reader is requested.

The appellation of bride, used of the church, is only met with in the Apocalypse (xxi. 9 ; xxii. 17), in which book she is also called the Lamb's wife (xix. 7 ; xxi. 9). She is the bride of the Lamb, and to Him only, of course, does she stand in this position, to be openly manifested as such, after that which professes to be the church shall have been publicly judged as the great whore (Rev. xix. 2), the Babylon of the Apocalypse. Now from three of the New Testament penmen do we learn about the church

in this special connexion with Christ. Of her beauty in the Lamb's eyes Matthew tells us; of Christ's care and service, to make her answer to the desire of His heart, Paul informs us. To John was it permitted to behold in vision something of her personal glory, when she shall be displayed to the world as the Bride, the Lamb's wife. Now such teaching is peculiar to the New Testament. No Old Testament prophet ever touched upon this theme. No Old Testament poet ever descanted upon such a union; yet David was inspired to sing of the King's consort (Ps. xlv.); Solomon composed the "Song of songs"; Isaiah described the future glory and greatness of her to whom Jehovah will be an husband (Isa. liv). These inspired men, however, were occupied with something very different from the Church of God. A little attention will make this clear.

Isaiah tells us plainly that it is of Jerusalem he writes (Isa. liv.), to which Jehovah formerly acted as husband (Ezek. xvi. 8-14), till forced to cast her off for a time for her whoredom with the nations, her lovers. Having learnt to her sorrow what widowhood and shame are, she will by-and-by enjoy restoration to divine favor, and be publicly reinstated in her proper relation to Him who is Israel's King and her husband. It was of this bright future that David sung when he penned that "song of loves" (Ps. xlv.), in which the queen was introduced, and described as accompanied by her virginal train, when she has received from the King the place of honor, and her favor is to be sought after by the rich among the people.

But is not the church, it may be asked, made mention of in this psalm? Heavenly saints, who form it, are expressly noticed therein, though as quite distinct from the queen. They are just touched upon under the term "His fellows" (v. 7), among whom, as Heb. iii. 14 in the original makes plain, we must include all those who are now saints upon earth, believers on the Lord Jesus Christ. The "fellows" of the King must

be very different from the queen. Both, indeed, have to do with Him who is the King, though clearly distinct the one from the other.

Of Jerusalem's past and future the prophetic word instructs us. Her restoration to favor, and to her proper position before all the earth, the prophet Isaiah predicts, and the psalmist graphically depicts.

But for this to be righteously effected there must be the moral restoration of the remnant of the people. Now it is of this Solomon writes in the Canticles, the purport of which, briefly expressed, is to show the pains taken by the Beloved to get hold afresh of the full affection of His loved one. For though Jerusalem, not the nation, is the queen, Jehovah will stand to the nation also, as He has done once, in the relation of her husband (Hosea ii. 16-20). So before Jerusalem can have her place of honor by the King's side, the remnant of the people must be restored in heart to Him from whom they have revolted. Canticles describe Christ dealing with hearts. Isaiah liv., Psalm xlv. acquaint us with Jerusalem's future glory, for the two are not described therein as meeting for the first time. Canticles then does not set forth the intercourse of the church with Christ. The church is not mentioned in the Song of songs, though Christ is prominent in the book, and the affection of His heart toward His earthly people is beautifully set forth. Yet there is much instruction for the individual Christian in that unique composition of the son of David; and many a believer, tasting of the unwearied love of Christ, after he has wandered in heart from Him, has found therein language just suited to him as a saint. The church's position, however, in reference to Christ, and His dealings with her, are very different from both the one and the other as set forth in that book.

For all teaching then about the Church, as the bride of Christ, we must turn to the New Testament. To that let us now direct our attention.

On the shore of the lake of Galilee, in the audience of the multitude, the Lord spake the parables of the sower, the tares, the mustard-tree, and the leaven. Inside the house, when alone with His disciples, He expounded the parable of the tares, and gave to them in addition those of the treasure, the pearl, and the net (Matt. xiii. 1-52). The outward character of the kingdom of the heavens, as men would see it, the Lord spake in parables to the multitude. Its aspect from God's point of view He reserved for the special information of His disciples. They, and they only, were then permitted to learn what a treasure His saints were to Him, what a beautiful thing the church would be in His eyes, and how He would care for His own people—symbolized by the good fish—through the instrumentality of His ministering servants. For the reader will remark, that in the parable of the net the good fish only are cared for, in the supplementary remarks the bad fish only are dealt with. On that occasion, in the house, it was disclosed for the first time, that there should be an object of surpassing beauty in the eyes of Christ, which He would die to possess, He would buy the field for the sake of the treasure concealed in it; but He would purchase the pearl for its own preciousness.

Seeking goodly pearls, the merchantman is arrested in his search by the sight of one pearl of great price. His search is stopped; he goes no further; he desires nothing more. Pearls he was seeking for; one pearl when found has satisfied his heart's desire. To possess it now is all his aim. He has valued it, and valued it aright. What is that value? Who shall determine it? Who shall give the price? One alone does that; the merchantman himself. He went, we read, and sold all that he had, and bought it. Its value to him is attested by that which he gives to possess it; for he must possess it. In plain language Christ would die to possess that one pearl. It is of His death, then, that He makes mention; and it is in

these two parables that the Lord in this chapter speaks of His death. Other scriptures acquaint us with the atoning character of His death. These parables acquaint us with another reason why He died. He wanted to acquire the treasure; He desired to possess the pearl. How precious, then, to Him, how satisfying to His eye and heart, is the one pearl of great price, for which, in order to purchase it, He has given up all that He, speaking of Himself here, of course, as a man possessed. The language of Scripture we must remember is definite; no waste of words do we find in that book. Whenever then we meet with epithets, we may be sure that there is force in them. So let the reader note the language of Christ Himself: one pearl of *great price* (πολύτιμον). No mere man surely would ever have dared thus to characterize the church.

Many and many a saint has heartily, truly declared, that Christ is to them the chiefest among ten thousand; but Christ by this epithet tells us what His church is in His eyes. Of the church's affection for Christ we read elsewhere; but in the parable, and in Eph. v., it is His estimate of her, and His love to her that is dwelt upon. What her joy will be might be conceived; what His delight in her would be had need to be revealed, and that He Himself first touched upon.

Passing from the parable to the doctrinal teaching of Eph. v., where Paul writes of the church in its spousal relation to Christ, we are taught of His love to her, the way in which He has shown it, does prove it, and will yet manifest it. But, as is often the case in Scripture, the Spirit of God, while touching upon what has already been revealed, adds to its fulness. The parable described Christ giving up all He had to possess the pearl. The Holy Ghost, in the Ephesians, speaks in language, if possible, yet more full. For the apostle wrote: "Christ loved the church, and gave *Himself* for it" (Eph. v. 25). All that He

could give for it, all that He can be to it, she is assured of in these words.

A pearl of great price! But who would have discovered that? who, looking around on the Church of God, remembering the sadly-blotted history it possesses, surveying what it is at present, who indeed would ever have discovered that it was a pearl, that it had any beauty, and that it was an object of great price? To bring this out, to make manifest its beauty and preciousness, Christ has and does minister to it.

We should mark the progressive stages of His service which the apostle traces out for us. First, Christ gave Himself for the assembly. He died to possess the Church, and that because He loved it. The motive, the reason for thus dying, was simply the love of His heart. The parable tells us He desired to purchase it. The teaching of Ephesians acquaints us with the secret motive—love for it. His service for the assembly did not however end there. Man's devotedness can proceed no further than to die instead of his object; but in dying man loses any earthly object. Christ, on the contrary, died to possess the assembly, and His service for the object of His heart begins where that of a mere man's must end. So, secondly, He sanctifies it and cleanses it with the washing of water by the word.

As first possessed then by Him, it does not answer to that which He desires. A pearl it is in His eyes, but He must bring out its beauty. This He does by the application of the word. Once it was not His, but He bought it. It was not clean so He would cleanse it. It was not set apart, but he would sanctify it. These are tokens of His love to His assembly. By-and-by He will present the assembly to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Such is the end He has in view. What a service He has undertaken! What an end has He proposed to Himself! What delight will He have when He

presents the assembly to Himself glorious, without any blemish. Throughout this passage the reader should remark, we have nothing told us of the church's joy. Christ's love, Christ's present service, the end He has in view, on these points the Holy Ghost delights to dwell.

What a condition must the assembly be in when He has to sanctify and cleanse it (or, as some would translate, "having cleansed it"), by the washing of water by the word, a plain declaration that it is not what He wants; Yet He will not rest till He has made it all He desires.

But more, He "nourisheth and cherisheth it" (Eph. v. 29). All that it needs in its spousal relation to Him He supplies. To make it conformable to His desire, He applies to it the word. Besides this, He ministers to it all that it wants. Nourishing and cherishing! What grace is there in that! Giving Himself for it, sanctifying it, cleansing it. What grace, too, in all this! Viewed as man views the assembly, could we say that it has requited such care and love? How little have those who form part of it had intelligence as to that which Christ is doing. There was surely a time in the history of every believer whose eye may light on this page, when salvation from wrath was desired, and perhaps known, but church relationship to Christ unknown, or ignored. Can all the readers of this paper say that such is no longer true of them?

Unchanged, however, is Christ's estimate of the assembly's worth. What the parable sets forth, His constant service on its behalf confirms. Yet how soon had He to tell one assembly that it had left its first love, and to charge another with having in the midst that doctrine which He hated (Rev. ii. 15, compared with v. 6). How early in the history of the church had Jezebel been allowed a footing in that which bore His name, and He Himself had to stand without, knocking to learn, as it were, whether there

was in the assembly at Laodicea one heart faithful to Him. This personal ministration of Christ testified to the unchanging affection of His heart (Rev. iii. 19), and evidenced that he well knew the condition and position of his people, and most truly desired their welfare.

But this was in the past. Is He *still* unchanged? Those surely who have learnt in these days truth about the church so long neglected, and even forgotten, can testify that His love and service are as unwearied as ever. Blessed for them that it is so. For what must those who form part of it be by nature, when, to enforce the observance by the husband of his duty and bearing towards his wife, the love of Christ and His service to the church is set forth as a fitting illustration. What creatures to need such an exhortation! How richly blest to be objects of Christ's love!

By-and-by His object will be accomplished. His present service to the assembly will cease, only because it will not be required; and He will present it to Himself glorious, answering to His wish about it. At this point, however, we must pass from the writings of Paul to those of John.

Paul has set forth Christ's love to the church, and told even as an assembly of its relation to Christ, as representing locally the Bride (2 Cor. xi. 2). John writes of the time when the marriage of the Lamb shall have come (Rev. xix. 7), but the actual marriage he never describes. For like the inside of the Father's house it is essentially a scene fit only for heaven, and never therefore disclosed to the view of men on earth.

We hear of the marriage of the Lamb. We are shown the Bride, the Lamb's wife after the marriage, when displayed to the earth, but her presentation to Him is carefully hidden from us. Heaven rejoices at it we learn. Blessed, too, we are told, will those be who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. xix. 7-9). Here again all is looked at from

the Lamb's point of view, not from that of the Bride. It is the fulfilment of His long-cherished desire that the great multitude unanimously announce.

What her feelings will be John was not directed here to declare.

We do, however, gather from some of his writings something of her feelings towards Christ; for when He announces Himself at the end of the Revelation as the root and offspring of David, and the bright and Morning Star, an immediate response is made to Him by the Spirit and the bride who both address Him saying "Come." Her desire is to see Him. She wishes for His return. She asks Him to come. That is the voice of the church as a whole. When it was in its pristine condition one could have fancied the whole assembly, with one heart and voice uttering that word "Come." In the present condition of the assembly that cannot be done. Some there are, really, part of the body of Christ, who understand not the truth of the Lord's return. Some too have taken the place of being christians—are such in name, but in name only. How could they join in that cry? Are souls then to be deprived of the opportunity and joy of echoing that cry to Him, the Morning Star, by reason of the present condition of the assembly of God upon earth? By no means; for the word immediately adds, let him that heareth say "Come." God thus provides, that even in the disorderly condition of the church souls should be allowed to welcome the coming of Christ.

Not only does the bride, however, desire His return, for we read in Rev. xix. 7, of the bride when the marriage day has come having made herself ready, being adorned for her husband. And her bridal attire how simple it is, and yet how comely. "To her it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints" (Rev. xix. 8). What a contrast to that of

the great whore who is described as being clothed in purple and scarlet with ornaments of gold, precious stones and pearls (Rev. xvii. 4). On the person of the whore was seen that which attracts and pleases the natural eye. On the bride was just that which would please the Bridegroom's eyes—the righteousness of the saints—what they have done, it is true, but all the fruit of divine grace, and of the ever-giving power of the Holy Ghost. The whore delights in meretricious splendor; the bride is arrayed in that which witnesses of grace bestowed upon her. The bride, too, is the pearl of great price in Christ's eyes. No need then could she have to deck out her person with pearls, &c. Such an attire, such ornaments would only dim instead of enhancing her beauty in His eyes. Gold, pearls, precious stones—these speak of God as Creator. He made them.

Righteousness of saints—these are the fruits of that new creation, of which Christ is the beginning and in which all who form the bride have their part. The significance of her clothing we can all therefore understand.

But observe, the marriage is not described as taking place immediately on the rapture of the saints. In Rev. v. they are seen in heaven already. It is not till chap. xix. that the marriage day is spoken of as having come. Then she will be found ready. Till the rapture she can say to him "Come." But throughout all this time she proves His love and care. Her beauty He discerned at the outset. His love and service to her make it manifest, and when the time arrives for the marriage, He who has nourished her, cleansed her and sanctified her, will find her prepared for Him. His service to her it will then be seen, has not been in vain.

C. E. S.

The Holy Ghost dwells in believers, not to make them sons of God, but to make them *act* like sons.

ON APOSTASY.

