

“SOUND WORDS.”

2 Tim. i. 13

A MONTHLY PERIODICAL,

FOR THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL AND FEEDING
“THE CHURCH OF GOD.”



“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.”
— COL. III., 16.



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“SOUND WORDS.”

VOL. III.

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No. 1.

THE FIRSTLING OF AN ASS.

Exod. XIII. 13.

“EVERY firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break its neck.” This type teaches us a wholesome and humbling truth with reference to our state by nature as children of Adam the first, together with the wondrous provision of God's grace for relieving us from this state. It brings before us, not what we are in our personal responsibilities, and the way of meeting these, so as to free us from the penalties that attach to us as guilty, but what we are, apart from every act of our own, by simple inheritance from our parents, by virtue of which our lives are forfeited from the first moment of our existence, and from which we require to be redeemed in order that we may live in any sense.

The type brings before us three things. 1st. The nature of the animal that is to be redeemed—an ass. 2nd. The mode of its redemption—by a lamb. 3rd. The absolute alternative if not redeemed—the neck to be broken.

Under the law, as we read in Leviticus xi., all animals were divided into two classes—clean and unclean. The first class alone was to supply the Israelite with food, and from it the various sacrifices were to be drawn. What man could eat for his blessing, and God accept for him in sacrifice, were thus made identical. On the other hand, what God could not accept in sacrifice man was not to eat, and thus in what was used or refused, Jehovah associated His people with Himself in that which made up even their life in natural things.

Without going into the details of what constituted clean and unclean, we learn from the broad features of this typical teaching two all important truths. In nature and in practice one animal is clean; while in nature and in practice another is unclean. What have we here but the simple unfolding of what Christ, as man, is on the one hand, and what man in the flesh, is on the other? The defining line of clean and unclean runs

from Genesis to Revelation. Whether in type or in fact, it is Christ on the one side and Adam on the other.

Man by his *birth* from Adam is unclean. He is *born* outside the pale of all blessing, far removed from all that is good and acceptable before God. The pride of the natural heart by no means receives readily such a humbling truth as this. He would fain disown his inheritance and take higher and better ground. He would see in the type we are considering only a curiosity in a past economy. He cannot allow himself to see in it his own condition by nature. Though forced to admit that in practice he has failed to be *all* he should be, whether towards God or his neighbour, he would utterly disclaim that he is by nature merely "the firstling of an ass." His knowledge of himself cannot admit such a thought for a moment, and "vain man would be wise, though man be *born* a wild ass's colt." (Job xi. 12.)

It is easier far to acknowledge that we have acted *like* a wild ass's colt, than to acknowledge that we are such. Yet this is the clear utterance of God's word about us, and it is the unmistakable language of our type. It is not till we see God's estimate of ourselves, that we are free to receive, in all its fulness, His wondrous remedy for the dire necessity we are in. By type and by direct teaching God has taken great pains to give us the real state of things as before Himself. Nor will he overlook what His own eye sees, however much we would like to have it so. He will not confound things that differ, nor yoke clean and unclean together. "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together," is His word in Deut. xxii. 10. Would he show us the extremity of man's necessity in the things of this life, he pictures it to us in the famine of a city "besieged till an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver." (2 Kings, vi. 25.) The horrors of famine could go no further; the ass's head, and "we boiled my son and did eat him," go together. So Israel's wanton reliance on an arm of flesh, in going to Egypt for help, is to Jehovah the abomination of feeding upon those "whose flesh is as the flesh of asses." (Ezek. xxiii. 20.) Had not Israel been taught God's utter rejection of Egypt, as that which to him was utterly unclean, indeed, "as the flesh of asses?" Was not their state that of those who had been by Himself redeemed from that unclean condition? and had not the type we are taking up been given as the memorial of this very thing? "And it shall be, when thy son asketh of thee in time to come saying, what is

this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage. And it came to pass when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the Lord slew the first-born of man and the first-born of beast; therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the first-born of my children I redeem."

Jehovah would ever have His people remember the degradation from which they had been redeemed, and continually He would keep before them and their children the bright *grace* that had interfered to save them from a destruction, which, in virtue of their *nature* as sinners, as much belonged to them by *inheritance* as it did to the Egyptians. What man is by *nature* is abomination to God and cannot live in his presence, or, while in that state, enter into His service, while to die in that state is to be consigned to everlasting shame. For a little moment man may glitter in the pomp and vanity of human greatness, like Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, King of Judah, and his friends may lament his end saying, "Ah, Lord! or, ah, his glory;" but in God's sight he is "buried with the burial of an *ass*, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem." (Jer. xxii. 19.) Man without the knowledge of God is but a Nebuchadnezzar, with a "heart made like the beasts and his dwelling with wild *asses*." (Dan. v. 21.)

Such in God's sight is man's state by nature. He is conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity. David tells us, (Ps. iv. 5,) he goes "astray from his youth up speaking lies." He is but "the firstling of an ass," by his earliest breath, and can only grow up as such. He may be educated to serve *man's* purposes, but with God he has no link, either for time or eternity. It is for us to consider such things. The plea of innocency is constantly put in for the babe at the breast, and education is brought to bear upon him as he grows up. A pardon for some lapses in good conduct he may require at the end of his history, but redemption, the thing needed *at birth* to bring him to God and save his life from eternal destruction, finds a small place in the popular theology of the day, or the ordinary pulpit oratory that people delight to have their ears tickled with.

"Every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb," is the utterance of Him whose word liveth and abideth forever. *Redemption*, not *education*, is what the infant at the breast requires, in order that he may have a place in God's economy.

One other alternative awaited the firstling of an ass: "if not, thou shalt break his neck." Redemption or destruction became its portion from the first moment of its existence. It was no question of what it had been or might become. It was "the firstling of an ass," and its life was forfeited by the first breath it drew. The lamb stepped in between it and destruction, and through the death of that lamb it passed out of its state by nature, and could take its part, in virtue of redemption, in the service of the God of Israel. By Jehovah's provision, the lamb was thus ready to die for the firstling of the ass, the *moment* it made its appearance. The *choice* lay between the lamb and the broken neck.

How simple is the language of **this** type to the eye of faith. Redemption or destruction awaits **the** child of Adam at the very mouth of the mother's womb. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin," and it is "appointed unto all men once to die, and after this the judgment." Man's history begins with the alternative of "the lamb," or "the broken neck." Blessed be God, the "Lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world," has "appeared once in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." (Heb. ix. 26.) The blood of God's own Son has been shed upon the cross for the entire race of man. It knows no limitation of nation or of color. It is not a ceremonial system for a special people, but the bright witness of divine love and mercy for all men. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom *for all*." He is the blessed "Lamb of God that beareth away the sin of the world." The healing rays of that Sun shine for all, and the redeeming virtues of that blood flow out to the length and breadth of humanity. Upon this ground, and not upon that of innocency, every little helpless infant that passes out of this scene ere it reaches the platform of personal responsibility, finds its place in the blessedness provided for it by Him whose will it is that "not one of these little ones should perish." (Matt. xviii. 14.) It was not pity for "the firstling of an ass," as such, that God would have had His ancient people learn from this suggestive ordinance, but a lesson about themselves, and His love for them. "Doth God take care of oxen?" asks the Apostle Paul, "or saith He it altogether for our sakes?" "For our sakes without doubt this is written," he replies. The pitying eye of God has looked

down in mercy upon every little helpless firstling of an ass of the wide spread human family, and in the blood of the Lamb of God we see the rich and eternal provision for its state as such. If, according to His choice, they die early, He avails Himself on their part of its blessed efficacy. If, according to His will, they grow up to take a place before Him on the footing of personal responsibility, He in the word of "the truth of the Gospel" tells them of their state before Himself, and bids them avail themselves, by personal faith, of that redemption through the blood of Jesus, which is also "the forgiveness of sins." (Eph. i. 7.)

Man *must* take his place before God, not only in the acknowledgement of sins, but of sin. Not only of what he is by practice, but of what he is by nature. Not only of what he has gained for himself as the *wages* of sin, but of what he stands possessed of by inheritance. He must change from the condition of *sinner-ship* to that of *righteousness*, and from the ground of *creation* to that of *redemption*, if ever he is to see the light of God in the abodes of everlasting blessedness. He does this *the moment* he trusts himself to THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. The firstling of the ass is eternally saved, and his neck shall *never* be broken.

Dear reader, have you done this? Is the blood of the Lamb all your hope?

C. W.

"EMMANUEL."

JOHN i. 1—18.

If this be the Lord's title in Matthew, even as One come into the midst of Israel as their Shepherd-King*—it is yet to John we must look for the exposition of this title. And thus I read these first eighteen verses of his Gospel which gives us, as introductory to the story of His ways of grace and power, our introduction to *Himself*.

And fit and right it is. For, reader, upon what He personally is, all blessing hangs for you and me. Had He been less than the One this Scripture speaks Him, His work could not have availed for, His blood could not have cleansed us. Creature-merit there cannot be. The creature can only do his duty, for

* Matth. ii. 6, should be as in Alford's Revision, "that shall be a shepherd to my people Israel."

he owes his all to his Creator. "When you have done *all*, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which it was our duty to do."

Nor could a creature, freely and sinlessly, leave his own estate, in which he was created. The angels that kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, God hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, to the judgment of the great day. It was His glory, whom John introduces to us here, that He *could* stoop, could empty Himself. His being what he was,—“Emmanuel,”—was as the altar which sanctified the gift of that meek life surrendered up to God. Freely He could stoop, and fully He could earn a glory, which others might be given to share with Him. (Jno. xvii. 22.) Fruit of His work—having by Himself purged our sins, He has sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. No Adam-righteousness could have pierced those heavens where He sits, and where we who believe are seated in Him. Suited place, and only so, for Him by whom those heavens were created. He is made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance a more excellent name than they.

Back then into the past infinite, or to the beginning of those ages of created being which none among men may measure—“in the beginning,” (of anything that *hath* beginning,) “the Word *was*.” Not “began.” Alone “with God,” when nought but God was there. Himself therefore “God,” yet “with God” too, and “in the beginning with God.” No derived being, therefore, His. Always was He “with God,” and always “God,”—co-equal, co-eternal.

Such is the outspoken declaration now, of that which former revelation had more than hinted, but never yet in the same simplicity declared. Israel had plainly heard that Jehovah their God was one Jehovah, not the greatest, but the only God. Here, as simply God, and with God, yet not another God, “the Word was,”—in Person distinct, in Godhead one.

But not only so. “All things were made by Him.” We thus are *His* creatures. We and all: “without Him was not anything made that was made.” The jealousy on His behalf who has in His very love come down so low as to raise question and allow suspicion as to His own proper dignity among those He came to serve,—is beautiful. But it speaks, too, solemnly, for it tells not indistinctly therefore of questioning and suspicion,

if not more. Alas, more there was in the world for Him; a crown of thorns, and a cross.

Yet "in Him was life." Yes, in Him who died, but died because those He loved and came for, yea all around, were under death and dead. Dead while they lived. Sad and terrible reality! So dead, that the life in Him—only really that—shone out as light in the darkness of the world. "The life was the light of men." Thus the message came to them that God was light, as the rays of the sun announce the sun. The light of God was there in the world in Him who was the "brightness of His glory." In the faultlessness of a transparent, perfect manhood was enshrined the infinite glory and fulness of the Godhead. He who was man on earth, was the Lord from heaven. Thus a "*second* man." The divine life manifested itself in Him, a man, and was man's light.

But more than that was needed. It fell upon the regardless eyes of death, and light alone could not dispel *that* darkness. "The darkness comprehended it not." (Quite true that man *refused* the light, but also true that *as* light he was blind to it,— "alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that was in them." What a humbling for man's pride! And it was just the seal of their condemnation. Goodness, holiness, truth, love, embodied before their eyes, they did not know, nor did it attract them. So ignorant of it, that God gives another witness to the light beside its own,—a witness from among themselves, not so far removed from what themselves were as He in whom was Life. "A man was sent from God whose name was John. The same came for a witness to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe." It was needful to add (so blind were they)—"he was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light." And this is indeed what the preacher of righteousness in the other gospels, is simply occupied with here. To this moreover his preaching of righteousness and of repentance was but introductory. It was the warning of that condition which was the true cause of Christ having for them no form nor comeliness.

In the 9th verse a characteristic of the true Light is given. "Coming into the world, it lighteth *every* man."* The light of *men*, not of the Jew alone, it was for man universally. And in

* I believe this to be the true rendering. Alford gives, "The true Light, which lighteth every man, came into the world."

what was a dead Jew better than a dead Gentile? No, it was man's condition universally that was made known by it, and if God was come into the scene, was He the God of the Jews only? was He not also of the Gentiles?

The result is, man's condition is thoroughly exposed. The world's Creator was not known by the world He made. The people specially prepared to receive Him, and boasting of being the peculiar people of God,—those whom He had nursed, and cherished, and disciplined as His,—refused His claim. If any did receive, it was only when Divine grace had wrought in sovereign power. "Not of blood" were they born, as the Jew was. "Not of the will of the flesh," which had manifested itself fully alas, in Jew and Gentile. "Not of the will of man" at all. No, it was God alone whose love and power had acted in a scene of total ruin, where none sought after Him. True, they did receive,—they did believe,—but because "God for the great love wherewith He loved them, even when dead in sins, had quickened the dead."

Thus they were sons of God. The absoluteness of the grace which had wrought in them had given them a place, such as the fullest obedience rendered never could have claimed, or had to do with. And now, when all claim of goodness or righteousness on man's part was gone for ever, and the world was exposed in all its deep reality of alienation from God,—now was come the time when the place into which grace had brought them should be fully manifested, and God's ear gladdened with the voice of children. "To as many as received Him, to them gave He the *right* (see margin) to become sons of God." It is not "power." It is the conveying over to believers, who were always really sons, the full blessedness of their place. And there, amid these sons, the Word made flesh dwells, the glory of the Only-begotten is manifested. They behold it. It is what occupies and satisfies them. Well may it, beloved, satisfy, indeed.

"The Word *dwelt* among us." "Tabernacled" is the simple force of the expression. He who for forty years had gone up and down in the wilderness with His people of old, walking in a tent and in a tabernacle, was now in a far more intimate way among His people. Man among men He was. No such true manhood anywhere, as that conceived by the power of the Highest in His virgin mother. Surely untainted manhood was truest manhood. Untainted was His, and He was free thus in title

from all the consequences of sin. Death had no more claim upon Him, than had John's baptism of repentance. He could stoop to it, and did, but it *was* stooping. Even when in fashion as a man, He *lumbled* Himself still further, becoming obedient to death. It is no voluntary self-humiliation on our part. In Him it was—part of the condition of man which He came to know, and did know. So He knew hunger and thirst and weariness. A "brother born for adversity," He came to know our sorrows, "took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses," deeply entering into what His grace removed, while never using the power freely used for every other, for the supply of His own need. All divine fulness there, but in One who "though He was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich."

Such was the Word made flesh, while in His own personal relation to God, the Only-begotten of the Father, ever in His bosom, witnessing to, and witnessed to by Him; Whose presence upon earth, (if the darkness comprehended not,) gave Heaven an object of delight. Wondrous glory in a man and among men, the glory as of an Only-begotten with the Father! Light in a dark world, which manifested the real character of all amid which it shone,—manifested *themselves* to those who beheld it, but in "grace" as well as "truth." In contrast with that law which, coming by Moses, shut up the glory in a holy place where none could penetrate—the light of Divine glory shone in One, meek and lowly of heart, most accessible to all, and having all Divine fulness for the need of the poorest and vilest,—Him whom the Baptist pointed out as coming after, yet preferred before, because indeed before,—about whom by personal experience we can say, "of His fulness have we all received, even grace upon grace."

And God is manifest; no otherwise or other-*where* visible at all. He whom the flames of Sinai had not revealed, but hid. He whom the law had shut up in thick darkness, and made it death to see. Abraham's "Almighty God,"—Israel's self-subsisting and eternal "Jehovah,"—now revealed in the Son of His bosom, and revealed to those who being put themselves into the place of sons, could lay hold of and enjoy that revelation. Those without God in the world were thus brought nigh, and found "acquaintance-ship with God" was indeed "peace." To see was life. To know was to enjoy. To know the Father did indeed suffice the soul. And here was the once-hidden God, in One

whom eyes could see, and ears could hear, and hands could handle, and who invited it, whose glory simply drew and not repelled : friend of publicans and sinners, physician of man's deepest and worst disease,—to sum up all in one, God-man, Emmanuel. " God with us."

The mighty chasm between God and man is thus bridged over, the gulf filled up, the distance done away. He who wrote this gospel—who knew best on earth, may we not say, what Jesus was,—" lay on His breast." And He is commissioned to tell out what he has found, that others may. Beloved, may you and I know better this one place of restful outlook upon a world of sorrow, the breast of Jesus, which indeed bears us all upon it,—of Him, " the Only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father."

F. W. G.

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE INSPIRED BOOKS.

LEVITICUS.

As we have seen, Genesis gives us Life and the Life-giver ; Exodus, Redemption and the Redeemer ; so now in Leviticus, beyond doubt, we find, as characteristic of it, Sanctification and the Sanctifier.

The theme of Leviticus is thus very closely related to what we have been already looking at in the second part of the book of Exodus. There we had those who had been bondslaves in Egypt, brought as delivered, and as part of that deliverance, under the authority of Him who had redeemed them to Himself ; and then and there we began to hear of a holy people, of sanctification to God. Redemption must come first in order to sanctification. Thus Exodus itself necessarily precedes Leviticus. The place taken by God at the outset of the book speaks forcibly of this, for it is out of the tabernacle, which Exodus has shown us set up as a habitation for Him, that Jehovah now speaks to Moses. (Ch. i. 1.)

And this is all-important as regards the difference between the last section of Exodus and the present book. In Exodus a people in the wilderness find a throne of grace to which they can come in every time of need. No doubt it is a *throne*, and they are *subject*. Commandments are given, and they are taught

obedience to Him who is in the midst, as well as the way of approach to a living God manifesting Himself for them that approach in His appointed way. Yet the obedience enjoined is more outward, if I may so say ; more regulating their conduct as between man and man than bringing them under the piercing eye of Him who dwells in the sanctuary. Hence, the *grace* of God may seem at first sight more manifest in Exodus than in Leviticus. But we must remember that it is the same God ; and that we are first taught the lessons of Exodus in order that we may be prepared to learn the lessons of Leviticus. And then we find it no less grace when we are searched out under the eye of One from whom nothing can escape, than when from the throne of grace the answer comes to our cry of need. Nay, I believe it may test how far we have learned the grace of Exodus, to ascertain how far it has brought us joyfully to surrender ourselves to learn practically the holiness that we find in Leviticus.

The fact remains, that this book brings us under the pure and holy eye that cannot abide iniquity. What pollutes before Him is carefully pointed out, but in connection (as it is beautiful to see) with our high place of privilege as priests unto God. It is the priest's eye that is to discern, as it is the priest's lips that are to "keep knowledge." His whose place is in the sanctuary, where the pure clear light of the seven-branched candlestick displaces the light of common day. His who feeds upon the bread of God from His own table. His who burns the incense before God, and who sends up the perfume of the name of Christ in sweet adoring remembrance of the Unspotted, Perfect One, who, moreover, laid down His life for him that he might enjoy that nearness of access which he has to God. Such an one it is who will have the keen and jealous eye that suits the sanctuary,—the ability to discern, and the heart to judge all that is unfit for the presence of the Blessed One in whom he rejoices.

Thus what is prominent in Leviticus is not the high priest bearing the names of the children of Israel upon his breast before God. The breast-plate is but once, and that incidentally, noticed. The priests, the *sons* of Aaron, are rather prominent. The wilderness, too, is scarcely mentioned throughout the book, nor are we occupied with the disciplinary government of wayfarers there, but shut in with God in the sanctuary. On the other hand, we do learn there the counsels of His grace, surely accomplished by the right hand of His power for blessing to His

own. This we have in the "feasts," or, as one of the words may be rendered, "appointed times," which marked off Israel's year, crowned with the goodness of their covenant-God. His ways thus, and the final result which they look on to, are known in the sanctuary.

(1.) Chaps. i—vii.

Before all this, however, the first seven chapters present to us in the offerings that which is at once the introduction to, and the justification of the whole book. If we are to be told of holiness, of devotedness, of surrender to God, of that which suits and delights Him,—what more suitable than, in the very first place, to have the voice from heaven telling us of that beloved Son, in whom the Father is well pleased? Thus, as distinctly as the Lamb opens the book of Divine purposes in Revelation, does the Lamb open the book of Divine precept in Leviticus. We find at the outset the picture of that obedience of Christ to which we are sanctified. (1 Pet. i. 2.) And not only so, but we learn, before ever a command is given or an exhortation uttered, an "obedience" by which we are "made righteous," a perfection in which we stand before God, apart altogether from our own performances. First of all is the acceptable offering put into our hands. "He shall offer it for his acceptance"^{*} is the first voice that salutes our ears. "Justification by works" *before God* is distinctly disclaimed at the very threshold of the sanctuary.

The offerings have thus a *double* application: first of all, as no Christian need be told, to Him who is the antitype of all unblemished offering; but secondly, and for that very reason, to us also who are called in wondrous grace to "walk even as He walked," who is at once our Pattern, our Motive, and our Power.

The offerings then present to us Christ as the one devoted and given up to God, both in life and death. It is manifest that but four of the five are *sacrifices*. The meat-offering (or food offering) was not sacrificial, being an offering of fine flour, involving no shedding of blood, wherein alone the essence of atonement lay: "for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul." (Ch. xvii. 11.) Thus the other offerings speak of the *Cross*; the "meat-offering," of the *Person* of our blessed Lord, much in the aspect of the first part of the 6th of John, "the Bread of Life."

* Ch. i. 8: "He shall offer it of his own voluntary will," should be rather, as above, "for his acceptance."

There is another division of these offerings well known, but which needs insisting on, the distinction between the "sweet-savour" offerings and the rest. The burnt offering, meat and peace-offerings, thus give us the side of the acceptability of what was offered to God on account of its own intrinsic value in His eyes, while the sin and trespass offerings present us more with the need and the reality of expiation. In the Gospels the same division is to be found, the cry of abandonment, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" being found only in Matthew and Mark, which answer to the sin and trespass-offering aspect of Christ's work; while in Luke we have the cry of "Father," and see in the thief saved by His side, as in the peace-offering, the efficacy of that wondrous work, which in John His own lips proclaim as "finished." The last gives the burnt-offering side, as we may shortly more see.

In these offerings, as presented here, the sweet-savour ones come first.

We will now begin with the burnt offering. It is remarkable that the word here employed is not the ordinary one for "burnt," but one which signifies "that which goes up," or "ascends." This points out its character: it is the offering that wholly goes up to God upon the altar; the whole of it is His. In the meat-offering, the peace-offering, even the sin-offering (in some grades of it) the priest had his own portion. In the burnt offering he had none. It was flayed, washed with water that it might be perfectly clean, and divided into its pieces, and then put wholly on the altar, that it might go up to God for the acceptance with Him of him who offered it. He was accepted in all the value of a perfectly pure and unblemished sacrifice in every part approved, from which the fire that tried brought out nothing but the odour of a sweet smell. Even thus is our acceptance before God in the full value of the work of One, whose personal dignity and preciousness, as the only begotten of the Father, was as the altar which sanctified the gift, but a gift in itself suited in preciousness to Him who gave it. The fire tried it fully. No element of trial was absent, no drop of bitterness wanting in the full cup of sorrow,—a cup tasted in its full reality in the garden before He drank it, when He might have had twelve legions of angels and gone to the Father, but would not; with a human heart that shrank, not from pain and sorrow, but from the place and due of sin, but where "not my will" was the very perfection of hu-

man obedience. The fire tried Him fully. The sweet savour of unflinching devotedness alone came forth.

The grades of the offering are, I doubt not, significant. The first-named (here the offering of the bullock) gives in general the fullest thought. The others give what God can accept from man, true, if not so deep and blessed. In the sin-offering these grades are most distinct, and there the lowest of them are stated to be a provision for the person who is not able to bring a better. Touching condescension to human infirmity and poverty, but of One to whom the poorest thought of Christ begotten in the soul of man has unflinching preciousness.

The grades of the burnt-offering present to us a different apprehension of Christ Himself. In the bullock we see the strong and patient labourer for God. In the sheep the meekness of unresisting and uncomplaining submission. In the goat One who suffered in the likeness of sinful flesh. In the turtle-dove the character of mourning innocence. It will be plain how, while the least thought here is true and blessed, there is yet a descending scale from the positive to the negative side of the apprehension of Christ, from the most divine to the most human. In the lowest form too there is no dividing the bird "into its parts:" the separate elements of the perfect whole are not in the same way realized.

The application of the burnt-offering to the believer's offering of himself to God is clearly intimated in Eph. v. 2: "Walk in love, as Christ hath also loved us, and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." If we are "sanctified" (set apart) "to the obedience of Christ," nothing less than His absolute devotedness to God is to be our pattern. Atonement of course it was His alone to make. But the principle of self-sacrifice finds for us in the Lord's own words its illustration and enforcement in the cross. "If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me: for whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it." Carry that out as fully as possible there is no legality in it. That "for My sake" distinguishes it as the free and happy service of a heart that has learnt Christ and has found in His Love not *pattern* alone, but *power*. Hear Paul express it when he says: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet *not I*, but *Christ* liveth in me." Yes, in Paul, not Paul now but Christ lived.

The result was : " And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." F. W. G.

FRAGMENTS FROM LETTERS OF CONSOLATION.

1. " God is love, for so it is written. Faith, therefore, says, God is love. *You* say so, for you have faith ; and you say so as to every detail even of your sorrow and anguish down here. You say it, though you have to add, as the antidote to sense's surmisings, ' Let God be true, and every man a liar.' He was love when He put the cup into the hands of His only-begotten Son. He is love when he gives us to drink of fellowship of His sufferings. *Faith* is not *feeling*, much less is it *fallen nature's* feeling."

2. " Can I read love in this your present trial? I may be stupid and unable to do so, or I may be able to read part of it aright, and I think I can. There is large love to *you* in it ; the expression of a jealousy on His part towards you, that you should learn how to walk blind like His servant ; an expression, too, of His jealousy to have your heart, as His Son's was, able to say, ' Not my will but Thine be done.' He loves you, and wants His will to be *all* your satisfaction ; wants you to find your all in Him and in His Son. He will not let you share your heart's best affections between Him and even your mother. All this is His love to you—His good pleasure that you should be like Jesus, Lord of all. He thinks that, if all *His* pleasure is found in the Son of His love, He can make that Son of His love enough for *you*, when all else is gone. He so loves you in Him that He is making every affection in you, every thought in you, to find the Lord Jesus as its centre.

" Oft it requires a broken heart as a prelude to this blessing, but His love broke my heart to make room for Christ, and I know it was love that did it ; till then I never knew either the creature's need of Christ, nor Christ's sufficiency for a broken heart."

3. " Many long years ago I was wounded with a wound which has been green ever since. The Lord be praised for that blow. Through eternity it will proclaim His love to me."

4. " In a letter I read lately, there was one expression which struck me ; it was to this effect, that His people, amid the

sorrows and sense of bereavements, would find that Christ made His own sympathy to flow in through the sympathies of his members upon earth; and that was sweet. I am sure that the Lord has stirred up many of His in heart and mind toward you, that our thoughts and affections are in unwonted play toward you, because *His* are, who is our life."

5. "Do not try to answer Satan or to stop his slanders of you. Bunyan found that Satan could say, 'Sell Him, sell Him, sell Him,' faster than he could say, 'Not for a thousand worlds, not for ten thousand worlds.' George Herbert's was a better way, 'Thou, Lord, shalt answer for me.' Jesus Christ knows that *He* keeps *you*, and that you do not keep *Him*. He told Peter that He did not confide in Peter, but that Peter might trust Christ. (John xiii. 38, xiv. 1.)

"The discovery that it is Satan who worries, is an immense boon; for if he worries me, it is because I am Christ's, and this oft has comforted me in the hour of temptation.

"We all have to learn the contrasts between one's littleness, and the fulness of that which is one's in Christ. I, like Job, may oft have not been able to discern between God and Satan. Yet Christ loves us, because the Father, His own Father, gave us to Him. How should He but love, and look with intense delight on that which His Father gave Him, and gave to Him, too, as the expression of His confidence that He was able to do with it as He the Father wished, and bring it to glory, spite of all its pitifulness."

6. "There is a monstrous abortion of unbelief in many minds now, that because earthly ties and relationships cease in heaven, persons will not be known, or our mutual interest sustained. I know and love, and am known and loved by many who have been either my masters or my servants upon earth. The relationship may be passed, but (thank God) not the mutual love and esteem which our hearts formed in it. A child, when married, ceases to be a child in the house—is (he or she is) according to God, absolved from the tie; but the love and interest go on; or does a married daughter cease to be loved, because she has taken headship under another, and has not the tie and responsibility of the child in the house? Paul's former tie with the Thessalonians may cease, but not his love for them or their's for him, as found when on earth. They will be around him in glory, his crown of joy and rejoicing. 'For what is our hope, or joy, or

crown of rejoicing? Are not even *ye* in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"—*Extracted from "The Present Testimony."*

HELPS WITH DIFFICULT TEXTS.

NO. 1.

"WHOM God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission (marg. passing over) of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii., 25, 26.)

From this passage many get the idea that justification consists simply in the remission of the *past* sins of a believer's life. The result would be, that for sins committed *after* justification there must be a cleansing of some other kind, or else a repetition, and a frequent repetition too, of the justification itself. In either case the believer's position before God would be continually unsettled, and the door left open for all sorts of doubt, legality, and superstition to come in.

But, according to Scripture, when a sinner is justified by the blood of Jesus, he is acquitted once for all from every charge of sin that could ever be brought against him.* Because Christ, his Substitute, died, *he* is, judicially, "dead with Christ" (Rom. vi.); has passed away as a sinner altogether; "he that is *dead* is justified from sin." (vi. 7, *margin*.) His place of acceptance is "in Christ" before God, in all the value of what God's Beloved is to Him. Hence no change in the position of the believer before God is possible. As a sinner, he is dead and gone. He exists before God in Christ alone,—in Him who can never change.

But then, what about "the remission of sins that are *past*?" The wrong thought as to it proceeds mainly from two words put in by the translators of our Bible, but in those italic letters which are intended to show they are not in the original. Leave out "I say" out of the 26th verse, and we have evidently what the cross shews as to the passing over the sins of *past times*, and

* As touching his acceptance with God. But, as a Father, God takes notice of His child's sins, and chastens, too, where need is, because of them.

what, on the other hand, it shews as to the *present* time. As to both, it displays God's righteousness: as to the *past*, in passing over the sins of an Abraham, a Moses, or a Rahab, *up to* the cross itself; as to the *present* time, in shewing and making Him to be just even while justifying the believer in Jesus.

The force of the "I say" is to make the 26th verse an emphatic repetition of the preceding one, and thus leads to the wrong thought I have named.* This, however, is not the meaning of the passage.

* The Bible Union Revision gives it: "For the exhibition of His righteousness because of the passing over of the sins before committed, in the forbearance of God, [26] for the exhibition of His righteousness in this present time, that He may be just, &c." In Dean Alford's Revision it is rendered similarly: "For the shewing forth of His righteousness because of the passing over of the former sins, in the forbearance of God; [26] for the shewing forth of His righteousness in this present time, that He may be just, &c."

THE LORD'S LAST PROMISE.

John xiv. 16; Acts i. 5-8.

Most precious were those parting words
Of our Almighty Friend,
Who loved His own while in the world,
And loved them to the end.

"I leave you not as orphans here,
The Comforter shall come
And fill your hearts with joy and peace,
Till I shall fetch you home."

And soon upon the *watching* band
The Heavenly Stranger came;
And, like a rushing mighty wind,
Thrilled thro' each trembling frame.

Like a vast flood, He buried deep
Pain, grief, and worldly care:
In Resurrection-Life they breathed
Heaven's own fresh vital air.

Dead to the world thro' Jesus' love,
Nothing their own would call:
With power they preached their risen Lord;
Great grace was on them all.

Like ointment pour'd on Aaron's head
That down his garments flow'd,
Was that rich oil of grace and joy
From Christ, our Head, bestowed.

Great smitten Rock! from Thee flow'd forth
A stream rich and free,
Each desert heart that drinks the flood
Shall soon like Eden be.

Well may we ask, "Will God indeed
Descend to dwell in clay?"
We marvel at such wondrous grace,
And well indeed we may.

As once the pleased Rebecca trod
A desert long and drear,
While Abraham's wealth, and Isaac's love,
Rang in her raptur'd ear:—

So in this howling wilderness,
The Holy Ghost makes known
The Father's house, the Son's rich love,
And all *He* has, *our* own.

Blest thought! our hearts are with Him there,
We see our glorious home
Made ready for our bridal joys—
Come Jesus—quickly come!

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

(1.) The 1st and 2nd verses of 2 Cor. vi., are in regular connection with the close of the 5th chapter. *There* the Apostle had told them the general aspect of his ministry: "we pray [men]* in Christ's stead. Be ye reconciled to God." He now turns to the Corinthians, and exhorts them not to receive in vain the grace of God brought to them in the Gospel. Outwardly indeed they had already accepted it, but he wanted to see in each and all of them the manifest tokens of its having been *in heart* received. The word translated "in vain" means "in an

* The "you" twice over in c. 20 is not found in the Greek, as the Italic letters show.

empty" or "fruitless way." Fruit he looked for. Now only was the accepted time, the day of salvation, and that, notwithstanding all their profession, some of them might be letting slip.

(2.) The "words of the Lord Jesus" mentioned in Acts xx. 35, are nowhere else recorded. We have them on Paul's authority alone.

(3.) Rom. viii. 20, teaches that creation came into that condition in which it groans, *not of its own will*, but by the will of God who subjected it (because of man's sin) yet in hope of deliverance from the bondage of corruption, when the children of God are glorified (at the first resurrection.) The "liberty of *grace*" which we now enjoy, the creation around us is not affected by; but the "liberty of the *glory*" (as it should be rendered) will be shared in and enjoyed by creation generally, fallen with man, and with him restored.

(4.) Q. "Is importunity in prayer taught in Luke xi. 5-8?"

A. The argument is clearly, that *if* importunity gain what it seeks even from the selfish heart of man, much more may we persevere in earnest waiting upon God although the answer to our prayer seems long delayed. Here the success is certain. "Ask and it *shall* be given unto you." But though God our Father does not, like man, need urging before He gives, yet He does look for a real sense of need which is deepened by the delay, while faith is tried and exercised correspondingly.

(5.) Q. "When did the kingdom in mystery commence? when the Lord sowed the seed or after He had risen and gone to heaven?"

A. The kingdom of heaven is heaven's rule over earth,—the seat of authority being in heaven, and Christ the actual ruler. This could not be before the Lord's ascension therefore, although He *was* sowing the seed during His life on earth. This was only introductory to the actual setting up of the kingdom itself, and thus the first parable of Matth. xiii. is not called a parable of the kingdom of heaven.

(6.) With regard to the "first resurrection," all the dead saints of the present and the past dispensations are included in it, and all will be in heaven together. Yet this does not suppose the same place or rank for all.

“SOUND WORDS.”

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No. 2.

“COATS OF SKINS.”

“Unto Adam, also, and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them” (Genesis iii. 21). Scarcely a more simple and lovely type of the active grace of God is to be found in the entire Word of God than the one that this verse brings before us. Fitting, too, and appropriate is it that the volume of man's history, or more properly of God's dealings with him, should thus early present so bright a page. Happy, too, for us to see and realize these early dawnings of the Gospel of our God. If the first leaf shines bright before our eyes with the power and goodness of God in creation, how sad does the heart become as the second leaf is turned, and the dark record of man's sin, with the judgment it entailed, is read over. What more touching, then, than the third leaf, which might properly and righteously have been the solemn detail of the carrying out of that judgment, should thus sweetly, yet powerfully engage the attention with a scene, the beauty of which not only dispels the gloom that the second had cast over the heart, but leaves even the first unregretted, though lost for ever.

Innocency may stand beside the *God of creation*, and with unaffected confidence gaze upon far-reaching beauties of a scene where all, even to the eye of God, was very good; but that scene has passed away, and no innocent child of Adam remains to look upon it. The record only of it, in the indelible handwriting of Him who formed, abides. We do but *read* the page and turn it over, to behold a rebellious creature trembling before the *God of Judgment* in the midst of the ruin and desolation his sin has created round himself. That page, too, we turn, glad to quit its gloomy realities, for what heart can dare to tarry with the God of Judgment, where that which demands judgment is stretched in unshaded nakedness all around him. But oh! how different are the thoughts and feelings that possess our souls as we enter upon the scene our third page depicts, where “the God of all

grace" comes before us, displaying the marvels of redeeming love, and clothing with His *own* hands two poor naked sinners! What a sight, for eyes such as ours, to look upon, poor naked sinners as we, too, all are by nature! We can tarry here, and we are in no hurry to turn this page over; nor need we, for its blessed picturings are the living realities of the present moment. What God was doing then in type, He is doing now in abiding reality. He is clothing poor, naked, helpless sinners, not now with garments to wear on earth through time's short space, but with robes of enduring beauty to wear in heaven through all eternity.

But let us look more closely into the details of the type we are considering. "And unto Adam also, and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them." To see all its beauty we must recall a little of the history of Adam and his wife, and discover, if we can, what title they had to be thus graciously dealt with.

Created in innocence, and endowed by God with all His goodness could devise to make them happy, they had but despised their Benefactor, and rebelled against His known will. Visited by God in righteousness to give an account of themselves to Him, as responsible creatures, they had but tried to evade His presence. Forced by a will and power, outside themselves, to appear before Him, they had but equivocated—blamed others, and even God Himself, as the cause of their sin. Guilty of sin they could but acknowledge themselves, but sorrow of heart about that sin they had none.

In short, they had done nothing but all that was in their power to provoke and secure the righteous wrath of God against themselves. Not a sign, even of repentance, was there in them upon which the mercy of God might find a little to interfere upon their behalf while, as sinners, they stood before Him. And had it depended in one iota upon them, nothing but judgment could have been their portion, and the history of man had for ever closed amid the dread realities of death and eternal punishment. But if man cannot change his side, God can His. If Adam and Eve are silent before Him in unrepentant sin, He can speak sovereignly in words of love and unmerited mercy. If their eyes, holden by their sin, can see nothing before them but the present reality of that sin and its impending judgment, He can show them what His heart had got behind it all, and what

His purpose had in view, even before the world began, or sin had entailed on them its awful consequences. He can tell them of what Another should do for them. He can make them promises as to the future, in the midst of a present that was lost for ever. He can clothe them with garments their own thoughts and hands had had nothing whatever to do with.

Beautiful, indeed, it is to see these UNTITLED SINNERS stand passively before their Maker—naked outside and empty within. Hopeless and resourceless they stood before the Lord God. They *could* bring Him nothing but their nakedness and sin. With mouths shut—having no plea to offer; with hands that hang down—having no gift to present, they show us simply and plainly what we are ourselves, as helpless sinners, before our God.

They speak not of prayers and tears of repentance. They make no mention of good deeds done to others. They recount no tale of long attendance upon Church or Chapel. No ordinances do they put forward as having been performed upon them as a means of salvation. We hear them say nothing of reading their Bibles, of keeping the ten commandments, or of having done their best and harmed nobody. The folly of the human heart may parade such things in our day, and try to bring a religious life to God as a ground of mercy, but *nothing* of this kind is found with Adam and Eve, as they stand before the Lord God. They had sinned; and swift upon their retreating footsteps the God of Judgment had pursued and caught them as unrepentant sinners fleeing from Himself. With a word of power had He arrested them, and brought them into His presence; *no time* had they to do aught to avert the judgment that belonged to them. Guilty and lost, no door of escape had they of any kind. But if judgment had followed hard upon the heels of sin, the "mercy that rejoiceth against judgment," more nimbly still, had stepped forward, parried the blow that justice aimed, and put all in the hands of grace that "reigns through righteousness."

"And unto Adam, also, and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them." All that Adam and Eve had to do was passively to receive what grace put on them. They had nothing to do with making the coats, or even putting them on. The Lord God made them Himself, and put them on with His own hands—"He clothed them." It was all His own

work from first to last. To wear what was put on them was all that Adam and Eve *could* do. Love and praise the blessed God who thus dealt with them doubtless they did, and we may be sure sorrow now filled their hearts for the sin that had made all this fresh action of God necessary; and while their bosoms heaved with gratitude, conscience, doubtless, was doing its work, and the repentance that God Himself produces in the heart of every sinner His *grace* deals with, was not lacking, as they stepped forth from the garden of Eden with "the coats of skins" a God of love had clothed them with.

If they were obliged, under the government of God, to quit the pleasant fields of Eden, and saw flaming behind them the sword that "turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life," telling them of what their sin had for ever lost to them, and reminding them that pain and sorrow was to be their portion in this life, in an earth that was cursed for their sakes; they, at least, were no longer naked; and though the effects of sin remained, the sin itself was all covered out of sight. If innocence, that happy ignorance of evil that left them free to enjoy without a mistrust all the created goodness of God, was lost for ever, and with it all the joys that had once filled their simple hearts, they, at least, wore on their backs those "coats of skins" that told a guilty conscience within that all the evil it took cognisance of was gone for ever from the eye of the Lord God, and their renewed hearts realized a joy in the known *love* of God that the enjoyment of His goodness in creative power had never afforded them. Repentant, humble, and loving and confiding in the God that had revealed Himself to them in pardoning grace, they could now address themselves with chastened joy to their daily toils, and rest in hope of the accomplishment of those bright promises their faith had laid hold of.