We are so accustomed, when speaking of apostasy, to travel, in the self-complacency of our hearts, to the blasphemies of popery, that we think it impossible it can apply to orthodox christians who protest against the papacy. But if apostasy (*αποστασις*) be a standing away from, a departure from, a defection, then it will be seen that it describes the condition in which the Church, as a whole, is involved. In the measure, and in the particular thing, in which we cease to depend upon the Lord, the living God, there is *apostasis*, *i. e.*, defection from God. Chillingworth, a great reformer, when contending against Rome, in answer to the charge of schism brought against the Protestants, said—(I quote from a little tract called, ‘Mark them which cause divisions’)—“The imputation of schism lies heavily upon you, for making our separation from you necessary and just, by requiring unnecessary and unlawful conditions of your communion.” Now, that the Protestant societies, called churches, whether national or dissenting, are formed on the very principle condemned by the reformer, will, I think be allowed by all who accept the testimony of Dr. McNiele, in his popular work, the “Church and the Churches,” 1st edition, pp. 126; 127. Therein he states what, in his opinion, is the condition of all visible churches, including his own, *viz.*, that they are “unities which maintain themselves by rejecting all who will not conform to their secondary specialties;” and that “it is the characteristic littleness of visible churches . . . to exclude all who follow not with us, although they may be devoutly honoring the name, and sincerely rejoicing in the truth and love of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ.” And further, that, “for the sake of details of human origin, and of, at least, questionable wisdom, we are involved (he says) in a continued violation towards many Christians of that loving forbearance which is indeed of divine appointment” (page 93). This condition of things,

portrayed by a skilful hand, is, I believe, a true testimony, and what I venture to call "apostasy," *i. e.*, defection from that which is of "divine appointment;" and that all who cling to these excluding societies are necessarily involved in sectarianism, and in the exaltation of the traditions of men to a level with the word of God; yea, to a supremacy over that word; and are thus pandering to that idol of a disloyal heart—false expediency.

FEAR NOT !

"Let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. iv. 6)

Give to the wind thy fears ;
 Hope, and be undismayed ;
 God hears thy sighs, and counts thy tears—
 God shall lift up thy head.

Through waves and clouds, and storms,
 He gently clears the way ;
 Wait thou *His* time, so shall this night
 Soon end in joyous day.

Still heavy is thy heart ?
 Still sink thy spirits down ?
 Cast off the weight, let fear depart,
 And every care be gone :

What though thou rulest not !
 Yet heaven, and earth, and hell,
 Proclaim God sitteth on the throne,
 And ruleth all things well.

Leave to His sovereign sway
 To choose and to command ;
 So shalt thou, wond'ring own His sway—
 How wise, how strong His hand !

Far, far above thy thought
 His counsel shall appear,
 When fully He the work hath wrought,
 That caused thy needless fear.

THE CLOSING COMMISSIONS IN THE GOSPELS.

There are four different addresses or commissions in the four different gospels, each of them distinct and consequent on the character of the Gospel. In Matt. xxviii. it is the exaltation of Messiah to all power in heaven and earth, from which flows the mission to disciple all the Gentiles. This was a specific commission, contrasted with that to the lost sheep of the house of Israel—"the children." Now His exaltation, on His rejection by them, took a wider scope. They were to disciple all the nations. Such was the consequence of His rejection by Israel. The baptizing of the Gentiles was not to be unto John's or Messiah's baptism, but into that of which the full revelation was by His death and resurrection—into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. This was the position and unfolded fellowship with God into which they were brought; and all that was brought out, on God's part, both for the display of Himself and the economy of grace. It was not Jehovah and Messiah, but Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—something paramount and superior to the relationship of Messiah on the earth having followers, or Jehovah in heaven, however blessed. They were brought into distinct, known relationship with or in the unfolded fulness of the Godhead. They were children of the Father, in fellowship with the glorified Son, and the Holy Ghost dwelling in them; and they knew all three. It is the most formal statement of the Christian revelation as replacing Judaism; the sphere is enlarged to embrace all nations, and the observance of what Christ commanded is substituted for the law of Moses. Those who went forth to disciple the Gentiles were messengers of the King, whose presence would be with them till the end of the age, when He Himself should appear in the glory of His kingdom.

Mark, being more especially the witness of the

ministry of Christ, gives (not the outreaching principles of dispensation now opened by His death and resurrection, and founded on the place of power where He was, but) the principle, the new principle of the ministry itself and its consequences. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation." We may compare Rom. i. and Col. i. 23. It is a question here not of the kingdom but of salvation; and hence baptism as a fact and personal confession of Christ is insisted on, not its form in contradistinction to Judaism. The unbeliever shall be condemned.

In Luke, suitably to that Gospel, we have not the economical change which went forth to reduce all the Gentiles to a recognition of Christ, or the character and universal extent of the gospel, but its moral subject and scope, involving withal Jew and Gentile alike as sinners; for he specially looks at man. Hence it runs there: "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." It is beautiful to see that while the need and ruin of man are fully met, testimony to the Jew first" is not forgotten, even if Jerusalem were first in guilt as well as privilege.

In John, as the Sonship of Christ is the great subject (who He—the Son of God—was in person), the authority and power of His person in mission was the thing brought forward. "As my Father hath sent me; even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said 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." We have here the authority of the Sender from His person, title, and work. This was authority delegated in grace by the rejected but risen Son of God, giving peace to His own and sending them forth with peace for others, in a world which knows neither Him nor it.

As to these commissions, while the spirit and principle of all remains, and so far as we have spiritual power, we can realize them; yet all, I believe, have been perverted and have fallen, like all else in man's hand. As the Jewish economy received a deadly wound by the golden calf, for example, so did this full soon; and though the energy of God's grace and Spirit prerogatively might work and produce effects in sustaining and prolonging power and mercy in righteousness as such, the thing was gone; but it is the same power which originally constituted it which always lives and acts, though not in justifying the iniquity, for it is the power of the Spirit of God. And in measure as we act on this, the results are produced *pro tanto*. Here is spiritual wisdom, to see, and own, and bow under the sense of the apostasy (*i. e.*, under God's judgment of man's unrighteousness—God is always abidingly righteous in all His ways), and yet still hold fast to the living power which is the energy of the Spirit of God which works prerogatively in blessing. Of this the extraordinary example and scriptural illustration is Paul—the *ἐντρομα* of other hopes. And God is glorified in this; for the failure of man always brings out further and better things, though it may be in trial, than that which has decayed and passed away in his hands. The death of Stephen, in fact, was the turning-point, and formed the occasion of the bringing in the character of the dispensation as now exercised. In the calling of the centurion by Peter, God showed that He never departed from His purpose of associating the Gentiles as brought in with the Jews; and that, as regards administration, they bore not the root, but the root them. And so says Paul, bowing to this in his ministry, "It was necessary that the Word of God should be first preached unto you; but seeing ye count yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo we turn to the Gentiles. *For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee for a light to the Gentiles*" (a sentence

used on the Lord's rejection by Israel, "Then have I labored in vain, and spent my strength for naught and in vain;" whereas Peter was the minister of the circumcision, and could not take *this* ground, blessed in office as he was), "and that thou shouldst be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." Thus they take the spiritual interpretation of a passage significative of the dispensation, as a command which guided their conduct, though something else was first necessary. It was just following the Lord's own way, taking up His primacy and bowing to it; "it was necessary," &c., and then His glorious mission according to the energy of the Holy Ghost. Yet were Israel and Zion still well-beloved; and so Paul showed ever.

J. N. D.

LORD JESUS, COME!

Lord Jesus, come, and take thy saints away,
 There's nothing here to make us wish to stay;
 As weary pilgrims, longing for their home,
 Our hearts and lips are crying, "come, Lord, come!"

Thou long ago did'st bid us watch and wait,
 For Thy return, but we have left the gate;
 Have slept and slumbered at our honored post,
 Till all is ruin here, and well nigh lost.

With little strength we yet confess Thy name,
 Hold to the word in spite of cross or shame;
 An open door Thy love hath planted wide,
 And in Thy patience taught us to abide.

Now, blessed Lord, Thy glory having seen,
 Our eyes are dazed and ravished with its sheen;
 Till darker seems the fast increasing frown,
 That on th' apostate world is settling down.

Thou art our hope, Lord Jesus, 'tis with Thee
 With her loved Lord th' expectant bride would be,
 Should she not long to see the Bridegroom's face,
 And, with the Spirit, cry, come, Lord, Oh haste!

We long for Thee, long for the time to come
 That fits us for Thy presence in our home;
 As living harps, and crowned with mercy's bays,
 Attuned by grace to sound th' Eternal's praise.

J. T.

FAMILIAR LETTERS ON THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

NO. III.

DEAREST E.—I have spoken of the earth being yet occupied by man as descended from Adam, unchanged in all that he is, and demonstrated by the cross as incorrigible and incurable, and of Satan as the prince of the power of the air and prince of this world, occupying the heavenly places. It may be needful that I dwell upon this a little farther, as the commonly received thought is that he is in hell, reigning in the place of the damned. But you will find that is the fancy of man borrowed from poets it may be, both heathen and christian. In Job i. ii., you will find that when “the sons of God” (the angels) came to worship Him, Satan also appeared among them. This was a scene outside the earth, and Satan declared he had been going to and fro, and up and down on the earth, just as Peter represents him still, only now as a lion seeking whom he may devour, as still the adversary (Satan) of the children of God. You will see also in Eph. ii. that he is “the prince of the power of the air,” and in chap. vi. that we wrestle against wicked spirits in heavenly places, and also in Rev. xii., that his place in heaven is temporary, he is to be cast down, overcome by the blood and the word of our testimony, which is the same as Eph. vi. 17, where the weapon with which we oppose is the “sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” So Satan could not have been cast out of the heavens before creation, for the weapons used are the blood and the word. It is really looking forward to the future when the conflict of the saints in heavenly places, those occupying the present interval between the coming of the Holy Spirit and the coming of the Lord Jesus to meet us in the air (Acts ii. 1; Thess. iv. 15, 17) shall have ended.

The expression of our Lord, in Luke x. 18, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven,” gives rather

the vision that he was then having, of what was to come to Satan, the casting out of devils by his disciples, being the first blow and the pledge of this. It would be more clearly given, "I was viewing Satan as lightning out of heaven; fallen!"

We shall perceive the exceeding gravity of the present time then, with man upon the earth, made no better, but exposed as incurably bad, and left under condemnation, and Satan being free, by man's choice of him instead of Christ, to deceive and carry on his authority, save as infinite grace still earnest to save, gives the precious word of the gospel of the Son of God in glory, and the Holy Spirit is here to quicken, and God's hand to restrain, and still keep from utter destruction the whole fabric of social and political government. And that is all. Indue time Satan shall be cast into hell as the greatest criminal, and as only a criminal.

But now I wish to turn your thoughts to the Epistle to the Colossians. In chap. i. 20, we perceive the purpose of God to reconcile *all things* unto Himself, by Jesus Christ, whether in heaven or earth, and in v. 21, that He begins the reconciliation with us—the CHURCH. Everything had been going out as far as possible from Him up to the cross, and there ends the old creation and all hope in man, after repeated testings.

The church not being yet completed, everything stands still in the order of reconciliation till it is completed and taken up unto the Lord, the Head, in heaven.

In a former letter, our own position as the church was mentioned as distinct and unique in its character. You will have noticed in various epistles, those of Paul especially, that there are three divisions of people at the same and different times upon the earth that God speaks of, namely, the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God. In 1 Cor. x. 32, they are mentioned in this order. In Eph. i. 23, the Church is defined as the body of Christ, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all, and in v. 22 He is spoken of as Head over "all

things" in distinction from His body—the Church. In chap. ii. the Jews and Gentiles, the Circumcision and Uncircumcision are mentioned as separate peoples, and then as reconciled, *i. e.* those are quickened and raised up together with and in Christ, and seated in heavenly places in Him. These are the believers of the present day—the Church, builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. In chap. iii. the mystery now revealed is that the Gentiles should be members of the same body with the Jew, not all the Jews nor all the Gentiles, but those who are in Christ. So we have the three companies, Jews, Gentiles, and the Church. God has never remanded back the Jews to the nations to be absorbed and lost among them, even when He turned aside from them to take up the new thing—the Church—though now, in saving men, He includes all in unbelief, and, as lost men; still in the word, He has something peculiar in regard to the Jews, a specific object in calling them out and bearing them forward, and an end of great magnitude yet for and by them.

If you see these, then, you may judge that as a part of the "all things in the earth," the Jews and Gentiles are to be reconciled to Him, or brought into their projected places of subjection in joy and blessing, through Christ.

In pausing a little longer over this matter of the Church, you will perceive, in Eph. iii., that it was never so much as heard of or hinted at in the Old Testament, or as an object of revelation, until Paul himself received the truth of it by revelation. It was hid in God (Eph. iii. 9), not made known to other ages (iii. 5), the mystery hidden from ages and generations, but now made manifest to His saints (Col. i. 26), kept secret since the world began, but now revealed (Rom. xvi. 25, 26). And to emphasize the contrast, see 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10, "As it is written (Isa. lxiv.): Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath pre-

pared for them that love Him ; *but God hath revealed them unto us* by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the *deep things of God.*"

Now, if this is accepted and carefully weighed, it will clear the mind in looking into the prophecies of the Old Testament, for we may be sure we cannot find there what God has not put there. If the church was, all the while these things were being uttered, hid in God, awaiting His time for its revelation, most surely there is no word of the church there. Take it out of your interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies, and you need not interpret, but only read, for you will find they are for the people to whom they were addressed. Moses, in the beginning, intimates to them that there are secret things which belong to God, and Isaiah, near the end, signifies the same, and Daniel is informed that there are some hidden matters that God has not made known ; then Paul tells us it was given to him to make all know now, now that the end of the ages of man's trial has come, and God has the Second man in His seat. Now He can begin the reconciliation.