And if God had looked with complaisant satisfaction upon His two innocent creatures, amid the joys His goodness had conferred upon them, and said "very good," what must have been the emotion that filled the heart of that same God as He looked down upon those two justified sinners, as with their "coats of skins" and hearts lit up with faith and hope, they did His will amid the sorrows they had, under His righteous hand, brought upon themselves? Who can estimate the tenderness, pity, and love that followed these frail objects of His mercy as they, in helpless weakness, trod their untried and wearisome

paths across the fields of a ruined creation, where thorns and thistles repaid the labour of their hands.

Is it difficult to believe that Adam and Eve with the "coats of skins" and bright promises, and with God's tender love ever waiting on them, were even happier now than when in innocence enjoying the sweets of Eden? Shall we regret their loss for them? Shall we say, what a poor exchange? Shall we not bow low before the blessed God that had so triumphed over sin, as to make it the means of His creatures' *deeper* blessing, and the occasion for Him to reveal Himself in all the boundless stores of His grace?

Have our hearts made this God ours, and have we learned for ourselves the mystery of redeeming love that these "coats of skins" so early and so sweetly teach? Let us for a moment look closely at these wondrous garments as, upheld in the hands of Him who had made them, they await the acceptance of those for whom they have been made? Have they been spun out of nothing in the loom of creation? We have no such account. They are "coats of skins," and have their own history to the eye that looks upon them. They tell a tale of life in the death they exhibit. Already have they served the purpose of clothing, and death has clearly been at work. Blood has been shed, and an animal has yielded its life, under the hand of the Lord God, to give its skin as a covering for a naked sinner.

Simple, yet expressive language is this; letting the eye in upon the deep realities of the Cross of Christ. We are looking upon One who "was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification"; One, "made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." It is God's *completed* work for the sinner in the death and resurrection of His dear Son, that appears before us in these uplifted "coats of skins"—that "righteousness of God which is *unto all*, and *upon all* them that *believe*, for there is no difference." (Rom. iii. 22.)

Over every naked sinner, like the "coat of skins" over Adam and Eve, a clothing fitted already for them, which they had but to receive from the gracious hand that held it, so hangs the "righteousness of God" in the hands of Grace for the acceptance of all by faith. All need it, and none need go without it. There is no difference. It is held forth "unto all," and it is once and for ever put "on all" them that *believe*.

Dear reader, have you believed in the death and resurrection

of the Lord Jesus as that which God has done for you? Then you are clothed with the righteousness of God, and have peace with God, and are rejoicing "in the hope of the Glory of God." (Rom. v. 1.) You know experimentally the blessedness that our verse depicts: "and unto Adam also and unto his wife did the Lord God make "coats of skins," and clothed them." C.W.

EVIDENCES, AND THEIR SCRIPTURE USE.

"And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments."

"But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in Him."

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we breathe brethren." (John ii. 3, 5; iii. 14.)

It can never be held too simply that the foundation upon which our souls alone can rest is a work wrought for *sinners*, so that *as sinners* we may build on it. We have not to look in at ourselves for the evidences of being born again, in order to know we are. The moment we do so we are off the ground of simple faith, and involved in a process of reasoning which naturally and necessarily produces doubt and anxiety of soul. Have we not deceitful hearts? Have we not a subtle adversary ever ready to take advantage of our readiness to flatter ourselves to hush our souls into a false peace? Thus, while the careless may be readily persuaded that all is well, the more sincere and earnest we are, the more perplexed and anxious we must be. No word of God seems there to be to throw its light into the gloom and dispel it. Granted we are "justified by faith," who shall assure me that I have it? Granted, "he who believeth on Him hath everlasting life," what word of God settles for *me* that *I* believe in Him?

True, there are marks—evidences: Scripture gives such. The application of them to myself is the difficulty. *Scripture does not settle that I have the marks.* That must be a reasoning of my own, prejudiced naturally in my own favour, blind as I often find myself, and with the solemn utterance of Divine wisdom before me, "He that trusteth his own heart is a fool." (Prov. xxviii. 26.)

Thank God, to no such reasoning are we left. He who "justifieth the ungodly," because for ungodly ones Christ died, has assured me that, without need of further reasonings, *all* who trust in Him

are blessed. (Ps. ii. 12.) Without *any* trust in myself of any kind, I may trust One who died for the ungodly. My title to confide in Him, my Saviour, is thus *not* my godliness but my *ungodliness*. And "to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." (Rom. iv. 5.) Observe, it is not here, "that justifieth the *believer*,"—true as that is,—but justifieth the *ungodly*; for what my faith sees if it look within is not itself or its virtues, but that ungodliness which is but the dark background on which shine forth, in all their glory, the virtues of Him who loved me, and died for me when I was only that.

Sweet and precious faith, solid and unshaken, that trusts not itself but Christ! My ungodliness is no delusion. No deceitful heart betrays me there! No word of the old liar am I listening to in that, but the true and faithful word of the living God. So, too, that Jesus died for the ungodly, that same word is my warrant. Once again, then and there it bids me "trust in Him," and tells me it is no deception—can be none—to *know my blessedness*. Test every link there as you will, it is a threefold cord, not quickly broken.

Various are the objections, however, raised to this. The truths of Scripture themselves, torn from their proper connection and misapplied, become apparently the most formidable of all. *Texts*, too, no less than *truths*, used after (I must say) the most careless fashion, lend seeming authority to what is simply sad, injurious error. Who has not heard, for instance, the words, "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves," taken and dwelt upon as the plainest possible command to look into oneself for evidences of being born again? And how many even now need to be told that the whole sentence, as the apostle wrote it, conveys exactly the opposite thought? And yet that is the truth. We have only to remember that a certain part of this sentence is a parenthesis, and, for the moment laying it aside, we have: "*Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me . . . examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves.*" They had got *in themselves* the proof of Christ speaking by the apostle, for themselves were the fruit of it. How could they doubt whether Christ had spoken by Paul, when *through* Paul He had spoken to them? If they questioned that, they might well question the reality of their own conversion. But that he was

persuaded they could not do ; and so he goes on to ask, in the very next sentence, "*Know ye not, your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you?*" As much as to say, Do you need to look!

This passage, then, so often quoted for it, certainly does not prove what it is quoted for—that it is right and needful to examine ourselves to see if we be Christians. To look in for peace is *never* right. It is the sure road to doubt, with the earnest, and to get off the ground of real confidence ; for it is always well to *doubt self*, and we are never called to have faith in ourselves. There is no word of God that *I* am born again ; but if I know myself a sinner there is abundant assurance that I may trust Jesus *as one*. If I cannot trust myself—even my faith—I can trust *Him*.

But then, are there no evidences? I have already said, assuredly there are. The texts that stand at the head of this paper are the undeniable proof of it. The question is simply, when and how do I obtain them, and what use do I put them to.

It would be a poor thing to say that this faith we are speaking of wrought nothing one could be conscious of in the soul. It would be a poor account to give of faith, and no honour to it, and no comfort to the possessor of it to believe or find it so. Would it be comfort to say or think that I should never be conscious of true love to God, or true love to my brethren? I think there would be as little of comfort as of truth. "*We know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.*" We *know*, then, we are conscious of, our love.

But how differs this from building upon evidences?

In this way, that such evidences are only possible to one who is *already* building upon Christ.

Let me prove and illustrate this. The 7th of Luke may supply us both with proof and illustration from our Lord's own words.

"A certain creditor had two debtors : the one owed him five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both."

There is the divine picture of divine forgiveness. Two debtors, differing in the amount of their debt, differing not at all in this—they had *nothing* to pay. Beloved reader, have you ever stood before God so? If you have not, you shall. In the very truth of your condition as He knows, and as He has pro-

nounced it. Solemn, most solemn anticipation, that! What must be the reality? But it shall be; and your entire lot for eternity depends upon this, when and where you shall meet Him so—whether in the day of grace and salvation, or in the day of account and doom.

But, O beggared and bankrupt soul, that hast not even a promise to make more, thou art so lost! not a right feeling, nor a sigh or tear that thou canst take comfort in any more! bring that hard heart thou canst neither break nor soften, and set thee down in the Presence of this Speaker, and see and own thy God in Him! Listen now, and let thine ear drink in those precious words:—"When they had NOTHING to pay,"—was ever a sad truth so sweetly uttered?—"he,"—mark who this "He" is in our Lord's intent!—"HE *frankly forgave them both.*"

How sweet and simple this utterance! Does it need, think you, the ransacking of my thoughts and feelings with reference to it, to know it is for me? Nay, the Lord cuts off the thought of that by the question that follows. "Tell me, therefore," says He to Simon, "which of them will love Him most?" A question that even a Pharisee has to answer with "I suppose that he to whom he forgave most." Jesus said unto him, "Thou hast rightly judged."

Thus even human experience is competent to give the answer as to how love is to be produced in the soul. By the *knowledge* of love. "We love Him because He first loved us." And here in the 7th of Luke, how is this love shown? By full and free forgiveness. The *knowledge of forgiveness* it was that caused in the heart of the debtor the love of him who forgave him to spring up.

Now, weaken the certainty of that knowledge, and you weaken the spring of all this feeling. If I am doubting the reality of the forgiveness which I have from God will it have no effect in hindering the outflow of my love to Him? According to our Lord's words, it surely will. Or will my heart go forth in full conscious delight in Him at the very moment I am doubting whether He may not banish me from His face for ever? And if I am *not* doubting, I have surely no need to examine my heart for evidences.

No, Scripture has, in perfect knowledge of what we are, and in perfect wisdom as to how we need to be dealt with, decided this. An apostle who came short of none in entireness of devo-

tion to One blessed object, he who could say, "To me to live is Christ," gives us the very secret of that life given to Him, in the words, "And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, *who loved ME, and gave Himself for ME.*"

Nay, it is "*as the elect of God, holy and beloved,*" we are exhorted to "put on" the things which suit such. (Col. iii.) It is God's way, and good, to give *all* the blessing freely, which is ours in Christ, and then say, "Now walk worthy." How different from spelling out, or seeking to spell out, in the worthiness of my walk, whether I have the blessing!

It is as the love flows *in*, the love flows *out*. "If any man thirst," says our Lord again,—*thirst*, mark there is your title to Christ in all His fulness,—"*if any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink; and he that believeth in Me (so having drunk, remember) out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*" (Jno. vii.)

Well then, we must *drink*,—DRINK,—DRINK! Man can create nothing,—no, not love in his own heart! he must receive and enjoy, and the living waters shall flow forth. We shall be conscious of love as we are conscious of *His* love, and how it has been manifested in His giving Himself for us.

But how about, then, "We know we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren?"

Why, simply, so we do. But it is not the first way of knowing. It is the knowledge of a saint who has drunk in the love of Christ into his soul, and knows what he has got. But it is not the way a doubting soul acquires peace. Peace is got by believing, not our own feelings, which as a foundation are all untrustworthy, but the word of God about the blood of Jesus.

But still there is a solemn use and need be for the apostle's statements here. Who can read his words: "hereby we do know that we know Him if we keep His commandments," without feeling, he surely is thinking of some who say they know Him, and are *not* keeping His commandments. So indeed he is; and if there were need in the apostle's days of testing the tree by its fruit, how much more is there now? Thus if I find still professors, orthodox enough in form of speech, but whose lives show nothing of the power of the Gospel, I am entitled to take them up upon the ground of their professed confidence in Christ, and say, Are you keeping His commandments? Do you love

the brethren? No other ground is it possible to take with such, for their *profession* is all right and orthodox. Now, if the soul is really firm in Christ, it can afford to look at itself, and stand a shake. If after all it is not building on Christ, the conscience may get alarmed, and the man find out his condition.

But it is quite another thing to say to one who does *not* take the ground of confidence but of *doubt*. Do you keep His commandments? There I should be doing positive mischief and wrong to speak so. Such a soul wants *Christ to confirm*, not *self to shake* him. And I must deal with him accordingly. Only can he keep commandments when he keeps the first of all—the loving God. Only can he love God as he knows he is loved. Only can I exhort him to holiness when I can do it upon the ground of his being “elect of God, holy and beloved.” Otherwise Christ is made to men a more rigorous law than the law of Moses; but not so of God.

What we want is “rightly to *divide* the word of truth”—to apply it as itself teaches. The Lord Himself apply it, beloved reader, to every one who has need, and whose eye may rest upon this paper.

F. W. G.

THE POWER OF FAITH.

Heb. xi. 8-10.

The apostle here turns to the practical, active manifestation of the power of faith. It was this strengthened Abraham. He trusted, so to speak, blindly in God. God called him by His grace, and he went out, not knowing whither he went. There comes in confidence in God: not simply the receiving a testimony, but blind implicit confidence in God. A person might say, “If I only knew what would be the consequences of my doing so, I could trust God.” Then you will never go. Look at Adam: how did Adam act? He had present external things, but he took the devil's word in faith. God turns round and says, “you believed the devil when you had all My good things; now you must trust *me*.” You go out not knowing whither you go, because of trusting in the person that is leading you. God will give light enough to say, “God wills this, and I do not see another step.” When you have turned the corner, you will see what is round the corner.

Further, when we have taken a *step*, we shall find that the Lord never satisfies us; He *blesses*, but He does not *satisfy*.

When Abraham comes unto the place which he should after receive for an inheritance, what has he got? Nothing. He is still a stranger. This the heart dislikes. Hence the disappointments often experienced. As regards our prospects, we have our own thoughts about them; we are thinking perhaps of what we are going to make them twenty years hence. *God* is going to bring us into His rest.

He brings Abraham into the land; and then He begins to lead his thoughts to another country. He gets nearer God, and is placed upon a high enough platform of faith to see it is all before him yet. The Lord reveals Himself to him in communion; speaks with him, unfolds to him his purposes; and Abraham worships. He has his tent and his altar. And this is what God does with us. He makes Christians of us, brings us into the land of promise, and makes us see it is all before us yet. This is not the time for rest. The eye becomes clear in the ways of God, and we have the privilege of being strangers and sojourners with God, and we shall be strangers and sojourners until we get home in the home of God.

* * * * *

(Verses 13-17.)

Not only were those spoken of here "strangers and pilgrims," but they "confessed" it. People sometimes wish to be religious in the heart and not to speak of it: there is no energy of faith there. To see the world to be lost and condemned, to have our hopes in heaven—such facts must, of necessity, produce a proportionate result, that of making us think and act as "strangers and pilgrims" here, and it will be manifested in the whole life. The heart already gone, it remains but to set out oneself. This evidently involves open and public profession of it; and herein is a testimony for Christ. Who would be satisfied with a friend that owned us not when circumstances were difficult? The concealed Christian is a very bad Christian. Faith fixed on Jesus, we embrace the things we have seen afar off; we are not mindful of that country from whence we have come out, we have at heart that which is before us. When difficulties are in the path, and the affections not set on Jesus, the world rises again in the heart. Paul had not acted in a moment of excitement, to repent forthwith; his heart filled with Christ, he counts all but "dross and dung." Perseverance of heart makes the Christian's affections to be onward, his desires heavenly. *And God is not ashamed to be called his God.*

J. N. D.

“ENTERING INTO THAT WITHIN THE VEIL.”

The future is what we practically live in. It is the evidence of the ruined condition of all amid which we move, not *abide*. Present circumstances yield full content to none ; and did they, would soon change. The very worldling is thus forced to live and walk by a faith of his own, however poor it may be, and however little rest of heart may be in it. *He* has his future, for which and in which he really lives, though it be not eternal. The picture of one gone out from the presence of God, a fugitive, building cities where spite of himself he is a wanderer, and seeking to make enjoyable a world which he must leave behind him to others with as sad and weary hearts as his :—such is God's own portraiture of man as he was at the beginning ; and such in this nineteenth century he is. More feverishly busy, perhaps. And with the accumulated inventions of six thousand years of vanity,—a heritage from generations numerous and brief-lived, which have passed from the scene before him,—inventions which only tell how laborious the task has proved to undo a curse not yet undone, and transmit to posterity whatever may be perhaps less perishable than the hands that wrought it.

Yet man's heart is in the future, even though it perhaps yields him more of care and dread than satisfaction. Yet peer into it, if he can he will, or when he cannot, fill it up with the imaginations in which he is rich enough at least.

Sad and sorrowful all this, the blankness of a future into which fear no less than hope compels the soul, but where the fear is so much surer than the hope. The language of Job is in the end the language of men as men. “The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me. *I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet ; yet trouble came.*”

But enough of this. The future of which I am going to speak lies beyond these shadows. Not distant, therefore, but so near that we know of nothing necessarily interposing between us and it. So near, that it can be said, “Ye are come to . . . the heavenly Jerusalem.” Like the pilgrims of men's histories, who in mistaken devotion journeying to the earthly city “in bondage with her children,” would hail it from the mountain-tops over which their pathway wound,—we have our mountain-tops of faith from which our eternal city may be not dimly seen, bright under her cloudless morning-skies.

"Ye *are* come." Thus do we bring into the need and trial of to-day the needed strength and assurance. The glory in the light of which we walk kisses the clouds of sorrow into beauty. Believing in Him who as having purged our sins is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, our hope as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, enters into that within the veil, whither our Fore-runner is for us entered. We are "strengthened with all might according to the power of His glory,"—for all that we look upon is *His* glory,—“unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father who *hath made us meet* for the inheritance of the saints in light.”

Our hope has thus two elements of exceeding power in it. It is a hope “sure and steadfast.” No uncertainty enters into it. Its *being* sure is what enables us to wait for it with patience. Doubt would beget impatience. If all be surely mine in the end, then I can wait.

Yet it is a *near* hope: near, in that I know not the day or the hour, but know that He who comes to introduce me into all the blessedness He has prepared for me, has said, “Surely I come quickly.” Men may tell me, centuries have passed since that was said. They are right, and yet wrong. Right in the fact, wrong in the interpretation of the fact. Centuries *have* passed; that is true. It is *not true* that I may say, “My Lord delays His coming.” I am told to watch as well as wait for Him. And it is the time of His patience as well as mine. Will He wait longer than absolutely needful for the fulfilment of His own joy? Meanwhile we watch. “Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching. And if He come in the second watch, or come in the third watch and find them so, blessed are those servants.”

He, too, our Fore-runner, has not been unmindful of us, down here in the wilderness. If we have not yet the inheritance, we have the earnest of it in Him who has come down to be with us in place of the Absent One, and who is not only *with* us, but *in* us, the Witness to us of the glory which is to be our own. “Eye,” indeed, “hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him,” and many—the many, perhaps,—stop there, as if it were all therefore an impenetrable mystery; but how does it read further? “but God *hath* revealed them

unto us by the Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.)

Thus, if hope enter into that within the veil, that veil does not shut out from faith the things we hope for. They are "revealed:" that is, "*unveiled*." And "we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may *know* the things that are freely given to us of God."

Would any one think it was needful to plead for this? Would it not be supposed that, on the other hand, Christians would be so entering in with eagerness and desire into that which is their own, and which they are thus qualified to enter into, that there should be no more need to insist upon the possibility of so doing, than of proving the possibility of the sun's rising for those who day by day rejoice in its beams?

But so it is, and we proclaim it ourselves in hymns that shew indeed what we have arrived at,—that proclaim openly there is no Pisgah-view for faith over our land of promise:—

*"Could we but stand where Moses stood,
And view the prospect o'er!"*

Alas, and can we not? Certain it is, that the Word of God not only puts us there, but carries us right through that flood upon the brink of which we are supposed to stand. Antitype of Joshua and his hosts, and yet in contrast with those who wrestled with flesh and blood, "we wrestle," it is expressly said, "with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places." (Eph. v. 12, marg.) How, if we are not there? But there we are, for not only are we "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," but also, we are "seated together in heavenly places," too, in Him. What is needed is faith to lay hold of that position. But then we soon become practically aware, that for us those heavenly places are as yet no peaceable possession. We become involved in that conflict, the object of which is on Satan's part to drive us out of the practical enjoyment of that beforehand, which he cannot, blessed be God, prevent our attaining at last.

But in the meanwhile the effect of defeat here is sad enough. We have its tokens in the worldly condition of all around us, which alas, speaks us not "rooted and grounded in the love of Christ so much as rooted in the love of ease, of lazy, luxurious living, of that which Scripture characterizes as a "present evil world," out of which we are told we are delivered, (Gal. i. 4.,) and friendship with which is enmity to God. (Jas. iv. 5.)

Thus the pilgrim-character has in great measure ceased. The book of Joshua has ceased to be a type intelligible to the mass of Christians. To speak of being in heavenly places is to be considered an unpractical mystic. And he is accounted wise who never has fallen into the fanaticism of imagining that he is to take literally the injunction to be watching for Him who has earnestly enjoined it, and pronounced the blessedness of those who are found so doing.

Nevertheless the word of God abides, and its wisdom too, though the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. It abides for whosoever has an ear to hear. By it through the teaching of that blessed Spirit in whom alas, we have almost lost faith, we may still be guided into *all* truth, and possess "the *full assurance* of understanding," as well as the "full assurance of faith" and "of hope." All three are Scriptural expressions which cannot but tell us what is God's mind for us, however little we may have attained to it. Need we then say, how blessed is he that reads and they that hear!

The testimony of heavenly things is what we need to attend to, that we may be outwardly and manifestly what in God's thoughts and purposes, and by virtue of the new life given to us, we already are,—“heavenly” (1 Cor. xv. 48.) Soon for us all, the “image of the heavenly” shall be put on. Are there no affections to be sent on before into that city which the glory of God lightens, and where the Lamb is the light? Is it nothing that we may beforehand tread its street of gold, and stand on the banks of that river of living water upon which blooms and fructifies the tree of life? Will it have no practical result upon our walk and ways to converse with that which if it be unseen is yet the only real and eternal? Will it not be rather for us what to Paul was that catching up into Paradise, of which he tells us most when telling us that he heard “unspeakable things?”

But if there are, then,—and there are,—things *unspeakable*, there are also things spoken to us, and spoken to be understood, as to that bright and blessed place—“things above”—where we are told to set our affections,—where He who has gained our affections is: “where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.”

F. W. G.

God will go along with them that He sends. (John viii.)

"THE LORD'S TABLE."

With the Lord's help we desire to say a few simple words upon the "Lord's table." Without dogmatizing, our endeavour will be to shew what it is, and what it is not, in the hope that what is said may be heard of the Lord for His own glory, in those who are His by the purchase of His own precious blood. To such alone can "the Lord's table" have any interest. To them it belongs, as having an indefeasible title to be at it through redemption. "The sanctified in Christ Jesus" are exclusively in question when we think of "the Lord's table." A false modesty, the effect of imperfect apprehension of what *grace* has made us, may lead us to shrink from being called or thinking of ourselves as "saints," but it is the uniform language of the Spirit of God in addressing believers in the Lord Jesus.

It is to "saints" that the privileges and responsibilities of "the Lord's table" attach; and it is for them, as such, to know intelligently what it really is, and how far they are practically maintaining their place and testimony with reference to it in the midst of the surrounding worldliness and apostacy.

To a sinner, or unconverted person, "the Lord's table" has no application, for such a one can neither rejoice in its privileges nor assume its responsibilities. Lost in sin, and under the power of the god and prince of this world, he is simply, while in this state, a "child of wrath," and has no link with the Lord, save that which involves his judgment at the great white throne. It is the gospel that he needs. He wants "the grace of God, that carries with it salvation to all men," to come to him where he is, and bring him out of his lost condition. His requirement is the blood of Christ, that sanctifies and cleanses in the sight of God. Till a soul has peace with God, any thought about "the Lord's table" is quite out of place. The conscience needs to be aroused to the full claims of God against a sinner—claims which nothing but the blood of Christ can satisfy. Redemption must be known solidly in the soul ere it can peacefully even think about the table of the Lord. The exchange must have been consciously made from sinnership to righteousness before any one can happily approach the place where holiness and righteousness invite the presence of believers in Christ.

It is one thing to come to the cross as a poor sinner in my sins, and quite another to sit at the table of the Lord as a saint in righteousness. My *title* to the one is my sins; my *title* to

the other is my righteousness. My sins are all my own work, and at the cross I find how God has dealt with them by punishing His own Son on account of them. My righteousness is all God's work for me, or, as Paul puts it, "God's righteousness." This is God's *gift* to me as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. iii. 26,) fitting me everlastingly for His own presence, of which my sitting at "the Lord's table" is but the outward expression.

Having cleared the ground a little as to those who have a title to "the Lord's table," we will look now at the table itself. The first and most important point to settle is, what constitutes "the Lord's table?" The answer to this is simple, and evident. The *presence* and *authority* of the Lord. In this character it stands out in relief from all that surrounds it, and is thus set before us by the Apostle Paul in the 10th chapter of 1st Corinthians, where the term alone occurs, though the principle upon which it is based runs from Genesis to Revelation. In a world that has departed from God, and lies in the wicked one, it constitutes in itself, and those gathered round it, the visible witness of the presence, unity, and authority of God amid men. It is here that God surrounds Himself with *worshippers*, who find their joy in His presence, and in offering to Him the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving for all He has been to them. What the altar at Jerusalem was to the nation of Israel, the Lord's table is to the Church now. The worship and authority of Jehovah was established in connection with that altar at Jerusalem as the place where His name was recorded,—“unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put His name there, even unto His habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: and thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices.” (Deut. xii. 5, 6). The Lord took up Israel as a nation to be a witness for Himself in the midst of the idolatrous nations that surrounded them, and the altar was the visible expression of His presence in their midst. The glory of God in unity and power connected itself with that altar and their blessing stood or fell with it. To disregard that altar was to disregard Jehovah. To build another altar was to provoke Him to jealousy, and entail His wrath against them. (Deut. xxxii, 17.) All outside that one altar was rebellion, or worship that connected itself with devils, denying at once the name and authority of Jehovah.

[To be continued.]

"THE WATER THAT I SHALL GIVE."

Far beyond the storm and tempest—
 That untroubled calm above—
 There the Son of God abideth,
 Resting in the Father's love.

Loved with love beyond all measure,
 Love that knows no check nor shade ;
 Loved before the worlds were founded,
 Loved before the Heavens were made.

Loved with all the love that dwelleth
 In the very heart of God ;
 Loved with all the love befitting
 Him in whom all grace abode.

Loved with all the love He claimeth,
 Who endured the cross and shame,
 The forsaking of His Father,
 To exalt the Father's name.

There in that unmingled gladness,
 That unmeasured endless peace,
 He abideth and rejoiceth
 With a joy that cannot cease.

And amid that joy and glory,
 In that peace no tongue can tell,
 Far above all storm and tempest,
 There on high with Him we dwell.

All that precious love our portion,
 Sharing all alike with Him ;
 All our thirst for ever quenching
 In that everlasting stream.

Ever in the Father's bosom,
 There forever, come what may
 For the love that sought and found us,
 Keepeth us by night and day.

Precious to that tender Father,
 Precious to that gracious Son,
 Precious to that Holy Spirit,
 By Whom He and we are one.

Unto this His life has brought us,
 Nothing less than this He gives ;
 This the secret joy and power
 Of the heart wherein He lives.

Let us praise that love forever,
 Fall in worship at His feet ;
 Lost in silent joy and wonder,
 Sinners made in Him complete.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

(1.) Q. What is the meaning of Rom. v. 13, especially the last clause—"sin is not imputed where there is no law?" We know that David says in Ps. 32, "blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin," but in the first case the person is not reckoned righteous, as in the second. Please explain the difference.

Ans. The words as well as thoughts are different in the two places. That used in Rom. v. 13. is only found besides (in the New Testament) in Philemon 18: "put that to my account." It would be used for the putting of separate and specific items into a bill. This the law did: naming the specific charges in the general account of sin. But sin was there before: "until the law sin was in the world." And this is shown by "death reigning from Adam to Moses"—the period before law,—even over those who having no law to transgress as Adam had, "had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." The law defined the various kinds of sin of which man was guilty,—reckoned up the separate items in the general account. You might render very well, perhaps, "sin is not *reckoned up* where there is no law."

(2.) Q. Are the "elect" of Luke xviii. 7. the elect of Israel or God's people generally?

Ans. The general principle applies to all God's people. He will avenge the blood of Christians thus upon the cruel and haughty power of Babylon which has so long oppressed them (Rev. xix. 2); nevertheless, as long as the day of grace lasts, it would ill become *us* to cry for vengeance. When the Lord shall have removed the saints of this dispensation from the earth to be with Himself, and His grace is shown (as it will be) to His ancient people of Israel, the saints *among them* will rightly take the place of this poor widow, for then the judgment to be executed when He appears will be just ready to come; and this is the time to which the end of Luke xvii., as well as xviii. 8, refers.

"SOUND WORDS."

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THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

At last my soul has found rest. Long have I sought it, wished it, prayed for it, asked how to get it. At last I have found it. Strange as it may seem to *reason*, I have found it in another man's distress: in the cross of Jesus Christ.

His lovely youth. His subjection to His parents, His gentleness, His tender compassion towards all in sorrow, His unselfish, wearisome service from morning till night, His nights spent in communion with His Father, His patience towards them who persecuted Him, and His holy indignation against them who dishonoured His father, His gracious ways towards poor publicans and sinners, and His heavy blows at the consciences of Pharisees and Doctors; all this irresistibly drew me to Him. It made me admire Him, and knowing He always had God's favour (Matt. iii. 17) which I earnestly desired, I often burned in my soul to be able to do like Him. To this end I prayed much, and strove with God, but, alas! to become every day more and more alarmed by the fact that in spite of prayers and striving, of resolution, and trying again, I *could not do*, nor *be* like Him; I *could not gain* God's favour. Like a man in a nightmare, who tries to flee and cannot advance, I wanted to *be* like Christ, but I had been "shapen in iniquity, conceived in sin," (Ps. li. 5) and my will could not change it. I wanted to *do* like Christ, and my bad nature was in the way; I had no power. Thus there was no rest for my poor soul in all the beauty of Christ's life, but rather sorrow and shame. The man clothed in rags feels comfortably enough all alone, but trouble overtakes him in the presence of another richly clad.

But ah! the *Cross*, the *Blood of the Cross*! The instant I saw *that*, I got rest, a rest to my soul like that of the bottom of the sea—in perfect peace though mighty vessels be torn on the surface by the violence of the waves; a rest which no one knows but the one who has it. One glance at Him as He bled

and groaned on the tree, dear reader, gave me that rest while it opened my eyes to a world of precious things. I at once saw and understood why God had commanded a brazen serpent to be "lifted up" on a pole, that all who were "bitten" might "look and live," that is, might "believe and *have everlasting life.*" I saw the "stripes" falling on Him, the innocent one, that all who "believe on Him" might be "healed by His stripes." I saw the curse of God's holy law removed from upon me because He was *there* "made a curse for us." I saw, I believed, I was healed, and I ceased sorrowing. I saw God's love through the cross of Christ, and ever since my dearest thought is that of leaving this poor world and going to God. Truly "this is Eternal Life, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

Ah! said I, eternal life is not gotten by trying to be or to do like Christ. It is gotten by His *death.* "He died that we might live." How sweet to me now is the Lord's Supper. Formerly I thought it needful to make my heart sorrowful there but now I rejoice. I "show forth the Lord's *death*" by which I live.

But the Lord is dead no more. He purged our sins and then seated Himself at God's right hand. From thence He sent down the Holy Ghost who makes known to all who are of God that not only their sins are forgiven through the blood of Jesus, but that they are adopted sons, and yet more than this, that they are the members of His Body, the Church, which is now seated in Christ Jesus in the heavenlies (Eph. ii. 6, and Col. iii. 1). It is from *thence* I now love to look at the cross of Christ. And looking at it from thence the scene becomes such that one can well afford to lose sight for a while of the rest he has found in it, sweet and precious as that may be. Good and evil, God and man, are by it brought to the light. The full contrast is there established: God is at His best and man at his worst. God had made man in His own likeness, placed him in Eden in the midst of blessing and innocence. Man had departed, turned things to Satan's praise, "grieved God at His heart" by his abominations, yet God loved him in spite of all. Holy and sin-hating by nature He could not tolerate evil, therefore man, now sinful, must be driven out of his presence. Yet He loves him, He calls after him even when he runs to hide his nakedness, He deals with him for four thousand years in every imaginable

way ; through judgments and mercies, by direct manifestations of His power and faithful instruments, but all to no avail. His judgments have been slighted, His mercies abused, his power forgotten, His instruments hated. O, wretched man, art thou not ten times worthy of everlasting wrath ! And still God *loves* thee. After these four thousand years of man's failure, transgression and rebellion, the declaration comes forth clear, simple, so that "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein :"
 "God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son." And for what did he give Him ? "To put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," Heb. ix. 26. "To bear our sins in His own body on the tree." 1 Pet. ii, 24. God's love for man had never ceased, but His holiness and man's sin could never meet. Sin in man compelled Him to keep man out of His presence, and man's sins called for His righteous wrath. Sacrifice alone could put away the sin of the world, and wrath divine could alone be meted out to Him when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

In this double aspect, as we view Christ on the cross, what a sight of God we get ! Such is His *holiness* that he cannot bless a world whose "very heavens are unclean in His sight," not even smile on the sweet, tender babe, without a vindication worthy of himself. Sin is in all, and all are in sin, and God cannot have fellowship with anything in sin.

Such is His *righteousness* that not one soul, be he ever so sincere, anxious and repenting, could draw nigh if God's wrath due him because of his iniquities had not been fully poured on the Lamb of His own providing. Verily now grace may well *reign*, and it *does* reign, but through *righteousness*.

Fellow-traveller to eternity, that is the plea on which God "beseeches" men to be reconciled to Him. Oh ! what kind of a heart must man have to resist that plea !

O God, my soul adores Thee in all Thy majesty ! O Christ, my soul adores Thee as Thou now art seated on His throne whom Thou hast thus revealed ! Knowing God thus, love, righteousness and holiness must characterize all who are "followers of God as dear children." Beholding in the cross of Christ God's own way opened by Himself for sinners to come near ; His holiness fully vindicated in it, His righteousness unflinchingly maintained, His love having free course in utmost dignity, self-importance ceases, self-occupation appears in all its foolishness and vanity, and God Himself fills the soul.

Verily "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. *But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.*" (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10).

Doubting, trembling, sorrowing, yet believing soul, cease trying to find joy in *thy* thoughts concerning the cross of Christ. See *God* revealed in it, worship and go *thy* way rejoicing.

God's estimate of man's moral worth and spiritual condition also plainly appears in the cross: "We thus judge that if one died for all *then were all dead*" 2 Cor. v. 14. Such is the expression of God about man: "*all dead*," and He proves it by the cross when Christ was "tasting death for every man," Heb. ii. 9. Reason may say that since Christ died for all men all men will be saved, God says **Christ** dying for all men only proves that all are *dead*, truly "dead in trespasses and sins," Eph. ii. 1. Teachers of the law may moralize the world and feed its vain hopes by loud boastings of moral progress, there stands the cross staring them in the face, filling their bosoms in spite of themselves with the dread forebodings of a dark future. Transgression in Eden was to bring forth death. Gen. ii. 17. Abel owned it by an offering with blood. Gen. iv. 4. Cain *disowned* it by an offering without blood. Gen. iv. 3. God declares it has come over all by giving His Lamb for all. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

There may be yet beautiful qualities in Adam's race, for Adam's race to look at, but nothing for God. For "society"—this world—one man may certainly be preferable to another—the one respected, the other detested—but for God "there is no difference," Rom. iii. 22, "the whole world lieth in wickedness." 1 John v. 19. Had man been only a "bruised reed" or a "smoking flax," Christ would have been sent to heal, not to die. But death was his mission; "for this hour am I come," and to death He must go that by resurrection God might bring in another Adam, a new creation in which His soul can rejoice.

No wonder man's lofty looks make way for a chastened countenance when he sees God's thought of Him by the cross of Christ.

But if God's estimate of man be such, has not man himself proved God in the right by that same cross? Who crucified Christ? Did not the Jew deliver Him and the Gentile nail him to the tree? And what had he done to make the excited

multitude cry out, crucify ! crucify ! and the cowardly governor deliver Him up to the cruel soldiers ? Had He not healed the sick, opened the blind eyes, cleansed the lepers of Israel ? Had He not given bread even to "dogs:" delivered a poor Syro-phenician's daughter, healed a centurion's servant ? Had He not given Caesar his dues ? Had He not toiled for years day and night for the people ? Why then all this malice, this bitter hatred and cruel cross ? Ah ! wicked Cain, where is thy brother, the gentle, loving, unresisting Abel ? What hast thou done with him ? Was not the exposure of thy unrighteousness by His righteousness the cause of thy hatred against Him, and of the murder which crowned it ? Methinks thy unrighteousness is bad enough in itself without killing the one who exposes it. And thinkest thou that because God did not interfere at the time, He did not see the transaction ? Hear now His word : "*The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.*" Poor, guilty world, the day is fast coming when thou too shalt answer : "My punishment is greater than I can bear." Eternity shall echo nothing else from thee.

Thus, abandoned to his own will, man manifests himself in spite of himself. The Jew keeps out of the judgment hall for fear of defilement while he demands the death of the very God he pretends to fear. The Gentile under cover of protecting the good sends two thieves to death while he lets a murderer loose, and crucifies Christ to further his popularity. Such is the world, the world of the past, the world of the present, the herd of swine Satan is hurrying down the precipice.

But should we follow on as we view the cross we should not stop short of every purpose of God, for in it every one originates. No wonder men, with their boasted progress are every day becoming more ignorant of those purposes, they are every day more and more robbing the death of Christ of its import. Does God wish to show His love to the sinner He does it by the cross ; His hatred of sin, by the cross ; is a poor sinner crying out for mercy, He points him to the cross and makes him sing for joy ; does he, on the contrary, prop himself up in his own righteousness, He points him still to the cross and asks : what means that, if you have any goodness to draw near by ?

And these are but a few of the heavenly things seen in the cross, while "in Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell ; and having made peace by the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile

all things unto itself ; whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." Col. 1. 19, 20.

Oh ! poor, poor, perishing world : when I picture to myself thy countenance at the sight of Him whose cross has opened such an account with thee, I can but weep for thee and entreat thee to pause and consider while it is yet the day of grace, the day of salvation, the time when God, through the cross, falls on the neck of any broken down prodigal who "comes to himself" and says from the depth of his soul "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee ;" the time when He kisses him *upon that confession*, and gives him a seat at His table with "the best robe" to cover him.

P. J. L.

LIGHT.

"AND God said, 'Let there be light, and there was light.'" There are some verses in the Bible that arrest the mind with singular force, compelling the soul to surrender itself to the truth which they contain without question or hesitation. This is one of them. It commands attention, and compels subjection to itself by the simple majesty of its assertion. No appeal is made to man's responsibility for its acceptance or rejection. No attendance is given at the out-posts of the mind, while its request for admission is being considered within by the will of man. It enters into the chambers of the soul without question, and communicates its presence in a way that silences all objections, by setting the conscience in the presence of God.

Whether considered mentally or physically, it is the nature of light to diffuse itself by its own inherent force. It finds its own way unsought for to the eye ; so the faculty by which it is received and used is discovered, and known to be possessed, by that which calls it into exercise. We know nothing of the existence of light till it reaches us.

This is a very blessed quality of light, and one which we may ponder over with much satisfaction of heart. It hands us over to the sovereign goodness of Him from whom light proceeds, and makes God Himself the object of the soul.

It is one thing to use the light, and quite another to be attracted by it to the source from whence it flows. The perfec-

tion of divine light is that it necessarily and at once produces both these effects. It not only reaches the soul, but takes possession of it, so as to associate us with itself. The verse we are considering does this very simply and powerfully. It not only states authoritatively how light became, but it at once puts us in company with Him from whom it flows. The eye is opened by the light that reaches it, but the eye is opened on God at the same instant. "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light." Light is produced, the eye takes it in. Were this all, the will might use the light for its own purpose, which morally would be darkness; but this in a divine way is impossible, and, therefore, the moment we receive the light, it is God Himself that becomes at once the blessed object before the soul. "In light we see light," for we are in the presence of Him who is light.

The great thing for us is to keep in the light. In ourselves we are only darkness—we have light, and are light in the Lord alone. In the 8th of John the Lord Jesus presents Himself as the "light of the world," and then adds, "He that followeth ME shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." When he opened the eyes of blind Bartimeus we read, "and he followed Jesus in the way," the simple and natural effect of the light that had reached him.

The light of creation ought ever to have maintained the creature in the consciousness of God's presence, "for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead."—Rom. i. 20. But man allowed Satan to blind his eye, and lead him off into darkness, out of which, as far as man is concerned, there is no recovery. Every step he takes in *his natural state* is only a step further into the darkness that surrounds him, and a more complete surrender of himself to the dominion of the prince of darkness.

Morally his condition is just that of the material creation previous to the moment when God said, "Let there be light." The apostle Paul applies this truth in the 4th of 2nd Corinthians, and shews that the action of God, in the revelation of the Gospel to man, is an action of sovereign creative energy, similar to that which our verse sets before us. He says, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in

the face of Jesus Christ." This comparison is more complex than at first sight appears, and one that is often overlooked from not seeing the identity of the state of creation physically, with that of man morally, at the moment of the introduction of light. Man morally had not always been in this state of ruin and darkness. He had fallen into it from a previous state of light and blessing, and was now retained in it by the blinding power of Satan, from which nothing but the word of God in its own omnipotence could deliver him.