And He begins with an element that He never disclosed before, as men in their business or political purposes do not disclose the affairs of the heart, the matter pertaining to the bride they may choose, as not belonging to those with whom they have business relations. Yet surely, to the one chosen object of special affection, all secrets are told, all that went before or comes after, for the church is both the Body and the purposed Bride of Christ. The first thing, therefore, was to get it, and this He is doing now by the Holy Ghost down here, gathering to Him into one body those that are saved. This body, formed and gathered after judgment has been passed upon the world and its prince at the cross, must be distinct, and have an altogether different condition and end from those taken up while yet He was acting on the earth. Our calling is during the suspension of all His dealings with the world as such. We are taken out of it.

Another thing I wish to call attention to is that all this reconciliation is to take place "through the death of the cross." Peter tells us that the prophets of old spoke of "the sufferings of Christ and the glories (not glory) that should follow" (1 Pet. i. 11). I know I need not dwell upon this, for it is accepted freely and universally, I doubt not.

If, then, the reconciliation of all things begins from the cross, and those that are now reconciled and being drawn to Him are not spoken of at all in the Old Testament, what shall we do with the prophecies of the Old Testament but just apply them to the people to whom and for whom they are written? They speak of earthly blessings, of putting down national enemies, of uniting Judah and Israel again under one government, of Jerusalem being the joy of the whole earth, of physical changes of great importance for Israel and the nations, of the restoration of the temple service and the feasts familiar to the Jews, and of the nations as such gathering at certain times in the year at Jerusalem to these feasts. *They* never soar to one heavenly thing, to the heavens as the scene of blessings. They give no title to God or to Christ beyond Jehovah and Messiah, His anointed king. *We* are at home amidst such thoughts as these; that we are, as to our standing, raised and seated in heavenly places in Christ already (Eph. i. 3); that our hope is the glory of Christ in the heavens (Col. iii. 4), having a body like unto His own glorious body (Phil. iii. 21); that we are not of the world (John xvii. 16; Col. ii. 20); that the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world (Gal. vi. 14). We are told that having died, our life is hid with Christ in God, and that when He, our life, shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory (Col. iii. 1, 4). Moreover, we know God under titles and relationships as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and as our God and Father. We know Jesus as our Lord Jesus Christ, titles that have to do with His resurrection (Acts ii.

36), as well as the Son of God (Rom. i. 4), and Head of the church (Eph. i. 22, 23; Col. i. 18). We are brought into fellowship with the Father and the Son (1 John i. 3).

What a boundless range in the things into which we are introduced, as our own! What a contrast with the things that fill the mouths of all the prophets of the Old Testament! Surely no ingenuity has yet been able to transfuse these latter into the things of Christ which are revealed to us! I know man's capacity in that direction, but the result of applying these prophecies to us has only brought confusion to the mind, and legality to the heart and unrest to the conscience.

If you have been interested to read what I have thus far written, I think you will have before you, after learning your own right and warrant to look into these things of Christ, First, That God made the world and man for His own glory, and for joy and blessing. Second, That the first man is not the instrument that He can use for this, and much less can he of himself do anything good. Third, That He has already brought forth the Man through whom this is to be accomplished, and raised and seated Him on His throne, ready. Fourth, That He begins the reconciliation at the cross, and with us. That we (the church) are "the first fruits" in this new creation, the "all things" awaiting our getting to our place in heaven with Him, even as the purposed blessing of the earth through Israel awaited their getting into the land of Canaan, settled and at peace.

We shall be able, should it God will, to look farther at the coming of the Lord, with reference to these distinct companies, the heavenly and the earthly, in future letters. May we learn the more eagerly to cry, Come, Lord Jesus.

Yours, in the blessed hope, * *

SIMPLE PAPERS ON THE CHURCH OF GOD.

VI.

ITS RELATION TO THE HOLY GHOST.

In treating of the assembly of God we must remember the work of the Holy Ghost in connexion with it. But how different are the relations of the Holy Ghost to the assembly from those of God and of Christ! It is God's assembly, it is Christ's body, but in no sense does it bear the Holy Ghost's name; yet without the Spirit's work, and that not only in converting power, the assembly or Church would have no existence. To understand then, Scripture teaching about the Church, we must acknowledge the Scripture doctrine of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, three persons yet but one God. For the assembly, which is the Church of the living God, is in God the Father (1 Thess. i. 1), has for its foundation, the truth of the person of Christ as the Son of the living God (Matt. xvi. 18) and is indwelt by the Holy Ghost, thereby becoming the habitation of God (Eph. ii. 22). God, in the person of the Holy Ghost, has by His indwelling presence, made it His temple (1 Cor. iii. 16).

Further, the presence of the Holy Ghost in the assembly is constant and unconditional. Till the Lord Jesus Christ went on high to the Father, the Holy Ghost could not come thus to abide on earth (John xvi. 7). After Christ had ascended, the Holy Ghost came on the day of Pentecost, and has ever since dwelt in the assembly of God here below. Ananias and Sapphira learnt the reality of His presence when Peter, charging home on them their sin, told the man that he had lied to the Holy Ghost, and asked the woman why they had agreed to tempt the Spirit of the Lord (Acts v. 3-9). The assembly at Antioch proved the truth of His presence, when He told them to separate unto Him Barnabas and Saul for the work to which He had called them (Acts xiii. 2). The Lord, too, had announced beforehand, that

when the Holy Ghost came, He would abide with the disciples forever (John xxv. 17), and the Spirit's response with that of the bride to the Lord's announcement that He is the Morning Star, demonstrates that the divine prediction has indeed come to pass. The Spirit is with the assembly forever, so that it will never, while on earth, be deprived of His presence. He dwells, it is true, in each believer; but He dwells in the whole assembly as well.

These truths are quite distinct. They must not be confounded, nor should the one be held without the other. The difference, too, between them is very marked, for the Holy Ghost, as dwelling in each believer, makes that saint's body His temple. But as dwelling in the assembly, the assembly becomes the temple of God. A temple of the Holy Ghost is the body of each believer; a temple of God is the assembly of God upon earth. While stating all this, it should, however, be clearly understood, that the Spirit of God had been throughout all ages, since man was created, working upon earth. From the commencement of the Book of Genesis to the close of that of Revelation, the Holy Ghost is seen having to do with earth and with man. Yet never, till the last time that the feast of Pentecost was observed according to God's mind, did the Spirit take up His abode on earth as the third person of the Godhead, forming a habitation, a temple in which He dwells. This is Christian truth, and distinctive Christian truth; for as He did not dwell on earth before the cross, so He will not dwell on it after the rapture; constantly working before the cross, He will as certainly work on earth after the rapture of the saints, but will not dwell here as He does now. To be poured upon all flesh is one thing; to dwell on earth is another.

Till after the exodus of Israel from Egypt, God never dwelt upon earth. He first dwelt in the tabernacle. He dwelt, too, in the temple, until Nebuchadnezzar came to destroy it. From that time God did

not dwell on earth till the Lord Jesus Christ entered this world as a babe at the hour when men for most part were wrapt in slumber. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9). Created things, animate and inanimate, acknowledged His presence and power by obeying His word. The fishes in the sea, the wind and the waves were subservient to His will. But His presence here was but for a time, and that a very limited one. He died and left earth, no longer to be found dwelling upon it.

For a very brief period it was again true that God was not dwelling on this globe. But when the day of Pentecost had fully come, this earth became once more a dwelling place for God in the person of the Holy Ghost, who has never been absent from it for a single moment since that sound as of a rushing, mighty wind was heard, which filled all the house in which the disciples of Christ were sitting in Jerusalem (Acts ii. 2). God had come to earth to dwell on it for the third time in the world's history. How favored is this earth! A globe so small, yet God's habitation is found on it. For the fact noticed about the Spirit's coming is instructive and significant. He filled all the house, but He did not fill all Jerusalem. He was upon earth, but He did not then dwell in every part of it. In that house He was that morning, but He was not in the temple on Mount Moriah. The building which the Lord entered as God's house at Jerusalem, was never part of God's habitation in the Spirit. The majestic structure of the temple never received as its occupant God the Holy Ghost; and though He came that morning to dwell on the earth, He did not fill the world with His presence. In like manner, the habitation of God, as it at present exists, though reaching far beyond the bounds of the nation of Israel, has, nevertheless, limits which fall considerably short of the boundaries of this terrestrial globe. It had unity on that day when the Holy Ghost filled the house, but did not fill Jerusalem. It

had limits in apostolic times ; it has limits still. It is true that no individual upon earth need remain outside of them, on either natural or moral grounds, if the grace of God reaches the heart and the conscience is dealt with. Souls from among the Hottentots and the Esquimaux, the South Sea Islanders and the Red Indians, as well as from among the most refined and intellectual members of civilized society, can each and all form part of God's habitation in the Spirit, for God now commands all men everywhere to repent ; and if any man enters in by Christ (the door) he is saved (John x. 9), and finds himself a member of the assembly of God.

Yet it is a fact that the assembly does not embrace within its limits every soul dwelling upon earth, and, indeed, it was never intended so to do, for God was visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name (Acts xv. 14). He is saving also now a remnant according to the election of grace, in contradistinction to the saving of all Israel by-and-by (Rom. xi. 5, 26). The conversion of all the world never was the divine purpose to be effected during the absence of Christ from earth. The gospel of the kingdom will, indeed, be preached in all the world before the end comes (Matt. xxiv. 14), but that is a very different message from the Gospel or glad tidings of God's grace. The limits of the assembly, therefore, within which the Holy Ghost dwells, are really very far from being coterminous with the bounds of the earth, or even coincident with the habitable parts of it. There is a *within* and a *without*, as expressed in God's word, which, when using such language, has reference to the confines of the assembly of God. "Walk in wisdom," we are told, "toward them that are without (Col. iv. 5); that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without" (1 Thess. iv. 12). Again, writes the apostle, "What have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth

(1 Cor. v. 12, 13). Within, the Holy Ghost dwells; without, Satan, who is the god and prince of this world, exercises sway.

But besides dwelling in the assembly, which thus becomes God's habitation, God's temple, the Holy Ghost has also formed the body of Christ. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. xii. 13). It is by the baptism of the Holy Ghost that the body of Christ is formed, to which we have already directed the attention of our readers. This was effected at Pentecost for those who had been Jews; and Gentiles were first brought into the body by sharing in this baptism, in the house of Cornelius and Paul, as we have read, though he was not converted on the day of Pentecost, neither was present at Ceasarea when Peter visited the Roman Centurion, yet shared in that baptism, as did all the Corinthian saints to whom he wrote: for saints only can share in it. Saints only can be members of the body of Christ, united to Him by the Holy Ghost, though the Spirit dwells in the assembly, in which there may be some who are only professors (1 Cor. iii. 17). He is not said, however, to dwell in the body, though He does dwell in every individual member of the body.

In the body of Christ so formed, neither national nor social distinctions exist. Baptised by one Spirit, the unity of the Spirit of Ephes. iv. 3, is called into existence. Having all been made to drink into one Spirit, the unity should be acknowledged and manifested; and the scriptural way of manifesting it is by breaking bread as the Lord has appointed it (1 Cor. x. 17). Whatever would practically deny the oneness of the body of Christ, we are clearly to turn from. And it should be remembered that the only divinely appointed way of showing it, is by our presence at the Lord's table. In Christ we have said, all distinctions cease. We must, however, remember that this is not

true of the church. There are distinctions in the assembly. In Christ we are all one. Further, christians should remember what the apostle writes in (1 Cor. xii. 14-26), about the body, for it is most important. Taking as his illustration the natural body, he sets forth *four* points of great practical value.

First, we can never, if part of the body, get out of it. "If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? The foot and the ear cannot help themselves; they are part of the body. They may deny it, they may repudiate all connexion with it, but they cannot get free from it unless by amputation, which, if a loss to the body, would be death to them. The members then have no choice about it. They are in the body, they are part of the body. Just so it is with christians and the body of Christ. They may be ignorant of it, they may refuse to learn about it, they may repudiate all connexion with it; *but they cannot get out of the body.* For as none but true christians are members of the body of Christ, none such can be finally lost; nor can excision of a member of the body of Christ ever take place. In the body they are, and to it they must ever belong. But the body is but one; two bodies united to one head, is contrary to all order in creation. So with the body of Christ; there is one body, as there is one Head. But here the common thoughts and language of christians are at variance with God's truth. Bodies of christians, men speak of, and approve of; one body is all that God owns, and scripture teaches. If scripture is to teach us, we must own only one body, and so be one true church ground, on which all christians, if simply in subjection to the word, could meet: and once there we must stay there. Thus the foot cannot get free from the body, whatever it may say about it; no more can christians shake themselves free of their responsibility

to acknowledge and maintain practically the truth of the oneness of the body of Christ. Secondly, we must ever remember that one member does not constitute the body. If they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. For one member then in the body of Christ to arrogate to itself the functions of the body must be clearly wrong. Wherever that is done, the individual so acting, if in self-will, is wrong; if with cordial agreement of others, both are fostering the evil. But is this understood?

Thirdly, we cannot do without every member. The eye cannot say unto the hand I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary. It may be, and it surely is the case, that from the disorder in the assembly of God, we cannot avail ourselves of the help of every member of the body of Christ; but for our part, though deprived in a great measure of their assistance and service, we cannot without suffering loss, be independent of one of them; so closely are the members of the body bound up, one with another. But all this denominationalism ignores and thus robs the whole church of that which has been provided for the benefit of all. How little is this seen. The Corinthians, when split up into parties, were robbing themselves of the gifts given for them all (1 Cor. iii. 21, 23). How suicidal to the church's best interest is her advocacy of denominational ground.

Lastly, God sets the members in the body as it hath pleased Him. None, therefore, can choose their place, though it may have to learn what it is. But, reminded of this, all envying of another's place, all imitation of another's service, should be carefully guarded against. Each has his own place, each his own service, which, if rightly carried out, will conduce to the healthy increase of the whole body. What a busy hive the assembly at Rome must have been, judging

from the remarks on individuals made by the apostle in the last chapter of the epistle to that assembly. All the service there enumerated might not be what men call great, yet it was true, and accepted of God.

Most particular is the truth of the oneness of the body of Christ, formed by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. That oneness exists now on earth. May each one who forms part of it, discovering his place, and the character of his service in the body, and in the assembly, keep the one, and perform the other.