The 1st of Genesis, and 4th of the 2nd of Corinthians, alike depict a scene of chaos—the one physical—the other moral—into which God enters in sovereign creative energy to reproduce order and beauty. But creation too had not always been a scene of chaos. It like man has its history of a fall from a previous state of light and blessing. It is interesting and well to know this, as it takes away one of the points on which infidelity turns in its attempt to upset the Mosaic account of the creation. It affords also a striking instance of the accuracy of God's word and the folly of man exhibiting itself, through simple ignorance of that word.

Geologists tell us that the formations and strata of the earth's crust are conclusive evidence against the Bible record of the creation. They have discovered successive periods of time in the consecutive layers that form the earth's crust. They can mark off successive catastrophies, or disruptions that have occurred in the formation of the earth's present crust. They demand enormous periods of time to produce these conditions, and they laugh at the idea of the earth being only 6000 years old. They would have saved themselves all this to-do, if they had first learned that *Scripture* by no means teaches us that the earth is only 6000 years old. If they said, the introduction of light upon the globe was 6000 years ago, they would be correct, but what *Scripture* tells us about the creation of the earth is this, that "In the *beginning* God created the heaven and the earth, and the *earth* became without form and void: and darkness was upon the face of the deep." When that beginning was we know not. When the earth became without form and void we know not. Why or when the earth, (*not the heaven, mark,*) fell into this condition, we have no word—we read of no catastrophe happening to the heaven, but we do read of catastrophe to the earth; and we are told in the 18th verse of the 45th of *Isaiah*,

“ Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens: God himself that formed the earth and made it : He hath established it : He *created it not void*—[the same word in the Hebrew as in Genesis 1-2]—He formed it to be inhabited.” The earth was *created* in beauty and order, and to be inhabited—it lapsed into chaos, and became without form and void. How many catastrophies it required to reduce to the state geologists find it in, we leave them to decide, and they may take as many hundreds of thousands of years as they like to produce them, we are only concerned to show, that creation, with the earth becoming without form and void, are one thing ; and that the introduction of light and order amid a scene of chaos is another thing.

We are not informed how long the earth remained in this state of chaos, any more than we are told how long darkness covered the face of the deep. God is silent on these points, and it is our wisdom to be so too. When He gives us light we can see. All our own thoughts and reasonings are only darkness. The entering of God’s word “giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple,” and it is “by *faith* we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” (Heb. xi.)

Before leaving the point before us, it may help our readers to remind them that, the heaven of our sphere was made subsequently to the introduction of light, and was produced by placing an expanse or firmament between the waters above and beneath. (Gen. 1. 7, 8.) The starry heaven was *created in the beginning*, and this has nothing to do with the work of the first day, which was devoted to the introduction of light upon the globe, the evening and morning of which constitute the first day.

A *material* scene of chaos, enshrouded in complete and unrelieved darkness, with the spirit of God moving “upon the face of the waters,” is what the first verses of Genesis set before us. Similar to this is the scene depicted in the opening verses of the 4th of the 2nd of Corinthians, where we find a *moral* chaos entombed in the darkness of unbelief through the blinding power of Satan, and with the Spirit of God “striving” with the perverted elements of the human heart. But there is no light in either scene till God says, “let there be light.” Then the Spirit of God answers to the word that speaks in sovereign power, and immediately there is light. In the one case a globe fills with the light of nature that reveals the eternal power and Godhood

of Him who *created* it. In the other the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ fills the soul of man with the knowledge of redeeming love. Morally, "the first day," has dawned in the benighted heart of a sinner, as physically it dawned upon the darkened globe of earth. The old and the new creations alike beginning their histories with the sovereign introduction of light. In both cases it is, "and God said, Let there be light, and there was light."

As nature rests, lives, grows and unfolds itself under the light that shines upon it, in passive effortlessness: so does the newborn soul of man rest, live, grow, and unfold itself beneath the genial rays of love and grace that fall on it from the face of Jesus, a treasure in an earthen vessel, "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and *not* of us."

The light that shines in us, is to shine forth from us, "Because it is the God who spake that out of darkness light should shine, who has shone in our hearts for the shining forth of the knowledge of Jesus Christ." "God is light," and light is the excellency of His power in us. We are but earthen vessels, the lamps out of which the light is to shine. We have nothing to do with getting the light, or making it shine forth. Light is always light—it shines in darkness. As believers, we who were sometimes darkness are now light in the Lord, and have merely to walk in the light as He is in the light, "shining as LIGHTS in the world, holding forth THE WORD OF LIFE."

C. W.

THE EARTHLY AND THE HEAVENLY.

IN the counsels of Infinite wisdom—in the plans and purposes of Him whose love gave up the Beloved of His heart for our redemption—heaven and earth have each their place. The value and efficacy of Christ's work—the power of His blood to purify and reconcile—are not alone to be seen in the bringing of individual souls to God, but extend to the reconciliation of all things, "whether they be things on earth or things in heaven." (Col. i. 20.) Not only *men* but *things* on earth are reconciled by that precious blood; and, on the other hand, things in *heaven* require as well that reconciliation.

It is not *persons* at all that this text speaks of. Plainly it

speaks of spheres into which sin has entered, and which it has defiled. Into heaven it entered when the angels fell, and thus Scripture speaks elsewhere of the "purification" (Heb. ix. 23.) as here of the "reconciliation" of heavenly things, and (our inheritance being in heaven, 1 Pet. i. 4.) of "the redemption of the purchased possession" on that day when we shall not have alone the earnest, but the enjoyment of our inheritance. (Eph. i. 14.)

Thus also "the mystery of His will," which God hath made known unto us is "that he might gather together in one [literally, *head up*] all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth." (Eph. i. 10.)

It can scarcely be plainer, then, that both heaven and earth have their allotted place eternally before God. Earth is no more to be blotted out of existence than heaven is. Beyond the dissolution of the earth and heavens, which the apostle Peter predicts, and which John in vision sees, there remain, alike for each, "new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."* "We look for this," says the apostle. It was the general expectation of Christians. One can scarcely say. (although of course the words remain and are acknowledged) that it is the general expectation now.

There are, however, opposite extremes. While for the many, even true believers, dying and going to heaven so have well-nigh displaced, as to all practical power, the resurrection and the coming of the Lord; and while the "new earth" has disappeared entirely from their prospect of the future,—with some the pendulum of opinion has swung to the opposite side altogether, and the vision of a new earth has completely shut out from their view the "inheritance reserved for us in heaven." (1 Pet. i. 4.)

With these men—and they number among them some of the most popular writers of the day—heaven is not at all, in strict-

* I would just say, by the way, that "the heavens" that are "dissolved" in 2 Pet. iii., and that "pass away," in Rev. xx., are simply (according to a very frequent use of the word in Scripture) the atmosphere, the heavens in which the clouds are, and the birds fly, and do not necessarily include even the planetary system to which the earth belongs. So also the "heavens" here. "The third heaven," of 2 Cor. xii., to which Paul was caught up, was thus that beyond the heaven of the birds, and the heaven of the stars, God's own in a peculiar way.

ness, our inheritance. Earth itself will be that heavenly home,—as one of them says, “the sweetest nook of heaven:” earth in a “heavenly condition,” if you please; but, still, earth and nothing more. In this case, the true force of our Lord’s words about His Father’s house, which He is *gone away from earth* to prepare for us, and come again to receive us into, is lost entirely; and “where I AM” is no longer the assurance of a home with Him in His own eternal dwelling place.

Yet Scripture is as plain as can be, on the one side, and on the other. For, if, on the one hand, the “new earth” be, as we have seen, a part of the recognized expectation of Christians,—on the other, an “inheritance *reserved* in heaven” can scarcely be made to mean one whose title-deeds alone are there.

But in truth the *contrast* between an earthly and a heavenly inheritance is everywhere maintained throughout the Word. Two spheres of blessing are there. Two gatherings of redeemed people. An earthly, first revealed, last in fulfilment, the type and shadow of a heavenly.

Characteristically indeed, the Old and the New Testaments directly speak, the one of the one, the other of the other, of these purposes. The story of earth is properly and characteristically the story of the Old Testament. Its burden is, “The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord’s; but the *earth* hath He given to the children of men.” (Ps. cxv. 16.) The picture that lay before the eye of the seers of the future was of an earth which the meek should inherit, and where the place of the wicked should no more be found. (Ps. xxxvii. 9, 10.) It were needless to adduce passages. Let any reader of this who desires to ascertain its truth, read but any one of the Old Testament prophets. I am bold to say he will find not even one word throughout about going to heaven, while the trumpets of earth’s jubilee are continually sounding out. Sweetly they sound, and joyfully, and well may the earth rejoice, for the Lord reigneth. The “Prince of Peace” reigns. Judgment may indeed smite first, swift and terrible, but it smites down the oppressor, and “when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness.” Thenceforth “nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” “The ends of the earth” bear the salvation of the Lord, and the earth is “filled with the knowledge of His glory, as the waters cover the sea.”

People may have more or less thought of such a time as this, and not wonder to find it in glowing colors on the prophetic page; but it is to be marked that this is the one only future that the book of the Old Testament prophecy reveals. Another thing may help to explain that; for Israel is, under God—under the gracious rule of their own Messiah—the centre and foreground of the picture. “*Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.*” (Isa. xxvii. 6.) If any one asks, *what* Israel is spoken of here, Jeremiah as another inspired witness may give us the Divine answer, that it is that same Israel and Judah whom God had brought out of the land of Egypt. (Jer. xxiii. 7., xxxi. 32.) So Micah speaks of the law going forth out of that Zion once “*plowed as a field,*” and the word of the Lord going forth out of that Jerusalem, which is indeed before our eyes “*become as heaps,*” and the establishment in the top of the mountains of that “*mountain of the house of the Lord,*” which, as the place of a foreign worship, has become, without **any** question, “*as the high places of the forest.*” (Mic. iii. 12., iv. 4.)

Linger awhile over those prophetic landscapes, dear reader, and ascertain fully their character, and then turn with me to a New Testament page, and listen to the apostle of the Gentiles. He is weeping over the unbelief of his people. Like Moses, their ancient leader and deliverer, he had even wished himself accursed from Christ for his brethren, his “*kindred according to the flesh,*”—not, plainly then, a *spiritual* Israel, spiritual kindred, but the nation still, as to the mass, in unbelief; and he says of *them*: “*Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the PROMISES.*” (Rom. ix. 3, 4.) *The promises!* Just those we have been reading. Promises in every page of which they figure, but in an earthly scene, while “*spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*” are those allotted *us*. Thus we learn to divide the Word of Truth aright. Things fall into their places. Instead of unintelligible confusion there is perfect harmony and distinctness of utterance.

But thus in passing into the sphere of New Testament prophecy we become conscious of another prospect lying before us. One who comes from heaven tells of “*heavenly things*” (Jno. iii. 12). Received back into heaven after his work accomplished and grace reigning through righteousness by that fulfilled work,

that grace can open a door of blessing which the "law of righteousness" kept closed. The veil which hung before the holiest where, in thick darkness, all through Israel's day, God dwelt, was rent from top to bottom by the death of Christ. "The way into the holiest"—into heaven itself—was made manifest. Henceforth our hope is anchored "*within* the veil, whither the Fore-runner is for us entered." (Heb. vi. 19.) Nay, *as* our Fore-runner and Representative, *in Him* we are already entered: "we have boldness to enter into the holiest through the blood of Jesus," (Heb. x. 19) and are "seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 6.)

Nor only so; as One blessed Person has gone in for us into heaven, another has come out to lead us into the knowledge of things unseen, (1 Cor. ii. 10, 12) to form a heavenly people practically into heavenly character, to set their affections on things above. The Holy Ghost is thus witness to us of our heavenly inheritance. The New Testament lifts off the veil from a home in our *Father's* house. All is changed accordingly. For us that Jerusalem is *above* "which is *our* mother." (Gal. iv. 25.) The Jewish earthly things become for us the type and shadow of things in heaven.

Compare the close of Old Testament prophecy with the close of the New, and notice the difference. In Malachi, the great day of Jehovah's wrath is coming. "All the proud, yea, all that do wickedly shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." It is the earthly judgment of the wicked, which, as in the 37th Psalm, before cited, will leave them without root or branch again to spring up. "But unto you that fear my name shall the *Sun of righteousness* arise, with healing in his wings, and ye shall tread down the wicked."

This is one of Israel's promises. Day for the world dawns first on her. Her people tread down their enemies, Jehovah's also. The Lord comes, and every eye sees him, as when the sun rises, and his beams give light to all. It is the "*Sun of righteousness*," and the "*day*."

Not so the closing call in the *New Testament*. (Rev. xiii. 16.) Here the word is, that He who is the "root and offspring of David" is also "the bright and morning Star." Our hope points, not to the flooding of the world with day—blessed as

that may be—but to a time *preceding* it. The day star heralds the morn, but does not bring it. So for us, “Behold I come quickly,” bids us await, not the fulfilment of events on earth, but the moment when we shall be caught out of it with all the multitude of the redeemed of past and present, all the saints of the first resurrection, in fulfilment of that word, “I will come and receive you unto *Myself*.” The earth will find its deliverance from the same mighty hand at an after-time; but first of all we shall be with Him. The word to “him that overcometh” now is, “I will give him the *morning star*.” Not a place on earth filled with the beams of the Sun of righteousness, but a place with Himself before the first dawn of day.

And notice now the character of this whole book of New Testament apocalypse. Features borrowed, if you will, from the Old, no doubt there are, but everywhere with a marked difference. Thus the cherubim of Ezekiel’s vision may and do reappear in the “beasts” or “living creatures” rather, of Rev. iv. and v. But this company of elders whose thrones* the apostle sees surround the throne of God, where are they in the prophet’s vision? Notice, too, that Ezekiel sees the glory come down to earth; John sees it as one taken up to heaven. And there these elders with their redemption-song are found.

From heaven too, they watch the progress and issue of events on earth thereafter, until voices in heaven declare that the marriage of the Lamb is come; and far above the toil and tempests of earth that marriage is celebrated. Then, and not till then, the scene changes, and in the train of a warrior Lord, heaven pours out its white-clad hosts of redeemed people.

In the closing visions, “Jerusalem which is above” is painted for us in rich and glowing colors. If it come down from heaven, it is still the “heavenly city.” Earth has its millennial days; and beyond these a “new earth” more brightly greets us. But kept before our eyes ever is the beauty of a scene where the Lord God Himself and the Lamb are light and temple, a city at whose gates the angels wait, and where the tree of life finds its own genial soil and home in the “paradise of God.”

As we close the book we can think of nothing else than these words of the apostle, and wonder and adore:—“And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last

* Not “seats” properly, but “thrones.”

Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural ; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the *earth*, EARTHY ; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy such are they also that are earthy ; and as is the Heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the *image of the HEAVENLY.*" (1 Cor. xv. 45—49.)

Reader, I at least will not barter my birthright for the sweetest nook on earth that could be given.

F. W. G.

"THE LORD'S TABLE."

(Concluded from page 38.)

The apostle quotes and applies the teaching of Deuteronomy in the 10th of 2nd Corinthians, when dealing with the question of Christian worship, and shews that "the Lord's table" holds exactly the same place with reference to what surrounds it, as the altar in Israel did to that which surrounded it. "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy ? Are we stronger than He ?" he enquires. The nation of Israel failed to maintain the name and authority of Jehovah and has consequently for the time been set aside in judgment. The Church has taken the place of Israel as God's witness in the midst of the world of which Satan is the God and prince ; and "the Lord's table" has replaced the altar at Jerusalem ; but the principles that applied to the one remain in force with the other. Principles that must ever remain in force, as a testimony to what God is Himself, who changes not.

In the light in which we are now viewing things, "the Lord's table" is far more than a mere commemorative feast of Christ our Passover having been sacrificed for us ; nor is it the aspect of communion in the body and blood of Christ as members of His body, most blessed as this is, and doubtless the highest and happiest aspect of it. It may be well to note here, that when the Apostle does speak of communion, he does not use the name of Lord in connection with table, but speaks of our communion in what *Christ* is for us. The reason of this is evident, *communion* is not in question when we speak of the *Lord's table*,

but rather what that table is in contrast with evil, and as a place of dignity and judgment. Hence it is the Lord's own presence according to His own name and *authority* that constitutes it "the Lord's table." Thus it is not a question of those at the table, and their communion together in that which the table supplies, but of what maintains the dignity and authority of Him whose table, as personally present, it is. From this it becomes evident that where the name and authority of the Lord is not maintained, the Lord's table cannot be. And more, that as there is but one Lord, there can be but one "Lord's table." Any number of even true Christians meeting together to break bread would not have "the Lord's table" in their midst, unless the Lord Himself as *Lord* were present, and the principles that governed the table were the expression of His name and authority.

"The Lord's Table" being then the centre around which the church visibly gathers, and this centre representing the throne, so to speak, of the Lord in the midst of his saints, it becomes no merely the special sphere of the Lord's personal control and judgment, as brought before us in the latter part of the 11th chapter of 1st Corinthians, where, we read, as the effect of the *direct* dealings of the Lord with those at the table in judgment of the carnal observance of the Lord's supper, "For this cause many are weak among you, and many sleep;" but the acknowledged ground of public discipline according to the 18th chapter of Matthew, where those gathered to His name have so really the Lord in their midst, that whatsoever they bind on earth in His name is bound in heaven. The Apostle in the 5th chapter of 1st Corinthians directly connects the truth of the 18th chapter of Matthew with the Lord's table, and forces the saints to carry out the authority of the Lord at the table in putting away the wicked person from their midst as one unfit to keep the feast with them, or to form part of God's assembly.

It is of all importance to see clearly how "the Lord's table" thus connects itself with the holiness of God's house, which public discipline at the Lord's table vindicates and maintains. Not only is "God greatly to be feared in the assembly of the Saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him," but "Thy testimonies are very sure: *holiness* becometh Thy house, O Lord, *for ever*," the Psalmist says. We are called upon "to follow peace with all men," but it is as wedded to

that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." "Receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire," is the solemn exhortation of the Spirit of God at the end of the 12th of Hebrews.

In the address to the Church of Philadelphia the Lord presents Himself to the eye and ear of faith as "He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth." Holiness, truth, authority and power are presented to the eye of him that hath "an ear to hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies" in the person of Him who walks amid the seven golden candlesticks. Ruin and apostacy may have come in in all that surrounds Him, but He *remains* the same, and the claims of His name are as much in question now, as when all stood forth fair and strong in the day of Pentecost.

The "Lord's table" must, therefore, ever be the public witness for Him who in unseen, but real presence and power, presides at that table, and "as son over His own house" maintains God's glory in connection with it, as the ONE TRUE AND LIVING God. "There are diversities of gifts, but the *same* spirit. And there are diversities of administrations, but the *same* Lord. And there are diversities of operations; but it is the *same* God which worketh all in all," the Apostle tells us in the 12th of 1st Corinthians, and everything that hides or mars this manifested unity in divine action of the three persons of the Godhead, of which the Lord's table is the visible centre, as the gathering point of Saints, is in its principle schismatic or worse.

The question may fairly be asked here, "If what has been stated is correct, as to what constitutes the Lord's table, and that there can, by the very nature of things, be but one 'Lord's table,' does 'the Lord's table' still exist, and where is it to be found?"

If we have succeeded in fairly arousing this question in the minds of our readers our present object has been gained. That such a question presents many difficulties, we are well aware. That the path of faithfulness, amid all the confusion and rampant self-will of man that surrounds us, entails no ordinary spiritual energy and simplicity of heart with Christ, those know who, in any feeble measure, have endeavoured to tread it. Still we desire that the question may be fairly pressed home, as we are convinced it is fraught with blessing to the soul, and touches very nearly the honor and glory of the Lord Jesus.

We are living in a thoroughly Laodicean time, a day of intense latitudinarianism. Looseness of thought and carelessness of conscience characterise the present hour. Faithfulness to God and His revealed mind is becoming, even amongst true Christians, more and more unpopular. Truly, we are in the "last days," and the love of many is waxing cold. Our lamps need trimming ~~so~~, and our loins require greatly the girdings of truth. Blessed be God, amid all the confusion that surrounds us, and in spite of all our unfaithfulness, we have God and the word of His grace to look to. We thoroughly believe in the sufficiency of the Scriptures to guide and enlighten us at all times, and that through them "the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. iii. 17.)

May the Lord help us to be more uncompromising in the maintenance of the power of God's word over our own souls. May we, too, take our Bibles in our hand, and as a light that shines clearly in a dark place, humbly, yet thoroughly, test all that surrounds us by its unerring rays. Such a path though difficult is simple and certain. We shall find God with us in it, and know a complete rest and joy that nothing but Himself can give. Let us "*prove* all things; hold fast that which is good, and abstain from all appearance of evil." (1 Thes. v. 21, 22.)

C. W.

ON COLOSSIANS I. 19.

EVERY correction of Scripture is of moment. I beg to suggest one, the occasion for which it appears to me exceedingly mars the sense. I refer to the expression, "It pleased (the Father) that in Him should all fulness dwell." The English reader may see upon the face of it, that the word "Father" is put in by our translators. This is extremely bad theology, depriving us of the developement of glory in the person of our most blessed Lord. "All the fulness was pleased to dwell in Him." In its present reading it is merely the pleasure of the Father about the Son, which I apprehend to be a mischievous derogation from the divine glory of the Son, to deprive us of the revelation of that in which to me Christianity consists—a revelation of the Trinity known in relation ship in which we are brought by faith to it. In the second chapter we have the fact, "all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily;" that is, in the incarnation of

the Son. While He was the Son in personal union with flesh as Jesus, there could be no separation of the Son from the Father or the spirit, though most distinct in *relationship*. Therefore the Lord says, though He wrought Himself the miracles, "the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works: "and again, "If I cast out devils, by the spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you."

That He was the son, however, is the direct object of faith, but revealing the Father: and therefore "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In a word the fulness of the Godhead (as is declared by the Spirit concerning Him) "dwelt in Him bodily." These things may be difficult to human explanation, but not as to communion, where the spirit of God is; for He reveals in communion, according to the power of truth, and no way else. And I believe **that**, while the human intellect will break itself to pieces against the glory of the divine revelation, the fulness of our joy and hope, and the soundness of our Christianity, and, consequently Christian strength and energy, chiefly depends upon the distinctness with which we are cognizant of the unity and trinity, withal made known to us in Incarnation, which is the revelation of it. "God resisteth the proud but giveth grace to the humble." I believe it to be a revelation, and known, where only it can be known, in communion, by those made partakers of the spirit by faith in Christ Jesus: all else will stumble somewhere, and these too, if they be not humble.

J. N. D.

"FOLLOWING."

ONE path I seek to tread,
Straight 'tis and narrow,
Joy have I, Lord, in it,
Pain, too, and sorrow.

But One has gone that way,
Him would I follow,
Leaving earth's joys behind—
Selfish and hollow.

And I would seek to trace
Those footsteps only
Of Him who trod the waste,
Friendless and lonely.

His path of grief to know,
His scorn to share it;
Know what revilings are,
His cross to bear it.

Cross of Christ—death to all
This world counts gladness;
Yet would I seek for joy
Where He had sadness!

That path alone I'd tread,
Tear-stained and gory,
Trod by the Son of God,
Ending in glory. —M. A. C.

"SOUND WORDS."

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GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also the Greek. For therein is the *righteousness* of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, **T**he just shall live by faith.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." *Rom. i. 16-18.*

It seems at first an unsuitable expression the Apostle makes use of in speaking of the Gospel here, when he says that "therein is the *righteousness* of God revealed." It would be more in accordance with the thoughts of many to say, therein is the *love* or the *grace* of God revealed, which is surely most true.

But here the Spirit of God is engaged in laying the foundation for a soul to rest upon, and therefore takes up that side of God's character which would be thought to present the greatest obstacle to the justification of a sinner, and shows that in even that, God is for us.

Many an one, sincere and earnest too, has never got beyond reckoning on the *mercy* of God, and therefore never is on the true solid ground of peace, nor can they be until it is seen that God's *righteousness* justifies. Without doubt, *mercy* He is abundant in; but mercy refers more to His pity for me in my condition as a lost sinner once, and now as a saved one yet needing daily "grace to help in every time of need." No one then would wish to weaken for a moment the sense of that mercy that any soul has; but yet it is hardly the ground of full peace, nor, till it is seen that God in grace has given a *claim* upon Himself to us as sinners, can that peace be fully enjoyed.

The Apostle then states that in the Gospel, "the *righteousness* of God is revealed," and side by side with this declares that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;" and, as all are found in this condition of guilt, the difficulty is as to how the revelation of God's righteousness can be in any way the Gospel. Yet such it is.

The first step towards the full bringing out of the truth is the detail of man's sin, for the back-ground upon which God's righteousness is displayed is the ruin of the creature come in through sin and disobedience, "our unrighteousness commend-

ing the righteousness of God," so that man's mouth is forever stopped, and boasting excluded, except as opened by God, as David says, to "shew forth His praise" whose wisdom, love, and righteousness have all been called into the fullest exercise in dealing with man's sin.

Accordingly we find man, viewed in his natural condition, without testimony from God, save that which creation gave. "The heavens declaring the glory of God, and the firmament showing His handiwork," His "sending rain and fruitful seasons, filling men's hearts with joy and gladness" ought to have taught man "His eternal power and Godhead;" but the glory of the incorruptible God was changed into "an image made to like corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. His heart was proved incapable of retaining a true thought of God, and the creature giving up God was given up of God to his own ways, and all the corruption of a depraved nature came out without restraint.

But there were people better off than this, and who had a testimony from God; and the Jew, redeemed out of Egypt and put upon new ground in an acknowledged relationship with God, had a law given him to direct his way. The Gentile was man in his uncultivated state; the Jew in a cultivated. But the cultivated tree was as bad, or worse than the wild. For not only was the witness the heavens and the earth bore to their Maker's Deity set at nought: but His revealed will, expressed at Sinai, and given to a people who had been the subjects of a wonderful deliverance, was slighted by those who had undertaken to obey. Sin was now transgression, "sin by the commandment had become exceeding sinful." The ruin was complete, and the proof of it complete too, and the last final test by Christ coming in grace, showed that man was not only guilty and powerless to maintain himself in the place God put him in, still more to extricate himself from the consequences of sin; but when deliverance was brought him and the ability to remedy his condition was fully manifested in the works of Christ, as well as the will to do it, if that deliverance depended on his owning God in His true place, in the person of the Son, rejection and the Cross soon made it plain that man's heart was linked with Satan against God, fully.

Man then has been proved guilty before God, without righteousness or goodness; none sought after God, the way of peace

they did not know, but destruction and misery were in their ways. The throat, the tongue, the lips, the mouth, the outlets by which all that was in a heart "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" found vent, were all corrupt, and as standing upon one common level of guilt and ruin were all Adam's race.

The question now was, what would God do?

What *could* He do, but condemn sin?

With what relief the heart, conscious that it has read God's sentence upon guilty man—upon itself, turns to the declaration that God's righteousness has been manifested and that *for* the sinner.

Man had no righteousness for God, when asked for it by the law. If he sought to clothe himself in anything, it was only "filthy rags" as judged of by the light of God's presence. The law gave only the "knowledge of sin," and therefore could not justify. God's helps to man had only brought out the ruin more fully. And now what can a righteous God do with a guilty helpless sinner? What an answer we are furnished with! "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon (over) all that believe." What a declaration! God's righteousness is toward all—"for there is no difference, all have sinned," all need it, and far as the effects of sin reached, so far was the range God's grace took in offering to man a remedy for his sin, as we have in Ch. v. 18, "Therefore as by one offence toward *all men* unto condemnation, so by one righteousness towards *all men* unto justification of life." The cross gives God a gospel to preach to *every creature*, as we read in 2 Cor. v. "God was in Christ reconciling the *world* unto Himself;" and now, "as though God did beseech by us we pray in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God." Pray whom? Everybody who has an ear to listen.

But then that righteousness which is toward all, as offering through the cross shelter from deserved punishment, is *over* all them that believe. God's *righteousness* is their shelter. God's character as a righteous God, made good against sin in the Sinless One, who bore it before God on the cross, is *over*, as protecting the one that believes in Jesus. Therefore it is in

verse 24 we have "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" introduced, as giving to God a title to justify freely all that come by Him. And whilst His righteousness in passing over the sins that are past, through the forbearance of God, that is, the sins of those saved in past ages, is now manifested and God's character maintained fully by the work of the cross, that same righteousness is declared in the Gospel, which tells how He can be just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. What a character this gives to our state before God! That side of His nature which seemed most *against* us is now *for* us. Not for our sins; against them; but *for us*, and bidding us look to the cross and see the settlement of the entire question of sin, by God Himself, His hand visiting upon the head of His own beloved Son all that was sin's due, **that**, the cup of wrath being drunk to its very dregs, grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

What was in question when the Angel of the Lord passed through the land of Egypt to smite the first-born. As to the ground they stood upon by nature, there was no difference between an Israelite and an Egyptian. What made the difference was the blood upon the door-post. The judgment of death had passed upon the substituted lamb, the righteousness of God demanded the punishment of sin, and when sin had been judged, and the victim slain for the sin of others, *that righteousness* had been fully satisfied and now became their safe-guard. Righteousness which exacts rigidly the payment of the debt, when it is paid gives the fullest assurance that it will never be asked again. The more perfect the *righteousness* of the one who is dealing with the case, or to whom the debt is due, the more certain it is that payment will be exacted, and then, when the debt is paid, that very righteousness is my greatest security. Just so when I know that God in righteousness dealt with sin at the cross, in the judgment of my blessed Lord, I know He can never ask anything of me. Righteousness has been displayed against my sin; but love has provided One to be dealt with in my stead, and now nothing can bar the out-flow of that love which sought and found so blessed a channel by which to reach me in my sins. Thinking of my enemies I say, "If God be for me, who can be against me,"—of my necessities I say, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely *give* us all things."

God's love to man in the gift of His Son and His abhorrence of sin expressed in judging the Spotless One for sinners, having been made known, faith sees that God's character as so made known is in question now, and what God is and has done becomes the basis of the fullest peace. To question His *willingness* to justify, is to ~~question~~ **doubt** the love that gave the only begotten Son for us; to doubt ~~my~~ **perfect** justification, when I believe in Jesus, is to call in question the sufficiency of Christ's work, of which God has testified His satisfaction in raising Him from the dead, and giving Him glory; or the righteousness of God, as if He would exact from me again, what had been already paid by Christ.

Look at the picture we are furnished with in Numbers xxiii. The accuser is there seeking to get God's face turned against Israel. Good ground there is for them to be cursed, viewed in themselves. Their ways had angered Moses, noted for his meekness. A "stiff necked and rebellious people" is their character from Egypt to Canaan, well **known** and proved in near forty years wandering in the wilderness. But what answer does the accuser get when seeking their destruction? "How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed; or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied?" And then again, when the utmost part of them is seen, Balak thinking that it was their numbers before the prophet's eyes that called forth their blessing from his lips, God's answer shows how He makes it a question of His own character at once; "Hearken to me, thou son of Zippor, God is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent &c. It was not for any loveliness He saw in them He took them up, nor was it any failure in their ways could make Him listen to the accuser of His people. "Hear now, ye rebels," from Moses' lips, had shut him out from the land, because he did not sanctify God before them, and the complaint of unbelief in Elijah further on is reckoned as making intercession *against* Israel. God's thoughts are thoughts of love and grace towards those who are the objects of His purposes, He views them according to what He had done for them, and not what they are in themselves, and so we have "He hath not seen iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel." Was it not there? It was assuredly, but He had not seen it. Was He to make nothing of the work that He had done, done too

because they were what they were, and with the full knowledge of it and that they could do nothing for themselves? And so, "God brought them out of Egypt," is the answer to it all. God's thoughts go back to the blood on the doorpost in Egypt and the path He had opened through the Red Sea. Redemption is His answer to the accuser of His people, because their *righteousness* was satisfied, that *love* might have free course. Where righteousness might have reigned, and judgment had its way, to the utter exclusion of every sinner from the presence of the Blessed God, grace has reigned, through righteousness, unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. God's righteousness, revealed in that gospel which is "concerning Jesus Christ our Lord," is *towards* all, but it is over all who believe in Jesus, God justifying freely by *grace*, because of the satisfaction made to His righteousness by the death and sufferings of His Son, those who in themselves are sinners, without strength and ungodly.

R. T. G.

NOTES OF A READING ON JOHN IV.

G. V. W.

THE New Testament may be divided into three parts—Christ's Person, His works, and His revelation.

The attractive beauty of His Person is especially shown in His dealings with the Samaritan woman. Has there any thing drawn *me* to Christ? Have I seen His attractions? Has the beauty of His Person drawn and filled my heart?

From v. 7-14 He reveals Himself to her independently of herself. From v. 15 He comes down to *her* and her circumstances. He wanted to let the grace that was in Himself draw her, win her, but he had to pull her to pieces, show her her own corrupt heart—show her how unlike *Him* she was.

The people of Samaria were exceedingly corrupt, and the Jews had good cause to have no dealings with them. But here Jesus, the Lord of Glory, even though He was a Jew, worn, dusty, and weak with His journey, had come down from Jerusalem just to get this poor, despised, sinful woman. We may think what passed in her mind on looking back after she *knew* the Lord Himself, how she may have wondered if the disciples were

not sent away, that she might be alone with the Lord, that she might have this conversation with Him. His attractions were what drew her—drew her at that very hour, and at that very place.

He does not begin by showing His authority, or her need, but the beauty of His character. She little knew the glory of Him she was talking with, she had no conception of it or Him.

v. 10. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." Unknown to her He reveals His glory as a *giver*—to ask of Him was to have the request immediately granted.

v. 11. "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well &c.?" Seeing He had respect for Himself she addressed him more deferentially, but her mind was locked up in her circumstances. So were our's before we met the Lord. She questions first, *how* He can get the water; and *secondly*, historically, Jacob had to dig the well. He made it; and was this man greater than he?

v. 13, 14. "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." It was as though He said, you can't conceive I am in another world, but I am; I would have opened a well inside, eternity stamped upon it and everything seen in it.

v. 15. "Sir, give *me* this water, that I thirst not neither come hither to draw." She goes back to circumstances—understands Him not. We cannot understand God's things without having His mind. She cannot understand it. Afterwards she may have said, "What purpose of heart to catch me! He would have *me*." What is this but the pertinacious way in which Christ will follow up those that are His sheep!

v. 16. "Go call thy husband and come hither." He goes down to her circumstances. A simple word to detect her condition.

v. 17. "I have no husband." Her answer, all truth in words though a *lie* in spirit, to Him who knew *all* her heart. What were her thoughts when he said, "Thou hast well said I have no husband &c.?"

Has the Lord ever looked into my heart? let each ask. For Him to see what we are and what we have done are two different things!

In her thus far was—levity, equivocation, and adultery. The new life begins with God, and goes on with God, and ends with God. Did she not think of all this?—How she had been read—just what she was, all unlike Himself, and He did not curse because she was full of sin, and not like Him.

v. 19. "I perceive that thou art a prophet". Her motive for saying this might have been good, might have been bad. She *can't* get out of circumstances—wants to show she thinks about worship—something besides water. The foolish unmeaningness of her conversation was the means of bringing out what was near to His heart—*worship: Worship, admiration of God.* When did I begin to worship? Surely not in my sins. Never one admiring thought of God is a charge against all.

v. 21. "The hour cometh when you shall neither in this mountain, nor at Jerusalem worship the Father." First, sets aside all place, but presents God in character as Father. Secondly, sets out what is true worship.

v. 23. Two things: what the heart enjoys, and that in God, whom I can admire as truth. Secondly the Father a Spirit, requiring spiritual worshippers.

v. 25. "I know that Messiah cometh which is called Christ, when He is come He will tell us all things." She did not want His instructions because the Messiah was coming, and she had rather wait till He came.

v. 26. "I that speak unto thee am He." Here He was and what had she made Him? He had proved *her* a fool.

Seven things thus far in which Christ had endeared Himself to her. What! not love Him who had opened the well in me? Not love Him? She had nothing to boast of herself—it was all in *Him*. "I that speak unto thee am He." What loving attractive grace. Christ's last words were the key-stone. He took her out of circumstances—out of herself; she forgot all—her waterpot—the well—her past life—Jerusalem as the holy place, *everything*; and was filled with "*the Christ.*"

The fresh taste of Christ's love in the heart, and on the lips of a young Christian—a simple babe—is more than a clear distinct statement from many who have grown old in head truth. She

was not afraid to tell her bad character to all around, but desired them to come see Him, who had revealed Himself to her, and had discovered her to herself.

Faith is more than instinct—and instinct more than reason in man. She knew Him as Saviour, and all the Samaritans might know Him too.

v. 42. "Now we believe **it** because of thy saying, for we have heard Him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." They recognise him both as Messiah and Saviour.

In heaven the glory of Himself will go far beyond the works down here. If needs be I can say, He is my righteousness—He saved me—washed me &c. But what is all this compared to the beauty of his Person—Himself? I may say, I am thoroughly welcome, for I came in His name, but what is that to Himself—the personal glory of Christ. He is not only an attraction to a poor sinner down here, but to a ransomed sinner in the presence of God. The attractive beauty of Christ makes me—draws me—to follow His footsteps. He shows the sinner what he is not—then shows him His own ineffable beauty and glory.

That woman of Samaria, how beautiful she is to Jesus! We shall see her soon.

OUR GROWTH IN GRACE.

2 Pet. iii. 18.

"Grow in grace" is the injunction of an apostle, and to it the heart and conscience of the Christian man respond. The law of growth is the law of life pre-eminently in Christianity, where the life is eternal life, and maturity in it is not the easy attainment of a day. "He that hath this hope in Him," says the apostle John, "purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 Jno. iii. 3) Put that as the limit, and who can say that he has reached it—is purified as Christ is pure? When then shall the exhortation be needless, "Grow in grace?"

There is such a thing as growth then,—as the progressive sanctification of the believing soul to God. Progress in holiness there ought to be: we ought to be this year more fully and practically Christ's than last, which is what is meant by holiness; more simply and in detail yielded up to Him, and the results of it apparent in our lives.

I speak of course to believers. There must be *life* before there can be *growth*. First of all we must be "born again," as the apostle speaks, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God," a "word," he takes care to add, "which by the *gospel* is preached unto you" (1 Pet. i. 23, 25).

It is as if expressly designed to make it more emphatic in warning to all who depend on ordinances for the reception of new life, that *Peter* (proclaimed by men as the very head of the most ritualistic system existing at this day) is inspired to speak so. It is he who tells his would-be followers, that men are born again, not in *baptism*, but by the "word of the gospel."

That word which, coming to *sinner*s, as it does, speaks of a work done *for* sinners, salvation for the lost by the death of another. It is *this* that, being received, transforms. Having had much forgiven, the soul forgiven *loves*; and that love to one who has saved is the spring and power of a new life, a life of blessed and endeared obedience.

But I do not dwell upon this at this time. I would only be understood to speak to those just now, who have learnt, if only babes, to cry, "Abba, Father." To such I would say, do not imagine that because you are saved and have conscious peace with God, that therefore you have attained the summit of Christianity. The unhappy result of making the knowledge of salvation (as many make it) the result of (it may be even a lengthy) Christian experience, has been unhappily with a good many the making *that* the end and resting point, which is in reality only the beginning of attainment, and of experiences properly Christian. And thus the gospel itself is shorn of much more than half its power and blessing. Rest and peace and blessing *for myself* are made the end of all, and rest in *salvation* substituted very often for rest in *God*. Thus how many sink into loose and easy living and call it freedom! Alas for such, and for the gospel that they boast of, if such is indeed the freedom it has given.

We need to speak out plainly. The worst evil of the day is the Laodiceanism which can speak loudly of grace with the conscience unexercised as to the responsibility which grace introduces into. Men who delight in the gospel, "the glorious gospel"—and so it truly is,—if you speak to them of other things which the God of the gospel has made known and enjoined obedience to, will answer, "such things are not necessary to salvation."

God has spoken, and men have learnt by listening to His voice (as they would have it) how and when, with safety to themselves they may disregard His voice. But is that then the fruit of the gospel? Or what worth is the piety that sits down content with salvation, and not wishing to be disturbed or unsettled by the claims of God and His truth?

And it must be remembered that, according to Scripture, truth alone sanctifies. We do not judge with the poet of latitudinarianism,

“He can't be wrong whose life is in the right,”

but rather, with the Lord Himself, “he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me” (Jno. xiv. 21). There must be an ear listening for the voice of Christ, or there cannot be the spirit of true obedience. He who does not care to hear, does not really care to obey. “My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me.” He who discards as it were from the word of God all but the gospel, has never known yet the proper power of the gospel.

But the apostle adds to his exhortation, “grow in grace,” “and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” “Our Lord,” mark, first, as well as “Saviour.” Nay, we may say, “our Lord,” and even so our “Saviour.” Rendered up into His hands who has alone title to us, we find salvation from one “exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour,” and one main part of our salvation is deliverance from other masters unto His service, whom when we “call Master and Lord” we “say well, for so He is.” He who “died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him that died and rose again for them.”