C. E. S.

A LETTER ON THE PERSON AND DEITY OF THE HOLY GHOST.

The occasion of the following letter was the painful necessity of refusing to receive into christian fellowship in the Lord's supper, one who proved, on inquiry, to be unsound in this very important point of the christian faith stated above. There have ever been seasons, in the history of the Church, when a necessity has arisen for making a stand for some particular truth, which Satan has tried either openly to invalidate or covertly to obscure, or, more frequently, to lead the children of God to neglect or despise. Of late the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ has been the point of controversy, and the faith of many shaken almost to the center on questions arising concerning His proper divinity and proper humanity, or their union in His one blessed, undivided, and spotless Person. In this day the important truth of the Person, Deity, and indwelling of the Holy Ghost, as that, which constitutes the life and vigor of the Church is very loosely held even by many who zealously assert the Deity and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The vague assertion of the necessity of the *influence* of the Holy Ghost, instead of His own personal presence and power, has doubtless much tended to help on the fearful error of those who deny His distinct personality and Deity, while they allow, in words, the existence

of the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God. In full accordance with the judgment of the writer, that the Church should demand confession in the faith of the Trinity, as that confession which is to be made unto salvation—with his permission we use this letter for the common profit of the Church, in the furtherance of our common faith.

The writer is fully aware, and indeed has stated in the letter, that what he says is very far short of a complete statement of the truth on this point. So far as it goes it is most valuable; but we look to the truth on this point being followed out, both in its exposition and practical bearing, in some future papers:

MY DEAR SIR:

I felt myself much drawn to you from the little intercourse we had on Sunday, so that the apprehension, as it grew upon me, of anything that might prove a necessary hindrance to further intercourse, I need not say was painful to me.

I have since further meditated on the subject that was then between us, and have committed the guidance of my mind upon it to the Lord; but I feel only more confirmed in the judgment which I then had, and I have remembered the words of the apostle, "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." I desire now to write a little on the subject, as I promised you.

I believe the glory of God as He is, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, might have been learnt from the scriptures of the Old Testament. But I will instance only Isa. vi.

There the Seraphim cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts!" The New Testament scriptures show us that Christ and the Holy Ghost might have been apprehended in this vision and audience, which the prophet then had; for, says John, referring to that chapter, "these things said Esaias, when he saw

his (*i. e.* Christ's) glory and spake of Him." And Paul, referring afterwards to the same, says, "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers" (See John xii. 41; and Acts xxxviii. 25).

But I instance merely this place; for I have no design to go into the divine testimonies to this truth which might be derived from the Old Testament.

But when the work of the Son was accomplished, and He had risen from the dead, and was about to depart unto the Father, the full manifestation of God was made, for then the due time for this had come; and the commission to the apostles was this: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

And this was just the time, as I have observed (as doubtless everything in scripture is perfect), for the revelation of this glory. The work had now been done by the *Son* which had been given to Him by the *Father* to do, and the *Holy Ghost* was about to be sent down to make that work effectual in and to the Church. Therefore the Church was now to be brought into the knowledge of God, and baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

But so likewise is the Church *blest* in Him; the benediction pronounced upon His saints formally and fully running thus—"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all."

And from these things, if we had nothing further, we know Him "with whom we have to do," in whose name we have been thus baptized, and in whose grace, love and communion, we thus have our life and blessing.

But there is much more than this. The scriptures of the New Testament throughout *assume* that, which the form in baptism thus distinctly *declares*. There is not the constant repetition of the already declared

truth in a full, formal manner; but there is the constant *assumption* of it, and the presenting of it in its *moral* power.

I will just instance the passages which on the moment, without an effort, occur to me.

“For through *Him* we both have access by one *Spirit* unto the *Father*” (Eph. ii. 18).

“And the *Lord* make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end He may stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, *even our Father*, at the coming of our *Lord Jesus Christ* with all His saints” (1 Thess. iii. 12, 13).

“And *the Lord* direct your hearts into the love of *God*, and into the patient waiting for Christ” (2 Thess. iii. 5).

“Elect according to the foreknowledge of *God the Father*, through sanctification of the *Spirit*, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of *Jesus Christ*” (1 Pet. i. 2).

“He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the *Holy Ghost*; which *He* shed on us abundantly, through *Jesus Christ* our Saviour” (Tit. iii. 5).

In passages like these, the truth already declared in baptism is *assumed* and shewn further out in its *moral* power and relation to us: and we learn that as saints, we are vitally concerned in the actings of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. And we are saints by thus knowing God (having fellowship with the power and grace of our God) through His own actings—the only way in which He ever can be known, for man’s thoughts will never discover Him, and will therefore leave him but a worshipper of idols still. And this should teach the Church of God, that she dare not recognize any one who does not thus stand with her in the knowledge of God, in whose name she has been baptized, and with whose blessing she is blest. I am confining myself here rather to the doctrine of the

Word concerning the Holy Ghost; for that was the subject between us. We did not so much speak as to the Deity of the Lord Jesus.

As to the person of the Holy Ghost, I would then further say, that a full revelation of Him is made, not only in the baptismal and benedictory forms; but, also, though in another manner, by our Lord to His Apostles in John xiv-xvi. and there, too, I would again say, in *due time*, as we may thus see. When our Lord spake those words, it was just after He had told His disciples that He was about to be withdrawn from them. Such a declaration filled them (as it well might, for they had given up all *companionship* with Him, not as yet knowing Him in resurrection) with sorrow; and in these chapters He brings them the consolation. And the consolation He brings them was two-fold:

1st. He tells them that His present departure was not final separation, but that He was going away only to prepare a place for them in the Father's house, and that He would return and receive them to Himself. This was the great consolation, but this was not all, for,

2d. He tells them that in the meanwhile, while He was thus absent from them, and abiding with the Father, He would send the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, to be with them, and that He would do wondrous and blessed service for them, such even as His own presence with them could never accomplish. What this promised service of the Holy Ghost for the Church was, I will not here detail—it is graciously spread out before us in these chapters of John, as well as in the other Scriptures of the New Testament. But here it stood revealed by the Lord to His Apostles, that the Holy Ghost was to be with them, and in them, when He Himself had returned, and was abiding with the Father. Such is the revelation of the person of the Holy Ghost to the Church, such the blessed promise from the departing Son of God, that

the *Spirit of truth* should come to make effectual to the Church, the testimony which He the *Son* had given to the *Father*, and to seal upon their hearts all the life, and joy, and power of that calling, which had been prepared for them before the world was.

Here the Church rests—here she abides in peaceful assured joy, knowing that *God* in all His fulness is for her, that her security depends on no creature-strength, but that God Himself began, did continue, and is now ending her salvation, that what in covenant had of old been *planned* for her, God manifest in flesh had wrought out, and God the Holy Ghost is now making effectual, to the joy of all who believe. This is the blessed way in which, if I may so speak, Scripture vindicates the baptismal form; this is the way in which the name of God, there fully and formally published, is made known in life and power. I would further say, that without this there would be a giving of God's glory to another. For not only is equal honor required for the Son (John v.), but the Holy Ghost stands with the Father and the Son, as we have seen, in the work which is doing for poor sinners, the divine work of salvation. The subjection of the Son to the Father, and again of the Holy Ghost to the ascended and glorified Son of Man is abundantly exhibited in Scripture, and more than exhibited, for we are instructed in the *need* of these things. The Lord says "The Son can do nothing *from Himself*;" and again, speaking of the promised Comforter, "He shall not speak *from Himself*" (John v. 19; xvi. 13); both passages intimating distinctly these subjections. And we learn the *need* of this wondrous and blessed economy. What could have cancelled the offence of Adam, the offence of a creature seeking to be as God? What could have preserved the honor of the throne of God while extending pardon to the seed of this Adam, but Jehovah's fellow being Himself smitten, and He that was in the form of God emptying Himself? This we learn was

the needed way in which God could be just and the justifier of sinners (Rom. iii).

And what power less than that of God could make the work effectual to us? Having begun in God, are we to be made perfect in the creature? He that has been sent to be with the Church, while traveling here in weakness and patience during the dreary night of her Lord's absence, is the Spirit Himself, the Lord, who during that night is sought unto and trusted in, to direct our "hearts into the love of God, and the patient waiting for Christ."

I know there may be perplexities in the thoughts of the saints at times, on many of the great matters of Revelation, and Satan is busy to corrupt the mind from the simplicity that is in Christ. But his advantages are gained, because he finds something in us. I am *conscious* of this. It is the god *of the world* that blinds the mind, it is the *evil* heart that departs from the living God. At the root of many of our difficulties there is a real, though it may be undetected, desire to keep God at a distance. Just (as has been observed by another), as with the children of Israel in the wilderness. It was not because the manna was not pleasant, for we are told it was as coriander seed, sweet as honey; but still they loathed it; and why? It brings God too nigh to us; it brings Him to us in such amazing light of love as overwhelms us; it is too much for the narrow heart of man; it rebukes his selfishness, and he seeks relief from it in the law of works. This is illustrated in the young man in Matt. xix. It was because he was *covetous*, that he was asking, "What good thing shall I do?" And so the Godhead of Him who now dwells in the Church, is a truth that in like manner brings God blessedly nigh to us.

I have not here so much spoken of the person of our Lord Jesus, because, as I have observed, that was not so much the subject of our conversation. But I would just observe, that the revelation of the Son with the Father and the Holy Ghost, in the Godhead,

is made to us also in the Baptismal Form, and in that particular (as in the other which I have above considered), all subsequent scripture vindicates that form, *assuming* the truth therein contained, and shewing out its *moral* life and power. The work which the Lord has accomplished for the Church, and the affections which the Scriptures claim for Him from her, brings her before Him as God her Saviour. Some speak of a *subordinate* Deity, of God in an inferior order, but the Church knows no such mythology, as indeed I cannot refrain from calling it. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is *one* Lord," and "the Son of God is come to give us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John v. 20, 21).

But the Church has also learnt the subjection of the Son—that He said, in the volume of the book (in covenant, before the world was), "Lo, I come;"—that, like the *voluntary* servant in Israel (and how *voluntary*, if in any sense He had been debtor as an inferior?), He has had His ear bored for perpetual service (Exod. xxi; Ps. xl; Isa. l). Blessed be His name for such unsearchable riches of grace! But all this only verifies His true Deity, verifies the revelation, that He stands with the Father and the Holy Ghost in that name which is God, and in which, to know, love, serve, and worship Him, we have been baptized.

I do not desire, dear sir, to multiply thoughts needlessly on this subject, though I confess to you it is not grievous; for it is a sweet occupation to go over and over again those ever-blessing revelations of Him who is ours in covenant everlasting love, who has displayed His full name to us. But my direct purpose now is to shew you the grounds why I assuredly judge that the Church of God must, in order to her fellowship, require a confession to the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. This is God, because this

is the revelation; for without revelation of Himself, He is not to be known. No thought of ours will do any thing more than (at their best) leave us refined idolaters. God must witness Himself to us; and that He has done in His actings for His saints in the work of their everlasting salvation, and which actings have brought out to them that blessed One with whom they have to do, in whose name they have been baptized; with whose blessing they are blest—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

I would just add here what I have omitted (for I have followed my thoughts very much, as I was led, without order), that the Holy Ghost is not personally put before us in the way that “the Father” and our Lord Jesus are in the New Testament generally; for the Holy Ghost is now *in* the Church, the life of her worship, and the strength of her service; by His indwelling, He is making known to us the glory of the ascended Son (or His *Lordship*), and the *Fatherly* character and love of our God. Hence all the Epistles open somewhat in this way, “To the Church which is in God the *Father*, and in the *Lord* Jesus Christ, grace be unto you, and peace, from God the *Father* and the *Lord* Jesus Christ.” But in the Apocalypse, where the revelation was conveyed by the ministry of an angel, the salutation runs thus—“Grace be unto you, and peace from *Him* which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the *seven Spirits* which are before the throne; and from *Jesus Christ*, the faithful Witness, the first-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.”

But I will not go further, dear sir. I had thought to have sent you this on ———, but I have been unexpectedly interrupted. You will, I trust, believe that I have but the kindest thoughts towards you. You may judge me, after reading this, to be narrow-minded and bigoted, insisting on that which I have learnt by tradition from my fathers. But I do pray

that this may not be your last thought upon it, but that you may stand in the confession of the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with those who have, in every age of the Church since Jesus ascended and sent down the Holy Ghost, approved themselves as the saints of God, and witnessed and lived for their Lord in this evil world, and who have gathered all their joy and strength for present service, and all their confidence and ground of hope for future rest and glory, from the blessed and gracious God who has thus revealed His full name to them, and given Himself to them and for them.

Yours, very truly (in the remembrance that
Jesus is my Lord),

J. G. B.

“BEHOLD I COME QUICKLY : HOLD THAT FAST
WHICH THOU HAST, THAT NO MAN TAKE THY
CROWN (Rev. iii. 11).

We're watching for the morning,
Thy face, our Lord, to see,
And long its dawning to behold—
When like Thyself we'll be.

When in the place prepared,
Exalted by Thy side,
Thou wilt in us Thine image see,
And Thou'lt be satisfied.

Thy saints have long been waiting
'Midst tribulations sore ;
Thou said'st, O Lord, “a little while,”
And soon it will be o'er.

For us Thou liv'st in glory ;
We're in this world for Thee,
And by Thine all-sufficient grace
True witnesses would be.

In Thee alone we're perfect,
And in Thine hand secure,
Unspotted, sanctified and sealed,
Our place in glory sure.

Till Thou shalt come, Lord Jesus,
 Ob ! keep us by Thy side,
 In words and ways and spirit,
 More like Thy chosen bride.

Blest Lord, what wondrous pledges
 Thou giv'st us of Thy love !
 For through thy precious blood we joy
 In Abba Father's love.

In heart and spirit, Saviour,
 We sing the glorious grace,
 That raised us from the depths beneath
 And proved God's righteousness.

We sound the joyful tidings
 To sinners far and near,
 Of Thee, Thine own redeeming blood,
 And love that casts out fear.