Beloved reader, before we go a step further, let me ask you this question. If you profess and call yourself a *Christian*, are you *Christ's*? Surrendered up to Him in the full joyful consciousness of His service being indeed “perfect freedom”? Do you live with every pulse of that new life He has given you, “to Him”? There is no growth in grace for you till such is the purpose of your heart. Is your eye then on Him, your ear waiting upon His voice, your hand engaged for Him, your foot treading in His pleasant paths? Are you one not only “redeemed,” but “redeemed to God”? no “hired servant,” indeed, but one to whom to live is Christ? Oh, then, beloved, we hail in you

the true and proper effects of the gospel of grace : for "the grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." (Tit. ii. 11, 14).

And now then, beloved, "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The book of His thoughts, His counsels, His mind, lies open in your hand, and truth is truth just as far as it brings home to your soul Him who is Himself the truth. He is your master. Sit in the peace of His presence at His feet and learn of Him. Do not say one syllable He utters is "no matter" or "of little profit" or "that cannot be understood." Do not be content with mere opinions or human authorities. Consult Himself. Let your faith not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17).

Be you one of "God's men" in this evil day.

And now for the more strict enquiry : "What is 'growing in grace'?" It is explained as to its moral characteristics in those words which, we have seen, the apostle joins with it : "and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

A false idea is prevalent, to the great damage of souls.

Men have forgotten to distinguish between growth in *grace* and growth in *self-consciousness* of the grace we have. They imagine that, along with their growth in grace, they are to be able more and more to find satisfaction in their practical state. They think they ought to be able to *measure* their growth and to find out to their own satisfaction how much holier they are this year than last. That they *ought* to be practically holier, I have already said. But this is a very different thing from being *conscious to myself* that I am so, and in no wise needful to it. It is quite true that God says to us, "Be ye holy, for I am holy;" and quite true therefore, that we ought to "follow after holiness." All this has been but just now insisted on. But suppose

I take another text; when the Lord says "Learn of me, for I am meek and *lowly* in heart," what am I to infer from this? That I am to be "lowly?" True. But what would you think of me if I said, "Well, I *am* getting to be quite lowly; I improve in lowliness continually." Would you say, that that *was* "lowliness" which spoke in me? Or vanity?

Is it not right then to seek to be lowly? Clearly. But lowliness is *self-forgetfulness* and not *self-consciousness*, much less *self-complacency*.

And so with holiness. "To me to live is Christ" is its principle, and "we ought to walk as He walked" is our measure. As we grow then in the knowledge of Him, do we come to think more highly of our devotedness to Him, and be better satisfied with it, or the reverse? Comparing our walk with His, as we come to know better what that walk was, shall we increase in satisfaction with our own imitation of it, or the reverse?

A plant is in my garden. By its side stands a dead stick which was put in for its support. The other day the plant was but just as high as the stick, and now it is two inches or more above. It is easy to measure the living and growing plant by the dead stick. And why? Just because it is dead. But if the stick itself were alive and growing too, I should have lost my measurement. If my knowledge of Christ were but a dead and not a living thing, a fixed measure never to increase, I might more easily perhaps measure my own growth by it. But as *He* grows upon my soul *I* dwarf. That is the result in my experience: "He must increase, I must decrease": that is the daily law, and the daily song.

Yet the aim after holiness is a right and not a fruitless thing; but occupation with Christ is the essential requisite for holiness and for growth. "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the *glory of the Lord*, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. iii. 18, marg.). It is our privilege to have done with ourselves and to be occupied with Christ. It is impossible to be occupied with Christ and not be holy. It is very possible to be occupied with holiness and be neither holy nor happy. And *happiness* is a thing closely connected with holiness, for "the joy of the Lord is your strength."

A man may be seeking holiness in order to be better in his

own eyes. Will God honour that or help him in it? He will not. "Living to *Christ*" is another matter. Nor have I got to better myself in any wise. All that came to an end where I died upon the cross of Calvary in the person of my substitute. I am *dead*—"crucified with *Christ*." I have come thus (for faith) to the end of that self which terrifies and distresses me. God has put me as a sinner for ever out of His sight in the death of His Son, and He has accepted me in that Son, risen from the dead,—in His "Beloved." How that name tells of one upon whom His eye rests with infinite delight! There am I, "in Him," never separate. My mirror, as a Christian, reflects the glory of the well beloved. I am there in Him,—"*complete in Him*,"—"made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

Better myself then, shall I? Can I better *Him*? There is my true self now. The other—I bear it about with me still, but it is no more I—the other died with *Christ*; and now if "*I live*," it is "yet *not I*, but *Christ* liveth in me." *I* died; *Christ* lives; I in Him. I may look at myself there without vanity and with full satisfaction and rest of heart. "If any man be in *Christ* he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold *all things* are become new." If I look into myself I can say no such thing. With my eye on *Christ* it is all simple. I have not, then, to better myself; I have to *walk* as He walked. And that because I am already before God identified with Him.

But I grow in grace as a man down here, as I grow in the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour. Saved,—fitted for glory,—a new man in *Christ*, the wants of my heart are all filled up in Him, and I am free to live for Him who loved me and gave Himself for me. All that I see in Him, in whom daily I see more, is power over me and in me, working out in me likeness to the one I love. I yio'd myself up to the enjoyment of love, which has answered every question, settled every doubt, supplied every need. Joy in Him brings me with full surrender of heart to the God I see in Him. *He* lives in me. I know Him. Eternal life, full blessedness, rest, power, devotedness are implied in that.

As He shines more and more into my soul, even I myself, dark as midnight in myself, reflect back His glory, and am "light in the Lord."

A WORD AS TO OUR AIM.

THE constant excuse for our defects individually or ecclesiastically, is "We cannot expect perfection here;" but this is an argument for putting up with imperfection, without any attempt to emerge from it, but the Spirit of God does not remain inactive or content in imperfection. No doubt He deals with us amidst imperfections, but where would He lead us? Surely to perfection, to the summit of every truth.

The proof of apostacy in every age, was the quiet way the people of God condescended to a limitation of His truths, and resigned themselves to it as if it were a virtue; and afterwards, when there was a recovery of some of that which had been neglected—in other words, a reformation—it was regarded as an era *par excellence*. I am not disapproving of the revival, I commend and rejoice in it, but if souls are by it deluded from seeking perfection, then I must say, it is a dangerous snare to them.

If it be right to recover truth at all, surely it is more so, to recover it perfectly. I do not deny there is imperfection everywhere; but the extent of imperfection ought never to reconcile me to it. If I am on God's side I refuse everything that is imperfect, though I be surrounded on all sides with imperfection; I do not resign myself to it, but through grace I turn aside from it, as it is manifested to me. It is not the question with me, whether I shall reach perfection here; but I *seek* this, and nothing less; and my purpose, God helping me, is neither to sanction or connive at any imperfection in doctrine or practice, but to expose and disallow it in word and deed; and the more faithful I am, the more it will be disclosed to me, and the more shall I be enabled to reach the mind of God.

In dealing with the things of God, we have too much forgotten that they *are* God's and not ours. *Man* cannot obtain perfection in anything, and we must be content with imperfection as to human things. But God does obtain it in everything; and hence, one of the worst moral symptoms in the present hour is the attempt of saints to go on with things, which in the secret of their hearts, they disapprove and condemn; and all simply with this excuse, that they see nothing better, as if seeing nothing better were any reason for remaining connected or involved with that which is not truth. * * * *

The fact is (sad, bitterly sad as it is to feel it) that the most that in many cases can be said of earnest men in this day, is that which was said of the king of Judah: "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but *not* with a perfect heart," or, as is said of another, "*not* like David his father."

J. B. S.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

(1.) Q. How can it be said, that the devil has the "power of death," seeing it is God's righteous sentence upon sin? It is God who causes death, is it not? how then can the devil have the power of it?

A. Throughout Scripture the devil is represented as having real power over man—power put forth in the infliction of every form of misery. Not only temptation and delusion are his work, but bodily sickness also in every form. Thus the woman bowed with the spirit of infirmity is declared by our Lord to be bound of Satan. (Luke xiii. 16.) Thus too He "healed all that were oppressed of the devil." (Acts x. 38.) So in the same way Satan is said to have the power of death, not surely title to inflict it at his own will,—that is God's alone, and quite another thing, but as the permitted executor of Divine Judgment.

Christ however has come, and through death destroyed (or annulled) him that had the power of death, that, *in the case of believers*, this power might be broken, and their souls delivered from the bondage of the fear it caused. For one who is Christ's Satan's power is gone. Yet even in that case, one might be as a matter of discipline "*delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh*," the Lord working out by it His own purposes of grace—"that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Of such unwitting service to a saint, Job's history furnishes us with abundant illustration. The wiles and power of the devil are, thank God, limited and controlled absolutely by a greater than he.

(2.) Q. Does the Jerusalem spoken of as the "Bride, the Lamb's wife," represent another bride beside the ascended Church? or does it refer to Jerusalem purified in millennial times, and the glory of the whole earth? or does it refer to times

after the millennium, as Rev. xxi. 22 speaks of the city having no temple, and when Jerusalem is restored during the millennium, both temple and sacrifices are to be again, are they not?

A. An answer in part to this will be found in a paper in the last No. of S. W. entitled "The Earthly and the Heavenly." Beyond doubt, the Jerusalem of Rev. xxi. is heavenly, for it is called **the**, and comes down out of heaven. It should be noticed, that Rev. xxi. 1-3 is a continuation of the 20th chapter, and therefore clearly is *after* the millennium as given there. But from verse 9 the vision is separate and distinct, and goes back (as I believe) to the millennium, as it supposes the existence of nations (v. 24) and speaks of "healing" for them (ch. xxii. 2.) But the *city* is the same throughout.

Jewish ordinances as to sacrifice will undoubtedly be returned to during the millennium, as the last chapters of Ezekiel plainly teach; memorial of course in character.

(3.) Q. What am I to understand by Jno. iii. 13: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven?" Were there not persons translated in Old Testament days?

A. Of course Enoch and Elijah had long before "ascended up to heaven." That is not the question here. The connection of the passage clears up (as usual) any seeming difficulty. Thus in the previous verse the Lord has been asking, "If I have told you earthly things and you believe not, *how will ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?*" and then adds, "and no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven." That is to say, they must have His testimony about heaven alone, nobody else was there who could give them any. His words have thus no kind of reference to Enoch and Elijah, but to people on earth who could give them witness of heavenly things. None else could but Himself; for none had ascended up to heaven.

(4.) Q. Suppose a brother or brethren should bring evil into the assembly, and those who would put it out cannot, because of being in the minority; would it be right for that minority to leave that assembly? and if so, what would be their duty or privilege? I mean plainly, should they do nothing, go into system, or break bread by themselves?

A. If a company of people professedly gathered together to the name of the Lord Jesus knowingly allowed evil in their midst, their association would be a mere dishonour to His name, were they ever so much believers; or rather, that would make it all the worse. Such an association it would be the bounden duty of every one who would be true to His Lord, to quit at all costs, alone or not. Of course, I suppose the evil to be plain,—what the word of God would characterize as such: for instance moral wickedness, or doctrines which dishonour the Lord in either person or work.

Those who thus left would surely do right in meeting together to break bread among themselves. They would be wrong in not doing so, and worse in running hither and thither at their own will. God's principles abide and claim *my* adherence, however little men may have adhered to them. It is the devil's subtlety to try and make the evil and failure of some the means of inducing others to give up principles which are none the less God's because man fails in carrying them out. But the question is often with many at bottom still unsettled, as to whether the path they walk on is really God's. Here is the true secret of wavering and instability.

(5.) Q. Is the believer ever said to be united to Christ in His death? If not, what are we to learn from Gal. ii. 20, Rom. vi. 4-8, Col. ii. 12? What *is* union with Christ? our being in Him and He in us, *or* our being quickened together, raised up, and made sit together in heavenly places in Him, or our being baptized into His body by the Holy Ghost? Is the baptism of the Holy Ghost an individual or a corporate thing? And what is the difference between the baptism and the sealing of the Spirit?

A. Union with Christ is by the Spirit: "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" and thus united to Christ the Head. Very often, in the minds of people, *identification* is confounded with *union*, but they are quite distinct. The head is *not* identified with the members of the body: it *is* united to them. Husband and wife are *not* identified with one another; they are "united" and "one."

My being "*in* Christ" is not union but identification. My personality is as it were dropped and lost in His. God sees nothing but Christ; not me "together with" Him, but "*in*" Him.

Christ being in me is also identification, but in another way. It is as power for life and walk that He is in me. *I* have died,—died with Him; *He*, not *I*, lives. When I can say so, that is real power.

Our being quickened together with Christ is again not union, but a different idea. It is not identification, does not mean that Christ's quickening from the dead was ours, for we ourselves as dead in sin both need, and get, life. We are as individuals separately and distinctly quickened. The "with Him" here implies this, that the bringing up of Christ from the dead involved necessarily the quickening of those chosen in Him (Eph. i. 4), and the same power wrought in each case. But even quickening together is not the uniting of those quickened.

As to being united with Christ in His death it is a mistake arising from confounding, as I have said, identification with union. He died *for* me, not *with* me. He lives both *for* and *with* me. I am joined to Him as a living Man risen from the dead. "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit" could not apply to death but only to life.

Yet that we are "dead with Christ" is of course perfectly true according to Rom. vi. and Col. ii. But how? Why, "our *old man* is crucified with Him" (Rom. vi. 6). We as *sinners* died with Him. Can that be *union*? "Our old man" and Christ? I am sure those who argue so cannot have weighed the force of the expression. Plainly it is we as sinners,—as children of Adam—needed death; the living man in Christ neither needs to die nor can. And if I say, I am dead with Christ, dead to sin, dead to the world, I simply express by this that transfer of His death to my account, that reckoning of it by me as mine, because of what I was, and that it was *for* me,—my death—He died. I reckon myself dead with Him as to all I once was,—dead as a sinner and so *to* sin,—dead as a man of the world and so *to* the world.

Gal. ii. 40, carries that one point further. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet *not I*"—well, who then? Christ alone. *Not I*, but Christ liveth in me. That is his moral transformation. Christ lives in Paul henceforth; all is Christ. Blessed beyond expression where it is so. It is a life of joy and of power, the only one. "And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, *who loved ME, and gave himself for ME.*"

We are united to a living Christ then, risen and glorified ; we are quickened to *be* united, because He could not unite Himself with the dead in sins. So quickened—"After that ye believed" (Eph. i. 13),—we are "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."

It is the stamp of God put upon His own, the mark of the "little flock" He has purchased and called. Sealing is of course not uniting. But the Holy Spirit who as dwelling individually in the saints puts the seal of saintship on them, *also* by His *own* presence with them all unites them into one body. Not faith, nor life merely, but the baptism of the Spirit does this. (1 Cor. xii. 13).

Baptism implies the initiating into a new state, the passing away of the old : this everywhere. The baptism of the Spirit is for us the initiating into the body of Christ, and thus uniting with Him. Sealing is of individuals, the mark of approbation, the stamp of ownership, and the security of those sealed. (Comp. Eph. iv. 30, Rev. vii. 3, ix. 4).

CONFIDENCE.

Lord, it belongs not to my care,
 Whether I die or live ;
 To love and serve Thee is my share,
 And this Thy grace must give.
 If life be long I will be glad,
 That I may long obey ;
 If short, yet why should I be sad,
 To soar to endless day.

Christ leads me through no darker rooms,
 Than he went through before ;
 And he that to God's kingdom comes,
 Must enter by *His* door.
 Come! then, since grace has made me meet,
 Thy blessed face to see ;
 For if thy work on earth be sweet,
 What will thy glory be?

Then, then, shall end my sad complaints,
 My desert pilgrim days—
 End in the triumph of the Saints—
 In endless songs of praise.
 My knowledge of that life is small ;
 The eye of faith is dim ;
 But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,
 And I shall be with him.

"SOUND WORDS."

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"BAPTISM UNTO DEATH."

THERE are two very distinct parts in the testimony which God has been giving to man. His testimony of grace, the sweet and suited witness given in His beloved Son, could not be given without long testimony of another kind, preparatory to it. Though in His heart from the beginning, as His gospel surely was,—“promised” even, “by the prophets” of the old dispensation,—it was long before His heart could freely utter it. That glory of God, which was His “goodness,” a veil covered, through which few rays could pierce. He dwelt in the thick darkness. His face was hidden: none could look on it and live. Weary years went by, in which Job’s question, “How shall man be just with God?” was still a question. Prophets even, who “*prophesied of the grace that should come,*” enquired diligently as to the coming salvation, “searching *what the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify,*” and yet got but this answer, that “*not unto themselves they did minister.*” (1 Pet. iv. 11, 12.) Of how grave import must that have been in the eye of God, on account of which He could so long suspend the utterance of that which He could freely give up the Son of His love that He might utter—His own “glad tidings!”

Yes, there was a needs be,—a “due time” in the world’s history for Christ to come and for the glad news of salvation to be proclaimed. There was a “wisdom of God,” in which, “*after that the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*” (1 Cor. i. 21.) The world was to be proved bankrupt in wisdom before God’s wisdom could be declared. And in the same way, men had to be shewn, after long ages of patient dealing with them, “*yet without strength*” and “*ungodly,*” before the “due time” could arrive for Christ to die. (Rom. v. 6.)

To bankrupt and beggared man, *two* things were to be preached together in His name whom men with wicked hands had crucified,—“**REPENTANCE**, and *remission of sins*.” (Luke xxiv. 47.)

On man's part, as what God still claimed from him, lost and ruined as he was, yea, *because* that—*repentance*.

On His own, freely bestowed, but yet *answered* to that repentance which He claimed from man—“*remission of sins*.”

Both, and both together, “in His name.”

Thus the gospel goes forth in the end of the ages of preparatory dealing with men, bearing upon its face the *moral* of those ages not in vain gone by, and joining to it its own peculiar “good tidings of great joy.” The wisdom of God does not set aside, but confirms and combines with it the wisdom of the past, divine also, and now in its maturity manifested so: wisdom that waited for the “due time” to come, and wisdom that acted in the “due time” come—one and the same all through.

“Repentance,” the moral and issue of the past.

“Remission of sins,” the revelation of the present.

Both bound together by the zone of that divine “love, which is the bond of perfectness,” and which the gospel manifests.

At the dividing line between the past and the present, the cross stands. The full end of man's history is reached there. Bankrupt in goodness, desperate in evil, hopeless as regards further trial, must he indeed be, who has put to death with mockery and scorn, the Lord of glory. Yet you and I have done it, reader. Yes, though our *hands* never did it, and the lapse of eighteen centuries lies between, not thus can we escape the solemn charge. Our *hearts* are accomplices to the awful deed. The world at one time is the world at any other. Man is *man*: there is no “second man” outside of the One crucified by man.

And this gives its true character to the gospel, for it is evident that a “good news” for a lost and ruined creature must be equal to his need. And if the trial of man be over, and his sentence gone forth from God, as indeed it is, no doing better will meet his case. He who believes not in Jesus is “condemned already.” Yea, “all the world is guilty before (or subject to the judgment of) God.” (Rom. iii. 19, *margin*.) To call upon those in such a condition to do better, would be to ignore the judgment already pronounced. Hence the “repentance” to which

man is so solemnly called, can be by no means reformation. To that men were exhorted long before. Long before had the wicked man been exhorted to forsake his ways, to turn from his wickedness and do that which was lawful and right, and save his soul alive. It was all over now. The "Son of Man" had been "lifted up from the earth," and the "judgment of the world" come. (John xii. 31, 32.)

But what, then, was this repentance? It had already been shewn forth in word and deed. Before the cross,—before the formal presentation even to men of the One whom men rejected, —as the needed preparation even for His presentation, the voice of the preacher of repentance had been heard. From the wilderness of Judea it had reached to the Great Sea westward, and northward filled the valley of the Jordan as far as Galilee of the Gentiles. It had been heard in the streets of Jerusalem, and heard as no unmeaning thing. For the "word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness; and he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." "And there went out to him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins."

This was the call, and thus was it responded to. But before we look at this more closely, let us look at the preacher, and the people to whom he does his errand.

As to the people, they were the little remnant that had come out of the Babylonish captivity. Once the people of God, they had already been solemnly, for their sins, disowned as His. He had named them by Hosea "Lo-Ammi," "not my people;" and that sentence had never been recalled. Doubtless the mercy of God yet lingered over them, and a little remnant had been suffered to return, build again a temple to which no visible glory was any more vouchsafed, and feebly imitate the form of worship in better and bygone days. The real reason for all this was what was clung to as a hope still by many, Messiah was to come, the Lord whom they sought, suddenly to that temple, the latter glory of that house was to be greater than the former, and in that place the Lord of Hosts had promised He would give peace. (Mal. iii. 1, Hag. ii. 9.)

Still they had forfeited all, and upon what ground could he

who came as a messenger before the Lord to prepare His way, come among them? Must not righteousness go before peace? Must he not call them to recognize what and where they were—to own the ruin from which no hand but Jehovah's would suffice to pluck them? Was it not fitting and needful that the deliverance should be owned for what it was? All this finds its answer in the Baptist and his message.