With unveiled face, oh, Saviour !
 Thy glory we behold ;
 We're one with Thee, blest mystery !
 Not half hath yet been told.

Unspotted Lamb—most holy !
 God's Christ—the peerless Son !
 We hail Thy day and sing with joy,
 " Come Saviour—quickly come."

P. M.

 NO SEPARATION.

Hallelujah ! who shall part
 Christ's own Church from Christ's own heart ?
 Sever from the Saviour's side
 Souls for whom the Saviour died ?
 Cast one precious jewel down
 From Immanuel's blood-bought crown ?

Hallelujah ! shall the sword
 Part us from our glorious Lord ?
 Trouble dire or dark disgrace
 From His heart our names erase ?
 Famine, nakedness or hate
 Us from Jesus separate ?

Hallelujah ! life nor death,
 Powers above nor powers beneath,
 Satan's might nor hell's dark gloom,
 Things which are, nor things to come,
 Men nor angels, e'er shall part
 Christ's own Church from Christ's own heart.

FAMILIAR LETTERS, ON THE SECOND
COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

NO. IV.

Another thing to which I would direct your attention beloved E., is that the scriptures are, throughout, written in the spirit of anticipation. Wonderful and blessed as are the assertions of what is already done, the grand realities, the full consummation is an estate in expectancy. The reversion awaits its time, and the appeal is made to hope. All agree in saying that the Jews expected a mighty Deliverer who should set up a kingdom that should rule the whole earth, that their prophets pointed directly to this, and the whole order of their instruction turned their thoughts into the future. And they were right in this. The present thing with them from the death of Joshua until David, and then from Solomon to the dispersion, was the sad expression of failure and judgment, with but the recital of the purposes and possibilities of God, but no fruitage yet. The gospel, to them, was of the future restoration and the Restorer, the glory and renown that were to come.

As they went on in their history of defection and apostasy, and the ruinous results, the announcements of blessing and enlargement became the greater and more animating, deepening in the expression of moral riches and splendor, as Israel deepened in depravity and degradation; for God was not to be disappointed in His designs in calling out Abraham. His words of blessing to him, and to Isaac and Jacob, were not made to the ear, to be broken to the hope.

Let us look at a few of these. In Gen. xii. 2, 3, God says to Abraham, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed."

This is the original and general blessing given to

him in being called out, containing, doubtless, all that were afterwards brought out. In Gen. xiii. 14, the promise given included the land and the seed. "All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever; and I will make thy seed *as the dust of the earth*, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed be numbered. Arise, walk through the *land* in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee."

This, it will be seen, is definite, establishing the land of Canaan for the seed of Abraham, who shall be as the dust of the earth, referring not to Christ, but the millions of Israel, for in chapter xv., He tells him that four hundred years shall pass before they shall come into it. And mark, it is to be theirs *forever*. As long as this earth endures, that land is to be theirs. No word is said of their being driven out of it, for this does not invalidate their title. No other nation holds it as a dwelling-place, none ever has, none ever will. It is theirs *forever*.

After this, in Gen. xiv. 18-24, we have intimations of a heavenly character in the blessings upon Abram, though the mouth of Melchizedek, in the name of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth; and, on this, Abram's refusal of the earthly spoil of the King of Sodom, maintaining his place of separation. And then in chap. xv., the Lord's response to this, as his shield and exceeding great reward, in which He gives the stars of heaven as the expression of the number of Abram's seed. And then He makes this covenant with him, "Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt, unto the great river, the river Euphrates." (v. 18). Again, the covenant is made in chap. xvii., upon the promise of a son to Sarai, changing the names to Abraham and Sarah, in connexion with it, and then pledging the land of Canaan to him and his seed after him, *in their generations for an everlasting covenant*, for an everlasting possession (vv. 8, 9), and with this the covenant of

circumcision was given. Thus far the seed meant the nation, even the nations, the multitude, and the promise, *without conditions*, purely as the statement of God's purpose in Himself in regard to the earth is that they, a people, shall have and possess the one land of Canaan forever. It is exceedingly clear and positive.

And it has never been withdrawn, never forgotten. In all the faithlessness of that seed, and their rebellion, He has kept His own purpose in view. Their blessing to the nations and the world, was never contingent on their obedience, as the seed of Abraham; but upon the truth of God. And God reserved the right in grace to accomplish all the rich purpose of His heart, as will be seen in Lev. xxvi., and Deut. xxx., where after all the detail of judgment that should come upon them for breaking the statutes and the covenant which they had taken to be His people, and to obey His word, the desolation, the scattering of them among the nations, and the terrible things in righteousness, which He would bring upon them, He distinctly declares He will bring them back according to the promise made to Jacob and Isaac and Abraham.

This beginning of the prophecies made upon the expectation of their own ruin, is supplemented by the most positive and glorious declarations by all the prophets who came in the sad progress of the decline of Israel and Judah, going on through the whole of it, and speaking in the same and even more rich tones as the iniquity increased and there was no remedy, even till they were cast off as a people for the present. The tone of Moses is the key of Isaiah and Hosea and Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zachariah, and Malachi. Were they all wrong? Was Moses stating falsehoods, alluring them from rest in themselves to confidence in God, according to His meaning in taking them up at all? Was Isaiah infused with the same lying spirit? Did Hosea at the very end of all his pleading with the revolted ten tribes when they were

just about to be scattered till this day, share this braggart view? And the whole list of those who came with the so-called "burden of the Lord," as He, rising early, sent them, through all the years of idolatry and disaster, accompanying every lapse into sin with a new warning, did they all but speak in stately hyperbole and with the heat of their own impassioned longing, and not as they were moved by the Spirit? Was all the glad tidings of which they were bearers, with a wonderful unity as to the testimony and the time of its consummation, conditioned on adherence to the statutes and commandments of Jehovah, when they were being uttered at the time of the giving up of this obedience, as an impossible thing on the part of the nation? How could they be given in this *ex post facto* manner unless to tantalize, and add affliction to the sorrows already upon them, and to come, thus making Jehovah both cruel and false to them, *unless they are to be accomplished literally and to the full?*

You must see that all these future glories and blessings are uniformly linked with "the day of the Lord," that that period was as definitely held before the gaze of the one who thought upon God, as was the time of their departure out of Egypt and their establishment in the land, in the past; that everything about it, and the coming of the Deliverer out of Zion is as circumstantial and as clearly defined in its details, physically, politically and morally, as any earthly history can be. Make the attempt to apply these to the spiritual character of the Church, or "the christian dispensation," as it is called, and instead of the walk of faith alone resulting in fellowship with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and separation from the world, you will have the legal and Judaistic religiousness combined with the intense activities of today, and the confusion in intelligence of God's mind and of His word, that everywhere prevail.

Let us remember that the promises made to "the

fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, have never been fulfilled in the history of Israel thus far; that these have been supplemented by assurances and pledges to David of his kingdom and his seed as kings enduring forever. For this turn to 2 Sam. vii. 10-16, 24, and Ps. xxxix. 4, 29, 36, 37, where all is spoken unconditionally, as much so as those to Abraham. There were conditional promises, which failed of fulfillment, through the failure of poor Israel. But that which constituted the burden of prophecy is without conditions on their part, save the repenting and turning of the heart again to God, which He will accomplish, having also prophesied this, as well as its results.

Now let us look at some of the circumstances and characteristics of the fulfillment of that hope held out from the call of Abraham till the last inspired word given by Malachi, so that there never was an hour of distinct fruition and consummation, but always a blessing held out before them. What we have of Israel, which fills almost entirely the Old Testament, is a history of their complete failure, and a richly increasing succession of promises of the entire accomplishment of all God meant and said to Abraham in connexion with his descendants.

I. It is to embrace *all Israel*, the twelve tribes. Refer to Isa. xi. 10-14, "And it shall come to pass *in that day* that Jehovah shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people which shall be left, from Assyria and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth," &c. See also Jer. iii. 18, l. 4; Ezek. xxxvii. 16-22; xxxix. 25-29, xx. 33-44; Zech. x. 6; Joel iii. 1, 2; Amos ix. 11-15; Obad. 17-21; Zeph. iii. 11-20. I give these few out of many on this matter. A little fuller examination of the prophets will bring many more to

your notice. All these point to one day, and one character of blessing and one people, those who alone were known by the prophet, and who had filled all the history for hundreds of years; God writing of, or noticing other nations, only as they had relation to this people, Israel.

There has been introduced a mischievous and delusive interpretation of the Scriptures of the prophets in modern days, which is shown by the application of these promises and others to the *Church*. Thus you will see in Isa. ix. 1-6; Joel iii., and many other places, in the contents of the chapters, the church mentioned as the one comforted and to whom the promises are spoken. 1. How could the prophet comfort the church when it was not disclosed to them at all? (Ephes. iii). 2. And is it not loose and inconsistent teaching to find in one chapter the glory of Israel and her restoration acknowledged in the head lines, and the same event and time spoken of as the church's glory in the next chapter? You will see these things for yourself. 3. Besides, does it not destroy all meaning in writings to be interpolating a thing so utterly unlike the whole matter spoken of by the writer, so opposite in its calling and place, being heavenly instead of earthly, being connected with Christ risen and in heaven instead of on earth, and make confusion where all was plain and simple as given? 4. Again, the comfort which the prophet gives is to that which has been desolate and forsaken, oppressed and scattered under direct judgment of God among the nations. When was the church ever so treated by God? When was she broken and dispersed and called "Lo-Ammi,"—not my people? Is she in that state before God now? Why, she is the very thing that they boast of as only to go on progressing more and more to accomplish all this glory! 5. Besides, all the promises are made definitely in the name of JEHOVAH the God of *Israel*. Has God ever taken that title in relation to the church? Is He not

definitely revealed as our FATHER, and we as sons, and Christ as Head, and we His body? This is confusion and ignorance. I do not wonder that the Old Testament prophecies fail to interest general readers among christians, and that they can make nothing of them. Do any of these richest of promises ever give a hint of our being *as* Christ is; of our being one with Him; of the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles being broken down, and our being one body; of our being manifested in the heavens in glory, or of reigning with Him? Not a syllable like all this, but quite the contrary. And yet these are the Christian elements of truth, in which we stand as now risen with Christ; the Church position and hope unique and solitary in its privilege, according to thoughts of God before the foundation of the world. If God has made distinct the people of Israel, and the Church, and given specific hopes in accordance with this difference, let us just read the Word *as* He has written it.

II. Their restoration is to be *to the land of Canaan*. This was the original covenant with Abraham, and all the references given above involve this, as well as all others, that look to their restoration. Indeed they are always married to the land, or not accounted His people, saving as His heart holds them, while scattered and in exile, for the land. How can this be applied to the church, which they say is to cover the earth? Is Zion the church? If so what is Jerusalem? If this be church what is Judah, and what Palestine? Is there a church within a church? Now which shall we do, make God the author of this confusion, the inspirer of this jumbled mass, that means one thing at one time and another at another time, or shall we lay all the unwisdom at the door of man making him the liar, and God true? These accumulated pledges from Jehovah, who could refer to His leading them out of Egypt, and His care of them all the way through, as a proof of His faithful love, must either be His design with *that people* and *that land* in

the glorious future for them, the same people He had punished, and the same land He had made desolate, or the sublime and grand hallucinations of minds gone mad with grief over the sad wreck of what was so hopeful and wonderful in the beginning, so freighted with expectations and unconditioned promises. Truly the prophecies are a solemn threnody, apart from these rich words of expectation, but if they be not true to the letter, as the threats have been, then their very presence is but a useless mockery, and God is found false to His own heart, and to His first people; and how could His present people trust Him?

III. The restoration and glory of Israel is to be accompanied by *blessings upon their land*. As that was made theirs forever, and all the while they were and are absent from it, is made a wilderness; so upon their return He shall establish them in national and physical blessings. I refer you to but a few passages in the various prophets. If you say these are but figures of spiritual blessings, will you tell me how it is that so many of them follow the enumeration of their actual blessings which He would take away? Did they not have this pleasant land with all earthly comforts and riches? Is this to be taken literally and not the others which come in the same chapters? Besides, He speaks of spiritual blessings for them also. Now, if the spiritual things are to be taken as for the church, what are the physical ones? How simply and clearly they fit an earthly people! How awkwardly can they be applied to a purely heavenly people. I now name some passages: Isa. lv., lvi. 4-11, lvii. 4, lxxv. 17-25; Jer. xxx., xxxi., xxxiii.; Ezek. xxxvi. 1-15, 28-38; xxxvii. 21-28, xlvi. 13, xlviii.; Hos. ii. 18-23; Amos ix. 11-15; Obad. 19-21. Carefully read these in connexion with the purpose of God as stated in calling out Israel in the beginning, which has never yet had its fulfillment, excepting in part. But that part, going on in the line

of physical and earthly favor, is the rehearsal and token of His meaning for the completing of all that He purposed. We may in this use the language of Micah vii. 20, "Thou wilt perform the truth of Jacob and the mercy to Abraham which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old."

IV. There is to be a *moral change* a real turning of the heart to God, and the putting away of all guilt and defilement from them. Look at Isaiah i. for an example of this. Here there can be no mistake, for the first verse tells us that the vision is "concerning Judah and Jerusalem." They stood at that day, and surely what is said of the moral and physical desolation by sins and judgment was literally true. After arraying these things, Jehovah says, "Come, now, let us reason together," &c., looking to her moral cleansing. And then at the end, after speaking of easing Himself of the adversaries among them, He says, "I will turn my hand upon thee and purely purge away thy dross, and will take away all thy tin, and I will restore thy judges *as at the first*, and thy counsellors *as at the beginning*; afterward thou shalt be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city." Can that be applied to the church? Here there were judges at the beginning of Israel, and He is to restore judges as at first. Here is a city, standing out apart from the nations, and this at the time of the restoration, and if the church is to go on and fill the earth, how can that be? I may cite other quotations here also, though only a few specimens for your examination: Isa. iv. 2-6, xii., xxvi., xxxii. 15-20; xxxv., xlv. 21, 22; xlv. 17, 24, 25; liii. 4-11, lx. 21, lxi. 10; Jer. xxxi. 31-34, l. 20; Ezek. xxxvii. Hos. ii. 9, 10; xiv. 4-8; Micah vii. 18, 19; Zeph. xiii. 9; Zech. viii. 20-22, xii. 10, xiii. 1, xiv. 20, 21.

V. The restoration shall be preceded *by the day of tribulation*, and in which a remnant of the Jews shall be found waiting for their Deliverer, and by Him shall be saved at that time (Dan. xii. 1, 2; Mat. iii.; Joel ii., iii.

VI. It shall be connected with *blessing upon all the nations*. It is the case forever with the nations of this world that their real blessing from God is immediately to flow out from Israel's exaltation according to the first promise. This is continually spoken of in all the prophets, many of which have been quoted above. "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" (Deut. xxxii. 8). See Isa. ii. 1-4, xlix. 6-9, lx., lxvi. 23; Micah iv. 1, 2, &c.

VII. The restoration and blessing of Israel is to be *by power and at once* in the exercise of the authority that is given unto Christ. In Ps. cxi. the word to Him is, "Sit Thou on my throne until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." Jehovah shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion, rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power." In Isa. xxvi. 9, it is said, "When Thy judgments are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." This is so fully the drift of all that is spoken by the prophets, and in the Psalms, of the bringing in of the glory for Jerusalem and Judah and Israel, that one has but to read any portion that speaks of "that day" to learn that it shall be a terror, shall burn as an oven, that it shall be a day of wrath. The New Testament corroborates this. Matt. xxv. 31-46, tells that when the Son of Man shall come in His glory He shall have all nations gathered before Him and shall divide them on the question of their treatment of the remnant of Israel. 1 Thess. v. says that day shall come as a thief in the night, for when they shall say peace and safety, sudden destruction shall come. See 2 Thess. ii.; Rev. xix.; Heb. x. 12; 2 Pet. iii. 10-12. How unlike this to the precious day of salvation going on now, when God is acting in the riches of His grace.

Yours, in that grace,

* *

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE LATE ARTHUR
BELSHAM,

ON TAKING HIS PLACE IN TESTIMONY, AT THE LORD'S TABLE.

In taking our readers into confidence, by opening private letters before them, it may be well to give a word of explanation. It will easily be seen that at the time of writing, on both sides, there could not possibly have been any thought of these letters ever being seen by other eyes. But the deep spirit of inquiry, on the part of the beloved brother, so lately called away to the Lord, it is believed, is shared by many in various places, and he may prove to be the exponent of their thoughts and longings. And the answers given, though in the midst of incessant labor with the intention of meeting as best could be done, the need of the inquirer, yet have been used of God in helping one into the line of His will for Him, and may be used still further by infinite grace that asks not for great instrumentalities to carry out His precious purposes.

There are some portions of the correspondence that bear very intimately and tenderly on personal matters; but it is felt that these so serve to exhibit the progress, and even maturity, of apprehension of the mind of the Lord, on the part of the brother, that none can be left out without loss. His growth was very rapid, because conscience from the first question till the last expression of triumph, seemed to be in the presence of God. Everything was weighed there. What made God happy was the prevailing thought. And surely in a day of looseness as to God's will, this is of immense value.

The Lord was pleased to use for a second time, as far as known, a series of papers on "God's Unity and Man's Union," published last year in this magazine, in bringing out the latent desire, and starting the inquiry with which the series begins. During the course of these letters sorrow came to both breasts with its lessons and its blessings, and finally, joy in the presence of the Lord to him who began them, thus making what seemed only a correspondence to become a history.

In thinking of that which is "far better," having so soon come to him, the knowledge of how feeble and meagre these answers are to what he found at once

“with Christ” in person, is accompanied with the confidence that the same word to which he was subject here, is found true there, and that the body for which, finding himself a member here, he gave up all affiliations of men, is that of which he is still a member, and is to be forever—the church of God, the body of Christ.

It will be understood that the publication of these letters is not made to give credit to man, but rather to tell to others how God’s grace and God’s word will lead to God’s ground, to that in which He takes delight. And He will doubtless so use it, taking it to those who need a word in this matter, for He knows all about it.

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RICHMOND, Ind., June 5, 1876.

DEAR BROTHER: I venture to inquire of you concerning the assemblies of believers to whom reference is made in recent articles in SOUND WORDS, as having come out from denominations, and meeting upon the simple basis of being one with Christ. I have not the SOUND WORDS with me to refer to, and cannot give the exact heading of the article. Some assemblies are mentioned as in New York. Are there any in the West?

I am a member of the Society of Friends at present, but have for several years been exercised in regard to the sad divisions among those who claim to be members of *one body*; but have not as yet seen a clear way for me to proceed. Will you kindly give me some information as to these assemblies? How often do they meet? What are the exercises, if any? Is there any system of discipline? What are the safe-guards to prevent these assemblies from being forced into the position of a *new sect*? I long for freedom from sectarianism, yet hesitate to leave a position of comparative freedom from its grosser evils, and one, I trust of some usefulness, until I am fully satisfied that the Lord is leading me into a way that shall be closer to Him, though it may seem to be one which would cut me off, in a measure, from some fields of labor and from some privileges now enjoyed.

Your reply will be lovingly esteemed, and with many prayers for you as editor of, and for the increased usefulness of SOUND WORDS,

I am your brother in Christ,

A. B.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., June 14, 1876.

BELoved BROTHER—The pressure upon me has pushed the reply to your letter on a few days, and I fear now I shall not have time to give you what is in my heart on the matter you ask about, as I must gather out a few moments, here and there only, for correspondents. But it is a great joy to me that you have been thus far led of the Holy Spirit into His mind concerning the evils of this day, and the evils of man's system.

The meetings of which you speak, of the children of God in various places through the land, are the result of having learned the sad departure from that which was set up in the beginning, when the Holy Spirit came, upon Christ's ascension to the Father. Those composing them have, in most cases, come out of that which was seen as dishonoring the Head, and denying the Holy Spirit His place in gathering the saints and distributing the gifts as *He* wills, by the presidency of man. This is felt to be "iniquity," from which we are told in 2 Tim., ii. 19, to "depart." Obeying this, they have been told further, to follow righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those "who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart," that is, having only the Lord and His word before them.

They meet, then, first of all, with the acknowledgment of the headship of Christ to His body, which is the Church, giving all diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit, and thereby confessing the unity of the body, in the midst of the divisions of this day. Confessing this unity, they meet on God's ground, the ground on which every member of the body is before God, and, of course, where all the members of Christ, as such, are welcome.

As to "exercises," the whole is under the presidency of the Holy Spirit, Christ Himself being present according to His word: "where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst (Matt. xviii. 20). All is left to Him, therefore. The meeting is distinctly to Christ, as our Lord and Head. On His resurrection, He met His own on the first day of the week, the meeting being distinctly for them, the doors being shut (John xx. 19-23). It is for worship, and we find in 1 Cor., xi. 18-34, that the coming together is for

breaking bread, and though they *abused* it, so as to have it denied that it *was* the Lord's Supper, this only shows us what the Lord's Supper is. "The loaf we break (1 Cor., x. 16-17) is the communion of the body of Christ, and we, being many members, are all one loaf, one body, and are *all* partakers of that *one* loaf." The one loaf shows this, instead of the many loaves (the Cephas loaf, the Paul loaf, Apollos loaf, &c.) Here is the scene, then, of the gathering for breaking the loaf, itself showing the Lord's death until He come, showing to God that we enter into His mind on that matter, that the death of Christ is all. It is a scene of praise and thanksgiving, on the ground of what is already done, by which we are brought into the holiest, perfected forever. The Holy Spirit known as presiding leads as He will, one to give out a hymn of praise, or to express thanksgiving, and another to give thanks over the bread and cup. Each one is before the Lord, for Him to use whom He will. The freedom is the freedom of the Holy Spirit, not man's. Sometimes many may be used, sometimes few men—just as He will. Singing, and sometimes reading portions of the Scriptures, and whatever is according to His purpose in gathering, are the exercises. We find in Acts, xx. 7, that Paul being present at the breaking of bread, discoursed also (*not* "preached" the gospel as there would be no occasion). He simply told out the truth pertaining to the saints, and of the Lord Jesus risen. The object of gathering was not to hear Paul, but to break bread. So now, if the Lord lead any one to speak, it is accepted as from Him, though in 1. Cor., xiv. 29, the rest are to judge whether it is according to the Spirit.

The whole must be according to the real place we are in, as dear to God and standing in Christ, in the holiest, worshippers. It will be solemn and yet joyous, the heart occupied with Him who loves us and gave Himself for us.

In receiving others who come as children of God, the word is, "receive one another as Christ also received us to the glory of God (Rom., xv., 7). They must, first, be His, and second, it must be to the glory of God. This would bear upon evil either doctrinal or moral. The word judges both, as contrary to Christ, and His own

must not allow what denies Him. Hence, if one holds doctrine denying His work or person, such an one could not be received, and if one were breaking bread holding such things, he must be judged and put away. This is discipline—a receiving and putting away and restoring simply according to directions in the Word. So under the guidance alone of the Holy Spirit can any be kept from running into system. Man's tendencies are that way; he likes to be active, to make his own things. It is only as there is subjection to Him, therefore, that any can be guarded against making a sect: meeting alone to the person of Christ keeps from this.

There are other meetings for reading and study of the Word, and others for prayer—a constant dependence on Him for everything. The word alone is allowed, nothing of man, or there will be an end of testimony; the word is allowed its full force, no system of man binding it.

There are little meetings of this kind in various parts of the country—eight in and around New York, in Boston, Cleveland (O.), Detroit, St. Louis, Chicago, Springfield and Greenville (Ill.), Philadelphia, Baltimore, and others. I know of none in Indiana. There will be a meeting for the study of the word of God on the 22d of this month, at Vinton, Ia., at which many from different parts of the country will be. This you would find profitable and cheering, I doubt not, and if you can go, I strongly advise it. All will be provided for together during the meeting. I am very happy you have written. I send you a few pamphlets on the matter you ask about and others, and I shall be most glad to hear from you again, and often. Rejoicing in the grace of God that has made you His,

I am yours in the Lord Jesus Christ,

M. T.

RICHMOND, Ind., Aug. 19, 1876.

DEAR BROTHER T.—Your very kind and full letter of June 14 was duly received and highly valued. I have read it several times over, and also read, I think, *all* the tracts you sent, and some of them over and over again; I have also read the scriptures referred to as supporting the various propositions, and have reflected and prayed over the matter a great deal. As a result I find myself rapidly settling into the belief that I must take part with you.

However, I find a few questions still to be asked before the final steps are taken. As a "Friend" I am familiar with the doctrine of the leadership of the Holy Spirit in meetings for worship, and am not altogether unfamiliar with it as an experience; but as a "Friend" I am also more or less strongly imbued with a belief in the non-necessity of outward observances, as baptism, the Lord's supper, &c. As for the latter, your tracts and the reading of the Word have largely changed my views. But I would like to ask for a particular account of the *method* of its observance. Is ordinary bread used? How much to a person? How is it spread and how distributed? Is fermented wine used? How much, &c., as before? Having in my early manhood used more wine than was best, and having a deadly horror of its use in any way, I should hesitate even to use it on such an occasion as the above.

I believe I have yet seen nothing indicating what you receive and practice as the teaching of the Word on the subject of baptism by water. Please give me full particulars. I have not considered, and I do not at present consider, it as at all essential, or even best, for christians in these days to use it, as tending to cause many to trust in *observances* instead of in the sacrifice of Christ. However, I hold all my opinions and education *free*, and *only* desire to reach the *truth*. So far as I now know I hold *nothing* that I cannot give up *at once with pleasure*, when seen to be not in accordance with the truth.

Since thinking so definitely about these matters as I have done lately, I find there is in many minds a deep-seated conviction that in the present condition of *sects* there is something wrong, though they are ignorant of the means of escape. I have had a special illustration of this within a few weeks.

I wish, also, to ask, have the assemblies already existing found the exercise of discipline, &c., to be carried out with about the same degree of vigor and uniformity as to parallel cases in different places? Do the assemblies *really* maintain the unity of the Spirit and of doctrine and practice? I know the answers to the last questions have no bearing upon the truth of the basis of their establishment necessarily, but only prove or disprove their faithfulness to their principles; but I do need such information for the sake of objectors.

I hope, dear brother, you will not think I am asking questions for the sake of it. To leave the Society of Friends, the society of my ancestors on one side for more than three hundred years, and, in a certain sense, to subject myself to ostracism, is not a step to be taken without first being fully persuaded, especially when the further step of announcing myself as free from all denominations and condemning them is considered. I could readily be excused for going to the Methodists or Presbyterians, but for this other step, hardly, by many. Still, I mind not these things when compared with doing the Lord's will. I have given them up, but I have read a heathen town clerk's advice—"Do nothing rashly;" and it is Quaker policy also.

I should have been rejoiced to go to Vinton, but could not. I was in Cincinnati lately, and saw fares to New York marked very low, and thought how much I should like to run over and spend a Lord's Day with you, and learn all that I have asked about, and, no doubt, much more. I have now scarcely any doubt that I shall cast in my lot with you, and desire to be well posted on all points, as the pioneer, as it were, in this great State should be. I have suffered much for nearly two years by having been less engaged in christian work than it sometimes seems I ought to be. However, I trust that if I make this change, it will be the means of throwing me right into an active work. For three years now I have been a member of the Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends (Orthodox) Executive Committee on First Day Schools, and have acted as statistical secretary, having in a large degree originated the present system of reports. Of course this has given me much work of a certain class, and made me more or less prominent and correspondingly more strong will be the reaction on me if I *recede*. The Committee will, in all probability, be reappointed next October, and I am anxious to make up my mind completely before Oct. 1, so that I may resign my position and let the Y. M. appoint a successor.

If I go with you, I trust the way will open for me to come to New York, and be more perfectly instructed, for I cannot consent to be an idle *professor*, nor would I desire to rush unprepared into such a conflict, for conflict I know it will be, from incidental remarks made by

others where I have simply broached the idea that perhaps denominations were not perfectly in the mind of the Lord. "Crooked," "queer," "cross-grained," "notional," "ready to embrace new-fangled ideas," "visionary," and such, will be freely used. Still I believe my action will not be delayed a moment by these considerations; but I do want to have *wherewith to answer*.

My only apology for so long a letter is the importance of the topic and the desire to make this one letter suffice to give you the basis for giving me all the help I ought to need from a brother. I trust you will be able to write to me early, so that I may have all possible time to think before Oct. 1, for I shall, in courtesy to my companions on the Committee, be obliged to give a reason for resigning, as they have from their action, evidently much confidence in me, and will much regret to lose me, and I, in turn, have learned to esteem them during our association.

With much love for you and the brethren, I am
Yours very truly,

A. B.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., Sept. 6, 1876.

BELoved BROTHER—Your letter has given me great joy in seeing the way the Lord, in grace, is leading you as His own. I am quite sure He will guide you, step by step, to His own glory. So unused have we been to look first at His things, that now, in these last hours, as He calls our attention to these, we find that what ought to be most easy to us is hardest. We need to be more simple all the time, having nothing but His word before us. It is a blessed thing that He has recovered the ground and the truth so long lost, though given into the hands of those who are nothing in themselves. Our confession is of ruin and weakness, keeping His word and not denying His name.

It would be a joy to us all could you be with us here, that we might show that fellowship which the Lord gives us with Himself at His table. I quite understand the practical nature of your questions, from never having seen the breaking of bread. You will notice that it was "after supper" that it was instituted by Christ, and that Paul, in 1 Cor. xi., rebukes the thought of satisfying

hunger there; so the amount would be but a little piece broken by the one who partakes, for we are all members of the one body—one loaf—and are all partakers of that one loaf. So also with the wine—a single sip may be the expression of our individual association with Christ.

Whatever bread or wine can be procured, that which is used in common, is quite suitable. To be occupied with the character or quality of either, would savor of ritualism, and the form, that which in Colos. ii., 16-23, is rebuked as of the flesh, the “touch not, taste not, handle not” character, which is done away with in the cross.

Of course we try to get the juice of the grape, as being really wine, rather than the drugged material so commonly sold, though not with any legal feeling about it. The Lord will keep His own who are walking in fellowship with Him from thinking of the taste of the wine by occupying them with Himself.

I enter less into particulars on this matter, since I mean to introduce you to a very dear brother, R. S. S. who has but lately gone out to Indianapolis from among us, whom you may see, or to whom you can write, and appoint a meeting with him, though I judge he will be most glad to seek you out when he is informed by me or others of you. I commend him to you and rejoice that he is so near you. I hope to hear that you have broken bread together. I think, too, he would gladly run over and have a reading meeting, or preaching, if there were an opening.

As to baptism, the word is very simple and clear, that believers were immersed in *water*. In Rom. vi. this is referred to, as expressive of their death unto Christ, the fundamental fact of christianity, that Christ died for us, and we have died with Him. Thus our burial in water has meaning as setting forth that we are done with the old ground, as sinners, and are introduced into the new “in Christ.” I think you will see that Christ, after He had risen, sent out his apostles to preach and baptize those who believed; that, at Pentecost, the thousands were baptized; that those who believed at Samaria (Acts. viii.) were baptized—and so the Eunuch from Ethiopia—in *water*. So also, Paul, in Acts. ix., and then he baptized the twelve at Ephesus who had been baptized by John—in water, for *he* baptized in

Salem near Elim, because there was much water there. In 1 Pet. iii. 20, you will find baptism is the answer or demand of a good conscience, made good by the resurrection of Christ. It sets forth death and burial, thus telling of Christ's own death. We get to Christ not by nature, as in Adam, but through death, and here we show it. He instituted baptism and gave it to His apostles to observe. Membership of the body of Christ is by the baptism of the Spirit, which is another thing.

I am glad you are exercised as to the question of the practical unity of the assemblies in discipline. It is in cases of discipline that we learn practically the value and meaning of the truth of the Church. In cases of separation of a brother from fellowship, in one place, all judge the case, the world over. He is separated from all till he shall be restored. In the midst of great weakness, faithfulness has been manifested in this respect. Those who are led to see the ruin of the professing thing in the world, and have been gathered to Christ alone, have found Him a resource and the Holy Spirit a reality, and evil has been judged by Him, and by them, for His sake. Meeting alone to Him is the only condition in which true discipline can be maintained, and is possible, indeed. What standard is there for discipline in the systems of men except their own system, which is *their own*, and not of God's—else why leave them? All they can say is, I am not a good Methodist or Friend or Presbyterian, &c., besides not being a good christian, according to their standard, which is often quite low and worldly.

I know you will be brought into a place of rejection. In recovering the *truth* of the place, we recover all the circumstances, the persecution, the grief, the trial, the rejection. These are sweet tokens of sonship, and the reality of all. But you are cast into precious company, with Himself. Now, *are* we sons of God; "Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not."

I can understand your desire to be posted, as you say, to meet objectors, &c. But do not forget that you are with a living Lord, who can teach you moment by moment. Meeting the objections of others is not of us, or our wisdom, but wholly of Him, and it magnifies Him to confess our ignorance and nothingness, and we are

safest cast entirely upon Him. What you need is His own truth, bringing you more and more closely into fellowship with Himself, and let Him answer for you in all the freshness of His word. What you find clearly in His word is the thing to do. These brethren you ask about ought to do what is there, and I believe they do generally. The presence of the Lord Himself saves everything from form or custom or plan. There is always a freshness in His presence.

I can easily see how you will withdraw from affiliation with the Committee with which you have been acting. The Lord will direct it all. Do not delay when conscience says *do*, and do not go on the faith of others. Trade on your own, enlightened by the word, and it will be more clear on every use of it. I commend you to God and the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up. Many are being stirred up all around. I shall be glad to hear often from you.

Yours in the Risen Lord Jesus,

M. T.

RICHMOND, Ind., Oct. 22, 1876.

MY BELOVED BROTHER—I trust you will not consider me negligent in not having replied earlier to your kind favor of September 6. *Festina lente* (hasten slowly) is a good motto, believed in by me, though not always acted upon.

I must first thank you for your very explicit answers to my queries, and may I not say that I propounded them with a two-fold purpose—first, for information; and second, *to prove you*. I had my convictions on these matters, and I wished to discover whether you, brethren, were controlled by ritualism or by the Spirit of the Lord, who raises above forms or ceremonies, so that no form can be stated as absolute in the details thereof. I rejoice that your exposition leaves me no doubt upon these points.

Chiefly am I thankful that on the matter of *discipline* is faithfulness found. Of course I could see that if brethren were united and were humbly willing to be guided by the Holy Spirit, conclusions could easily be reached, and discipline in regard to parallel cases would be the same, whether administered in New York or Japan

The fact that it is the case is proof enough to me that the brethren of whom you write are in the truth. You will readily understand that it is one thing to recognize the truth of God, and that I must make a confession of it in a different or more full manner than heretofore, and, in so doing, dissociate myself from existing or present connections because they are a sect, and another thing to do this *and* associate myself with others, because I might then only exchange one form of sect for another. It is for the purpose of steering clear of this misfortune that I have been so pointed and minute in my inquiries.

I now say cordially and thankfully that I can and do extend the hand of fellowship to all who confess the truth as you have written it, and as expounded in the tracts you sent me; that the Holy Spirit seals it to my heart as the truth, and that I desire to be called "brother" by you and the brethren everywhere. I have resigned my position on the committee I told you of, and gave as my reason that I should soon resign my membership in the denomination. This I shall do shortly, unless some great change comes over me. My beloved wife will go with me. Thus we shall have the *two* for whom the promise was made. Please give me some hints as to how proceed further.

May I ask you also whether you unite at all with the Young Men's Christian Association? It seems to me we cannot. Sometimes when I see all the accustomed avenues of labor closed, it is a temptation to say "Cui bono?" (What is the use?) But, praise the Lord! I have learned that the only thing for me to decide is what I ought to do, and to rest the remainder with Him. Other avenues will open up, I doubt not, in which I can bear a testimony for Him and Him alone.

In contemplating this severance, I have been forcibly reminded of our Lord's remark, "The foxes have *holes*, and the birds of the air have *nests*, but the Son of Man hath not *where to lay his head*;" and as regards this life, why should I fare better than He?

I have been obliged to withdraw from political strife, even to the extent of not voting, for it is plain that no party honors the Lord as Head, and they would resist any attempts to install Him as such. To my natural man this was quite a cross, and in a heated canvass, such as we

have had here, a position that entailed many unkind remarks; but I have been preserved in peace, and with but little wavering on the matter. I know nothing how brethren act in this matter. If I have followed a false guide I shall be much surprised and grieved. (I have not!)

We trust that some of the brethren will pass this way soon and instruct us farther, catechise us, and correct us, so that we may properly meet as an assembly of God's children on His ground and in unity with His assembly. I have received a very nice letter from brother R. S. S., and have to-day answered him. I thank you for introducing us. Please write soon.

Yours in the risen Lord, A. B.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., Oct. 30, 1876.

BELoved BROTHER—Your letter, received after your card on Saturday, has given us all great joy, as we discern in it the mark of the Holy Spirit's action, and rejoice in the way He is leading you. The question I so often ask those who desire fellowship, and to take their place at the Lord's table, whether they are coming to a sect or a nice religious meeting for their own comfort or anything of man's making up, you have answered clearly. It is blessed to be clear in the matter of our testimony. The Lord has judged the condition of the whole professing church—Christendom—and we have been judged with it. We have been led out from the evil to *Him* simply to be according to His mind, and thus to bear a remnant testimony in a day of evil. And that is our work. By taking a position against all that dishonors Him in this day, you have already *done* more than all the activities of so-called service, efforts, work, etc., combined. What are God's children busy at? Building up that which is contrary to Him. To Jeremiah (chap. xv.) it was said, "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth."

We are to be more thoroughly judged and sifted by the Word and to take the place of confession before Him who is so grievously dishonoured, in behalf of all. If they do not confess, we must for them. Surely here is a work. Your "avenues" will open soon. Meanwhile quietness and brokenness before the Lord are of great price.

I am glad you have been led to see your separation from *all* associations of men—political, social, and religious. Those meeting to Him have long ago ceased to be of any nation here and of any citizenship, because our citizenship is in heaven alone. We are simply to pass along as strangers and pilgrims, not of the world at all, though subject to the authorities. We have not been able to go on with the Y. M. C. A., finding it is not on the ground of the body of which Christ is the head.

I saw brother R. S. S. lately in New York. He is now at home in Indianapolis, and I hope he may be able to be with you next Lord's day to break bread with you and your wife. I have written to him suggesting it. He will tell you other things that the Word gives us concerning the conduct of the assembly, but it will be what is already in the Word; see if you can find out the Lord's way there. The Holy Spirit is present, and that becomes the characteristic thing. Reliance is alone on Him to lead. Two or three gathered in the Lord's name are gathered by Him alone, and He must guide when to speak, read, praise, or give thanks. It is simplicity itself, because it is of Him.

We reciprocate most heartily your greeting and fellowship. I am glad your wife is with you; this is sweet indeed. She and you will find many a cold word, possibly a bitter one, from without, those who are nearest sometimes saying the sharpest. But the joy of the Lord is your strength. You fall into company with the despised and outcast, for such was He, and you fall heirs of the sorrows as well as the joys. It is enough that you are with Him, and He is coming soon!

Love from all. I hope to hear from you very soon again. When it is the Lord's will I shall see you.

Yours ever in Him, M. T.

RICHMOND, Ind., Dec. 17, 1876.

DEAR BROTHER T.—I have for some time been burdened because I could not answer your last letter. Business matters have pressed me very much of late, so that I seemed to have little time outside my necessary duties. I hope you have heard through Brother R. S. S. of our precious meeting together to break bread in the name of the Lord Jesus two weeks ago this day. Last Lord's

day and to-day my dear wife and I have remembered the Lord's death in the breaking of bread, and have found His precious promise realized to us, "There am I in the midst." We do indeed find that we enjoy closer communion with Him than ever before, and that He is far richer and more to be desired than all the systems of men. We ask that all those with you who call upon Him out of pure hearts will pray that even by such feeble folk as we are the Word may be faithfully spoken, and others added to bear testimony to the headship of Christ.

I hope that if any brother that you know travels this way, we may be favored with a call, for it would be sweet to hold fellowship with such. We hope the assemblies will sustain us by prayer and sympathy. It is our precious privilege frequently to present all who are standing out to Him. Of course we by no means neglect to present those who are still bound up in systems, but are deeply exercised that many among them may see the truth. We sent in our resignations to "Friends" a month ago, and have been visited by a committee from them. We suppose they will soon report their opinion on the case. Whatever they do, whether they accept our resignations or not, we feel that we have thoroughly put all such things behind us, and look only to the Lord Jesus Christ, who has redeemed us. Hoping to hear from you soon and to be able to write again soon to you,

We are, yours in Him,

A. B. AND WIFE.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., Feb. 1, 1877.

BELOVED BROTHER—Your letter of fellowship was received duly. I have been greatly occupied and could not answer. God has been pleased to bring near to me His precious Word, and make true His title as "the God of all comfort" by ministering to my heart on the departure of my darling wife to Himself on the 18th of January. I have made my boast in Him in times past, and surely by opening new avenues for His love to enter, He will make me still to boast in Him.

But, oh! what she was to me, to the children, and to His own in many places. Peculiarly intelligent in the truth, she was most thoroughly with me in all my

work, so that she seemed to do all that I did, and more. My meetings taking me out almost every evening she tied the family together, gathering and keeping them while I was away, and her power was sweetly for the Lord and from Him. Our house has been an open one for the saints for years, and she was happy, though with a poor, broken body, to be used in service for them. In all ways her life seems to have been like a sweet poem, precious and complete in all relations, and this simply through her absolute dependence on the Lord and His Word. It was *His* wisdom, *His* love and grace, she was showing. And so she was independent of man, walking before Him. I always felt she was the practical expression of the sweetest truth I was teaching. I thank God for the twenty one years of life with her, and now find Him turning my eyes more toward the resurrection and His coming and the glory. That is everything.

In the beginning of her sickness neither she nor I believed it would come to death. We rather thought as we had taken our lessons together so long, so we should gather the deeper teaching together from *sickness* rather than *death*. But it was to be the infinite rest for her, and the waiting for me. And now I can see how kind it was of Him not to let my mind sink to that thought, but to allow my poor heart to get adjusted to the great fact, and consent to it, under His handling.

God has cast much upon Himself to make up all to me, to us. But I know Him, and He loves us. I know, too, all about her. I know the company she keeps—forever with the Lord. It is enough. He is true. And so I go on, "always confident," waiting the "little while," and then —!

It may be the Lord is closing me up from going outside of New York to the many places both east and west I have had on my heart, as I have to be both father and mother to my children. But there is plenty in this neighborhood to be done, and one can keep very busy all the time.

I hope you have renewed opportunities of meeting dear brother S., and whether you have or not, you and your wife have been breaking bread. The Lord will honor those who honor Him in this, making a testimony

through the quiet going on of that which is according to His mind, more than by much attempt at talking.

Much love to you both, in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yours in Him,

M. T.

RICHMOND, Ind., Feb., 18, 1877.

MY BELOVED BROTHER IN CHRIST—Your most touching letter, telling us of the going home of your beloved wife, reached us on this day two weeks ago, and while we could not but sorrow with you, yet we thanked God for the sweet testimony to His all-sufficiency in every trial, and were enabled in a small measure to share, as it were, *her* joy in being with the Lord. It was a great privilege to receive your letter just on the day it came, as brethren R. S. S. and Dr. A. were here to spend the day with us. They had told us before your letter came from the office of your bereavement, and Dr. A. had given us some account of the gracious comfort given by God at the funeral. To the eyes of men you have indeed a severe trial, and indeed to your own soul the grief must be more intense than any who have not been through the like can tell. But, oh! how the wonderful sufficiency of God's grace is manifested in such trials, and how they intensify the preciousness of our fellowship with the Father and with His Son. How God uses such opportunities to show, not only to the stricken one, but to all His saints, what a sustainer and provider He is. We pray for you often that God will cause all these things to work out to His own glory, and that you may be supported, strengthened, and instructed in all, and only made the more useful.

How joyfully the heart can rest on the precious certainty that the time of our separation from Him is not long. As I contemplate the possibility of His coming *soon*, I often feel everything within me stirred up to the necessity there is for being diligent in what He gives us to do, and I *long* for opportunities to present the gracious invitation to "come" once more.

We have been made glad to-day by a letter from Brother S., enclosing a letter written in Oct., 1876, to Brother P. J. L., by Brother and Sister Brown, of Fairfield, O. They are standing out of men's things for God alone.

They are but fifteen miles from here, and we hope God will bring us together before long. Brother P. J. L. is now in New York, I suppose; please give my love to him, and tell him my house is open for him to share with me what I have if God bring him here.

Yours in the risen Lord,

A. B.

Shortly after this a card was received from another, telling of the death of a little child of Bro. B., and a word of fellowship and consolation was sent to which reference is made in the following letter:

RICHMOND, Ind., May 31, 1877-

MY BELOVED BROTHER—Your kind letter of remembrance came to hand at a time when its loving words were doubly acceptable, on the day when our only and precious little girl would have been a year old had she been left us. I had been wishing to write to you to tell you of her departure to be with the Lord on April 24th, but have been both very much pressed with work and in poor health. Our babe was only seriously ill for about ten days, with typhoid pneumonia. She was a peculiarly sweet and precious babe, and had endeared herself to our hearts exceedingly, and also to all our friends, and we were so glad to have her as a companion to her brother, who was but sixteen or seventeen months older. He seemed to be so good to her, and she to be delighted with everything he did. We therefore felt the separation deeply, and you know far more than we how much grief to the poor human heart these trials can give, and, bless the name of our God! you also know the depths of consolation there are in Him, and, how we are enabled to triumph and rejoice in His doings, even when they come so close.

Dear S., whom I suppose you will see about this time, came over to the funeral and God gave him precious words for us and those assembled, so that many acknowledged that they had never heard such consoling words before. Truly *He* must have given them. Dear S. has indeed been used of God to comfort and strengthen us, and we have been favored to have many times of sweet fellowship. We have also Brother and Sister B. at Fair Haven, Ohio. They spent a Lord's day with us two or

three weeks ago. None have, as yet, manifested much inclination to examine the ground we have been brought into, but seem to have mostly settled that it is a *new fangled* idea that will only lead to disaster. However we have *proved* the ground and daily became more rooted and grounded in the blessedness of the place, and learn the truths of God, to the consolation of our souls. My wife has been most encouragingly and happily blessed in fully seeing the truth of the place. We know we occupy in weakness, but God deals with us after *His* grace, and not after our failures. I am hoping to go to Canada about 35 miles east of Port Huron, Mich., with my wife, in order to recruit my health, in about three weeks, and write now in part to ask if you could give me a letter of introduction to any saint in Detroit with whom we might stay a night. It would, I think, be a convenience to us. To this query an early reply will be a favor. The tracts on the office of the Holy Spirit were very acceptable and made the matter clear. I think I had reached nearly the same mind before receiving them.

Yours in Him,

A. B.

Answer was made to this as requested, and a letter sent to Detroit, upon which a letter was addressed to him from there—inviting him to a temporary home on the journey. In this letter allusion was made to God leading His own into the deeper things by His dealings in sorrow that they might know and own the exceeding strength of His own arm for them, and rejoicing that this dear brother was being made more acquainted with Him, and accepting the fact that whom He *loved* He chastened. To this answer was made as follows, the last received from him, before he left us for the presence of the Lord.

—————
RICHMOND, Ind., June 6, 1877.

MY DEAR BROTHER—Your kind letter is at hand and I thank you much for its contents. I trust that in the “depths” to which you refer as being the portion of God’s people there will be an honoring of Him in all, and a willingness to come into judgment as may be necessary. May we all be kept in meekness and fear,

so that the deliverance may be manifestly of God, that *some may believe*.

As for myself, since I wrote you I have been brought into circumstances that may quite probably prevent our going to Canada, viz., my employer deems it necessary to dispense with my services in order to reduce expenses. In this I am sure there is the hand of a tender Father, and my prayer is to be kept before Him that my movements may be in His will. The condition of my health seems to demand a change of air and climate, and I hope events will be so ordered as to secure these.

For a long while, some years, my mind has much dwelt upon the joyfulness there would be in being altogether in God's work, but my own spiritual feebleness, and being so tied to business, have seemed to stand in the way. Many things have occurred to bring our minds into a closer dependence on Him, so that, even now, I seem at liberty to make but little effort on my own behalf. Should He permit you to suggest any course, or throw any opening for employment before your view, I should be glad to receive it in that way. In the mean time a place of trust and dependence becomes us, in which it is our desire to be kept by God's grace. We hope brethren do not forget us before His throne, in their petitions, as we often remember you.

In much love, Your brother, A. B.

The following letter will tell what closes up this precious history. The telegram referred to was received on Friday, July 28, announcing that dear A. B. was passing away to the Lord and asking if it was possible for the receiver of it to get out there. The railroad troubles caused delay, and when the journey was taken the dearly beloved one had passed away already three days, and his body was in the grave. It was exceedingly blessed, however, to see the grace of God manifested in supporting the bereaved survivor, knowing more deeply than ever the abyssmal depth of her loss by the richer fellowship into which they had lately come, now closed and checked until we shall all be together at the coming of our Lord. And it was delightful, also, to learn of the full testimony of late months, and especially the last days, that had been borne by this beloved saint and

borne witness to by so many in his city. The writer of this letter was of course, ignorant, at the time, of this visit, but that ignorance served to bring out this account, which is surely most welcome to all our readers.

INDIANAPOLIS, July 31, 1877.

MY BELOVED BROTHER T.—You were, I doubt not, little prepared for the contents of my telegram of last Friday. I should ere this have written in confirmation of it, but you can readily understand how much occupied the past few days have been.

About five weeks ago I went over to Richmond and spent a happy Lord's day with our dear Brother Arthur Belsham and his wife. His health was then a good deal run down, caused possibly by very close confinement to work for years, but it was thought a trip through the lakes, which he contemplated taking, and a visit to a friend's house in Canada would entirely restore his strength.

With the exception of a few lines written from Chicago, just after starting, I did not hear from him, but attributed it to the possibility of a letter written in reply having gone astray, or the difficulty of writing when traveling. But a letter from a friend of Arthur's received last Thursday gave the true reason. It was to say that he had returned from the journey much worse; that its effects had proved to be very different from what was expected, and that two or three days were the most he could possibly live. I had little anticipated such news, but lost no time in going over to Richmond, especially as it was feared that his mind toward the last might grow lethargic. Owing to the railroad troubles it was early Friday morning before I succeeded in getting a train, and in going up to the house it was with much apprehension that he might have already departed, or that he might not know me. But I was most happily disappointed. When I came into his room he was sitting half upright on the bed with his dear wife supporting him on one side. He signed for me to come to the other, and tried to hold out his hand to me, but its deathly coldness told me the end was near.

He looked up into my face and said, "Robert, I am going home; I think I'll go to-day." It was enough; it told me all in a moment. The doctors were just then in

consultation, and one of them came over, and said, "Arthur, you asked me a question a little while ago, and I think you want it answered. You may last a day or two, but this coldness which has come over you in the last hour is the beginning of the end." Instead of being the least moved at hearing this—"Oh," he said, "I'll be soon in the glory. Doctor, it is the only place that amounts to anything after all," to which the doctor assented, but with an apparent unwillingness which told that though in life and health he was not the happy man our precious brother was in weakness and death. I learned afterwards that he was somewhat sceptical, but I trust that what he witnessed shook him a little, for, coming in about fifteen minutes before dear A. fell asleep, A. said to him the moment he entered, "Oh, doctor, this is the morning of the glory!" To hear such an expression from a man just going into eternity seemed to affect him much, for he turned around and said to some one next to him, "The more I visit this patient the more I am convinced of the truth of christianity."

I was obliged to return home at half-past ten next morning, and as he had fallen asleep, I feared I should be obliged to come away without saying good-bye. I waited till the last moment, and just then he awoke. Our parting was a deeply affecting one, the memory of which can never leave me. In an hour afterwards he was with the Lord. All were around his bed when he departed, and his mind was perfectly clear till the last. He had a word for every one, and his departure was such a happy, peaceful, and triumphant one that its effect was deeply felt by many.

Some of his last words I am sure you would desire to hear. A gentleman who came in asked him if he could do anything for him. To which he replied, "Thank you, nothing; Jesus has done it *all!*" Though a terrible sufferer at times, he was a most uncomplaining one. His sister told him the last morning how patient he had been, but he would not allow it to be attributed to him, but "all to Christ." Often when awaking out of sleep he would ask "Is the Lord happy?" which many thought was done when he was not conscious. Once his wife answered affirmatively. "Ah well," he said, "then I am happy, for I am in Him."

And so our dear brother is gone. His consistent, earnest life was a bright testimony for the Lord, to which his departure was a brilliant crown. You were one whom, though he had never seen, he loved much, and the last day he said to me, "You will write to Brother T." When the meeting comes it will be a happy one, and I shall share in that joy. I know I can count on your sympathy, my dear brother, and that of the beloved saints with you in this almost irreparable loss. If alone before, oh, how alone now. But our blessed Lord is in it all, and I would know Him but little could I not praise and thank Him for this also.

But my sorrow is now for his dear wife, our beloved sister. How hard it is for a man to stand out alone I too well have proven; but oh, for a woman, and one, too, who has had such an arm to lean upon and a heart to share all with. Truly she demands the earnest prayers and sympathy of all. She bore up nobly all the week. And what a calm, decided testimony she bore on Monday—that most trying day of all—at the funeral. May God enable her to stand firmly and faithfully to Him. He has a large place now to fill, and surely He will fill it. If the Lord will, I hope to return on Saturday and spend Lord's day with her. These are circumstances under which the breaking of bread comes very near to us. Will you remember us *that day* especially? How glad it would have made us to have had you with us even on the day of the funeral, but it seemed not to be the Lord's will. I was able to say but little, but the Lord used the words of others I feel sure for His own glory. Our brother has been a strong testimony for the Lord in Richmond, to which the glorious manner of his death has added peculiar weight.

I forgot to mention that the first time Arthur was in an assembly larger than the actual "two or three" was the last Lord's day he was on earth. It was at Detroit, where the kindness they met was a great source of joy and thankfulness. He spoke much of the thoughtfulness of the brother with whom they stopped. I think the grace of our Lord Jesus is manifested very sweetly in this little circumstance.

With much love, I am your attached brother in Christ

WAIT ON THE LORD.

I wait on Thee, my Lord
 Thou dost my strength renew ;
 I mount on eagle's wings, on high,
 And all the landscape view.

I wait Thy bidding, Lord,
 To come, to go, to do ;
 I tire not, faint not, for Thy grace
 Is all sufficient, through.

I wait Thy teaching, Lord,
 To know the truth, the way ;
 The Spirit takes the things of Thine
 And makes a full display.

Oh grace ! oh love Divine !
 What length, what depth, what height !
 My feeble powers, but feebly grasp
 The wonders of this sight.

Angels might well desire
 And prophets too, and kings,
 To look into and understand
 The meaning of these things.

But not to them ; to us,
 Thy lost, apostate race,
 Thou hast made known (stupendous thought !)
 The riches of Thy grace !

From thence, Thy priceless "Pearl,"
 Thy "Body," aye, Thy "Bride,"
 Shall come, and clothed in robes of light,
 Be seated by Thy side !

We wait Thy coming, Lord ;
 Oh why so long delay ?
 Yet patiently will wait Thy time
 And antidate that day.