He had grown up in the wilderness as one outside them all. In raiment and in food he would owe them nothing; the one was of camel's hair; his meat, locusts and wild honey. He stood apart from the cities, preaching in the wilderness which for thirty years had hidden him; as if the Lord had said to him, as to another Jeremiah, "Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them." His preaching was of repentance, and his baptism was the baptism of repentance; and they who came out to him were all baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

That it was "in Jordan" he baptized, gave it deeper meaning. To us, at least, there is nothing obscure in the significance of that river which meets us so often in the chequered history of that people of Israel, so many of the events of which, we are assured by the apostle (1 Cor. x.) "happened unto them for types" (Verse 6, *marg.*) We sing in hymns familiar to us all of that river of death with its "green fields beyond the swelling flood," the land of our possession and our rest. That river of Jordan Israel in their youth had crossed, the flood dividing under an almighty hand, to give them passage. Now to that stream the same Almighty hand was leading them back, no more to divide as once its waters, but to baptize them as sinners in the river of death, to death. Yes, the "wages of sin is death." All was over really. Judgment was just ready to be pronounced, and the call was to anticipate that judgment by one self-pronouncement, and cast themselves upon a mercy which might even yet suffice, but which *alone* could.

"They were all baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." Their *sins* were their title to his baptism,—title sure, simple, unchallengeable. Those who had so well earned their "wages" might put in their claim without presumption.

That "baptism unto death" was also "the baptism of repentance." So it is expressly stated; and if we need still to ask therefore

what the repentance is, to which God is calling lost and ruined men, the question finds its plain and ready answer by these banks of Jordan. The repentance God requires of sinners is to own simply what they are, and what the wages they have so justly earned, to take one's place with the "mouth stopped" as only "guilty before God." It is for this purpose the law has spoken, (Rom. iii. 19) which speaking of life to the keepers of it, is "found to be unto death," (Rom. vii. 10) because none *have* kept it, so that "as many as are of the works of the law"—upon that ground—are under the curse." (Gal. iii. 10.)

Thus as "by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. iii. 20.) the "moral and issue" of it is the confession of sin. If as many as are of it are under the curse, the due place to which it brings is to the place of curse—the mouth stopped, as guilty before God;—the place of ruin and of death which Jordan figures. If the taking of that place in death were the baptism of repentance, then we can understand the fitness and force of what is written of these self-judged sinners: "they were all baptized of him in Jordan, *confessing their sins.*"

How vain and unsuited to that solemn place were a mouth filled with promises of amendment! easy drafts upon a bank at which they had no credit,—promises for a future which was not in their hands,—promises to do what neither had they ever done, nor man anywhere, for "*all the world*" was thus "guilty before God." Reader, look back over your past, that sad, sad past, and tell me, Can you trust yourself for the future? Ah! if you are speaking thus to God, you have not come down to Jordan, you are not even one of John's disciples yet, and much less Christ's! You are not come down yet to death. *Death* is the end of self, but you are parading self before the Searcher of the hearts of men, and who is searching yours,—telling Him of what you will do and be. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." "Either make the *tree* good, and his fruit good; or else make the *tree* corrupt and his fruit corrupt." Is the "*tree* good," my reader? Are you going to make it so? "You must be *born again.*" And how? "Not of blood, nor of the *will of the flesh*, nor of the WILL OF MAN, but of GOD." (Jno. i. 13.)

Do you ask, "what can we do, then?" *Nothing* as to salvation; *nothing* as to good work. But if you are a sinner, own it;

it is written, " If we *confess our sins*, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Take the place of confessed guilt and need. The God who gave His Son up for us all has pledged Himself to put away the guilt and to meet the need,— to *do* the things you never could. He has commanded repentance and remission of sins to be linked together, and preached together, in His name. He has bid you confess alone your *sins*, and He will forgive them, tells you he is " faithful" to do it. And not only so, but to make the *tree* good — " to cleanse you from all unrighteousness."

Do you ask, how? Who was it that came from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of Him, and whom John was for forbidding, saying, " I have need to be baptized of Thee?" Do you remember His reply? " Suffer it," He says, " to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." And he suffered Him.

Do you know how " righteousness" was fulfilled by Him?

Was it simply by His subjection to an ordinance designed for sinners?

Was *He* one?

Was it then designed for Him? or was it on His own account? He could stoop to it, and do it " to fulfil righteousness?"

Surely we must look below the surface if we would understand this, and yet the meaning is not far to seek.

Sin had brought Israel to that place of death, that sin in which each individual there baptized confessed his part. But was there not a " baptism" also to which sin brought Jesus, the sin which in grace He took upon Himself? And if *sin* brought Him down to death, because laid on Him, did not righteousness lay Him down to death as One upon whom it was so laid?

He died then to fulfil righteousness,—righteousness that called for the death of the sinner. But the question is, In what way does His baptism here bear upon that death? Or how are His works here, as to fulfilling righteousness, connected with the fulfilment of righteousness in His death?

Very simply, in this way; that, inasmuch as the baptism of John was on the people's part the confession of sin and that which was its due, so the Lord's baptism was His own solemn seal put upon that confession in both its parts. But for Him who having

no personal need stooped to that figure of death,—how distinctly that other baptism of which He afterwards spoke rose up before Him! He was indeed to put His seal upon these sinners' confession of their guilt and of the death which was its due by stooping once more, not to the figure but to the dread reality of what it was indeed! How much it cost Him to bear this witness to man's condition before a holy God! "thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness!" Yea, and He did, when He could only do it at the cost of bearing the sins whose due He witnessed to, in the death of the cross.

How fitly the heavens opened then, and, while the anointing Spirit came down upon Him, the Father's voice gave its attestation of delight! "Therefore," said He at another time, and His words seem like His own comment upon the scene—"therefore doth My Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again."

But what shall we say to all this? Can self-righteousness live in presence of the Cross of the Son of God? Was it not my due solemnly borne witness to in the very blood shed to meet it? God Himself could save me at no less a cost. Himself could do nothing but condemn *me*, even when His Son stood in my place! How it humbles, but how it blesses me! Is it presumption to claim that cross He took,—*Barabbas' cross*—as mine? He in His wondrous grace is on it, true; but it is mine. I can see He has come down even to *me*—yes, even to the sinner's place, for me the sinner. I *stoop*—if it be stooping, to claim my due of death; but I stoop to death to find Jesus there for me—and mine.

What a delight for the sinners who had come to Jordan's banks, to find if sin had brought them there, it had brought Him there, too, no less. Their baptism of repentance was indeed "for the remission of sins," for it had brought together *Him and them*,—the sinner and the Saviour. And for us also, how does the Apostle present in the same figure of baptism, the same precious truth? "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized unto His death?" No less, mark, is it baptism unto death, but *His* death. Have we not been down to Jordan too? he asks. But then for us, Jordan is indeed divided. The only death we know is "His death." He

has known it, been in it, passed through it, left for us a path to go over dry-shod to that resurrection-shore, where in living Presence He awaits us. Do you know that path, reader? *Through* death, owning it yours, yet never touched by it! Do you see yet how "repentance and confession of sins" are linked as to be preached together in His name? Can you understand how it is that "if we confess our *sins*,"—not our being better than others, nor our good resolves—God "is *faithful* and just to forgive us our sins?" "Faithful" because Jesus died for *sinners*, and your confession of your sins in view of that is the putting in your sure, your simple, your unquestionable title to all the value of His death! But, for this, you must repent, you must give up yourself as ruined and undone, you must come down to death, to Jordan, to the utter end of *you*. Be not afraid. You will find the Son of God there. Plead your sins. God is faithful and just to forgive you your sins, and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

F. W. G.

PERFECT, YET PERFECTED.

"Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up supplications and prayers, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared [marg., for his piety]: Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him."—Heb. v. 7—9.

THERE is marvellous beauty about the above words, letting us, as they do, into some of the secret wonders of the cross. What a picture do we get here of One, who though He was as to His person so exalted, yet came down to all the depths of human woe and suffering that had come in through sin. And although it was grace alone that brought Him down into this place where He could be a sufferer, and no necessity for being there but love for others and obedience to His Father's will; yet, when in that place He undertook to fill, nothing could perfect Him as the great Captain of our salvation but suffering.

What a tale this tells of where man was, in the place of alienation and distance from God, where sorrow was entailed upon him as a sinner, and on the other hand of the love of God

in giving up His only begotten Son to shame and degradation and to go into and taste fully all the bitter fruits of man's departure from God.

It is to this God bids us look to learn His love. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "Hereby perceive we love, because He laid down His life for us."

But it was a new place for the Son to take, to bring up out of ruin in which self will had plunged them those who were to be His "many brethren." Perfect in Himself always, He had yet to be perfected for this new place and nothing but suffering could fit Him for it. When He took a place among men He had to learn obedience by the things that he suffered—learn it, because it was a new thing to Him who came from heaven's glory into the place of dependence as a man, to take up man's creature obligations, and fulfil *his* responsibilities.

But then He learned it, not as one in whom there was any perverseness or self will to be corrected, for He could say, speaking of His Father's will, "I do *always* the things that please Him." But, step by step, as the path He trod opened up before Him, new difficulties were before Him. Where all was disobedience and sin around Him, to persevere steadily in the path marked out for Him brought suffering. He had to renounce the ease in which man had sunk down, to go contrary in every thing to the thoughts and feelings of men—to find instead of sympathy, reproaches, instead of comforters, accusers. The world, man, Satan, all withstood Him in His blessed path. But in each new difficulty the voice that said, "This is the way, walk thou in it," was implicitly obeyed.

Perfection was not reached thus until upon the cross He gave up His life for His enemies. His life of sympathy spent among men, acquainting Himself practically with their sorrows, and learning the difficulty of the path of faith, were His qualification for filling the place of a faithful and compassionate high priest. His death under the just displeasure of God against man's sin, as offering satisfaction for those sins, fully qualified Him as the

captain of our salvation. But all this perfection, so precious to the one who, in the consciousness of sin and guilt and unfitness for God's presence in himself, has "fled for refuge to the hope set before us in the gospel," was gained by Him in the path of suffering and could have been in no other way, and being made perfect, He "became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him; called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedec."

But there is another thought here to which the spirit of God gives prominence, and that is the "piety" which was so perfect in Him towards God, that it is given as the ground on which He was heard—"and was heard in that he feared," or, as in the margin, "for His piety."

To estimate at all the perfection of His piety, we must remember the place He had to fill—the work He had to accomplish as the "one Mediator between God and man." This work was twofold—if we view it in detail and all its bearings, manifold—but as to its main features, when viewed as a whole, consisting of the reconciling of man to God by the presentation of God's character in grace before men's eyes, as it is said "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father He hath declared him"; and on the other hand, offering the satisfaction to God's righteousness that was needed about sin, that love might have free course.

All this was surely no easy task in a world where ignorance of God prevailed; an ignorance based upon wilful blindness and the love of all that was evil before God.

To have displayed God's power in righteousness would have been far easier work, and man had no right to expect anything else but judgment for his sin. But to make known that power in grace involved the suffering in unwearied patience all that the brutality of man led on by Satan, could inflict. It was love, not only by hatred. "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause."

Yet it was not love overcome by hatred, but persevering in its own blessedness to overcome of itself every obstacle. But what

other could He be who trod this path of love amongst his enemies but "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"? One from whom men hid their faces, whose loving heart was ever open to show pity to others in their sorrows, but who found none in man for Himself. Discouragement, defilement, Satan, death, all found their antidote in Him, and every one could tell how willingly His power was used for others, while for Himself hunger and thirst, weariness and sorrow never called that power into exercise to avert the sorrow or to alleviate the sufferings.

Men would accept his deliverances who did not want Himself who wrought them. They had nothing but reproach and shame for Him. Disciples, notwithstanding all their boasted faithfulness, left Him in the hands of His enemies alone. No cup of sorrow that a sinless one could come into and taste in grace for others that He did not drink of. Doubtless He had His joys, but these were all drawn from nothing in this scene, although known in the path of fellowship with the Father in His thoughts in which He ever walked.

But His trials were not alone *from* man, although *for* man. His cry upon the cross, My God! my God! why hast *Thou* forsaken me, tells of sorrow from another source, wrath against sin—divine wrath—the cup filled full by us He must drink. But even here His perfections were the more manifest, His piety shone out more brightly, because more fully tested.

The tempter's voice, listened to by our first parents, breeds dissatisfaction in their hearts with God and His ways, even when all that love could think of to minister to their happiness, surrounded them. But here is One who came from heaven, with all the consciousness of perfect righteousness in all His ways towards God and man, yet brought into the "dust of death" by the very One He always trusted perfectly. The object of man's hatred and derision—the homage of a king paid to Him in mockery—reproach had broken His heart—He looked for comforters, but found none, and having now to ask in conscious righteousness, "Why hast *Thou* forsaken me?" yet nothing but the most perfect piety of heart toward God is found in Him. He justifies the One who condemns Him. His heart no power of undeserved suffering could move to distrust of God. The prince of the world came, but found nothing in Him. Sin on

Him, as bearing its penalty for others, there was. Sin in Him there was none. The attacks of Satan, the mockery and ill treatment of men, His own whom He had loved and cared for—faithfully forsaking Him in the hour of His need, the displeasure of God against the sins of others He was bearing, the hand of Him He had trusted fully and from His earliest days, bringing Him into the dust of death, only the more brought out His piety.

What loveliness for the Father to look down upon! What fragrance there was for Him went up from the cross of Jesus our Lord, "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour."

We read then, that He was "heard from the horns of the unicorns;" this passage in Hebrews tells us upon what ground, it was because of His piety. Not till He had fully satisfied the claims of divine holiness against us surely. Piety under such sufferings, in such a place, where the deeper the waters that rolled over His blessed head, the more manifest it became how unshaken His confidence in God was.

The Spirit who was to take of the things of Jesus and shew them to us delights to tell us this, to bear witness to the unfeigned trust in God that marked His ways. Had there been one thought of complaint or murmuring at His lot, one moment's distrust of Him in that hour, all would have been lost. But His unfailing piety is answered by deliverance.

What fills His thoughts when all is over is to declare His name who had thus dealt with Him, showing us how thorough was His justification of the ways of Him who had made His holy soul an offering for sin. His prayers for deliverance are ended in praise, in the midst of His redeemed ones, to the God who, when He cried unto Him, heard.

How perfect the Father's delight in the Son and His work, and the Son's delight in His Father's ways! Grace brings us into fellowship with those thoughts—fellowship with the One who is His God and our God, His Father and our Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

May we know how to value that fellowship into which we have been called.

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE INSPIRED BOOKS.

LEVITICUS.—(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15.)

THE word translated "meat-offering" (Ch. ii.) means, in the first place, simply a "gift" or "present," but which may be, and most frequently is in Scripture, offered to the Lord, an "offering." It could be used therefore with reference to a sacrifice, as in Gen. iv. 4, but most commonly implies a bloodless offering, as in the chapter before us, and is often put in contradistinction to sacrifice. "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not." (Ps. xl. 6.)

The meat-offering is here distinctly stated to be a bloodless one, an offering of fine flour. It is thus a striking exception to the usual character of these Levitical offerings, and though offered to the Lord, no thought of atonement is connected with it. "It is the *blood* that maketh *atonement* for the soul." (Ch. xvii. 11.)

In the order adopted here, the meat-offering comes as a sort of appendix to the burnt-offering, and you find it connected with it in this way frequently elsewhere. "A young bullock with his meat-offering," &c. And in Num. xxiii. the meat-offering is proportioned to the burnt-offering: "three tenth deals of flour for a meat-offering, for one *bullock*, and two tenth deals of flour for one *ram*," &c.

Now it is plain the "fine flour" speaks to us of Christ as much as the blood of atonement does, and it speaks here of Christ as an offering to God too, an "offering of sweet savour." But it is what the Lord was in *life*, rather than in *death*,—a life continually offered up to God, as even in death He was. "Sacrifice and offering" are fulfilled in Him who, taking the "body prepared Him," said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." As says the Apostle, "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." (Eph. v. 2.) "For us" He gave Himself, but "to God," and that whether in life or death. The blood of *atonement* became thus the blood of *sprinkling*, the *cleansing* blood offered up "to God" in atonement, it becomes "for us" the blood of reconciliation. So too our "bread of life," the fine flour of our meat-offering, was put first upon the altar. As He Himself tells us (Jno. vi. 27) "that meat (or food) which en-

dureth unto everlasting life, the Son of Man shall give unto you." Why? "For Him hath God the Father *sealed*." Hath put on Him (that is) the stamp of His own approbation.

Like the "shew-bread," or (as it means) the bread set before God, which afterward became the food of the priests, it is He who, living before God, and for His eye alone, has had witness given to Him of divine delight in Him, who satisfies with all the fulness that is in Himself the deep desires of the soul. God's object it is that becomes ours. God's Beloved, too, that becomes ours. And thus have we "fellowship with the Father."

The meat-offering thus presents Christ not laying down His life in atonement for our sins, but furnishing us with that which alone satisfies the soul, His fulfilment of His own assurance, "he that cometh unto me shall never hunger."

The manna has in one aspect given us this, as "the old corn of the land" will afterwards give it in another. But here, where God speaks to us out of his own dwelling-place, it is the deep and intimate view of what underlies both, the intrinsic blessedness which is in Him who is, in one view, as the Heavenly One in His humiliation upon earth, the manna, and, as gone up into the glory which was His eternally, "the old corn of the land," -- the bread *of* heaven, as well as the bread *from* heaven.

But here He who indeed knoweth the Son tells us *what* this heavenly bread is. He points out to us the *fineness* of the flour, where there was no roughness, no unevenness. Just as "There was no unevenness in Jesus; no predominant quality to produce the effect of giving Him a distinctive character. He was, though despised and rejected of men, the perfection of human nature. The sensibilities, firmness and decision, (though that attached itself also to the principle of obedience) elevation, and calm meekness which belong to human nature, all found their perfect place in Him."* There was nothing deficient; there was nothing in excess.

Upon this "fine flour," the "oil," the unction of the Holy Ghost, could be poured. This is specially marked out in the first place here (ch. ii. 1). It was that "sealing" which we have just heard the Lord speak of, the witness of divine approbation.

* Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, vol. i. p. 121/47.

That which with us, as put upon the blood which cleanses us, (see ch. xiv. 17) is the witness to the perfectness of our redemption, was with Him the witness to natural perfection, which, tried even by the fire of Divine judgment, came up with the odour of a sweet smell (as the frankincense in the type) before God.

The memorial taken out, the remnant of the meat-offering belonged to Aaron and his sons, as a most holy thing. For only as priests can we have fellowship with God in what His Son is. All Christians now, it is expressly told us (1 Pet. ii. 5), are what the sons of Aaron prefigured then.

In the other forms of the meat-offering other particulars relative to God's Holy Ono are given. Thus in the 5th and 6th verses we have the mingling with oil distinct from the anointing with oil. Thus in the production of His humanity the Holy Ghost had part, and He who was born of the Virgin, was even as begotten in time, declared the Son of God: "Thou art my Son, *this day* have I begotten Thee" (Ps. ii. 7); words which, with reference to His eternal Sonship, could have no place.

For us also there is mingling as well as anointing, but the *mingling* is for us "new birth," *after* which the Spirit of God seals and anoints us (Eph. i. 13).

Two things were forbidden absolutely to be mixed with the meat-offering, as representing what had no part in Christ. "Leaven," the first-mentioned, is always a type of evil: "the leaven of malice and wickedness." (1 Cor. v. 8.) The one passage in which it is commonly supposed to have a different application, most conclusively proves the reverse; for the "woman" in our Lord's parable (Matt. xiii. 23,) is doing exactly the thing forbidden in the chapter before us. It is the type of the professing church adulterating the pure bread of life with corrupt doctrine. Alas, the "leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees," and the "leaven of Herod" (which is expressly said to be false doctrine, Matth. xvi. 12) have indeed been so mixed with the doctrine of Christ, and *formalism, infidelity, and worldliness* have leavened well-nigh the whole of professing Christianity. Thank God, His Word at any rate abides, and Christ is there for our souls fresh and pure as ever.

In the oblation of the first-fruits, however (verse 12), leaven

was offered, but not burnt in the fire of the altar. (ch. xxiii. 17.) That took place at Pentecost, a thing that suggests the interpretation. It is the presentation of the *saints* as first-fruits to God, not Christ but His people, fruit of that "corn of wheat," which, had it not fallen into the ground and died, would have abode alone, but, having died, brings forth much fruit. (John xii. 24.) In the saints, however, leaven is still found, and to meet this the *sin-offering* accompanies this oblation of the first-fruits.

The second thing forbidden to be mixed with the meat-offering was "honey." It is the type of natural sweetness, not evil, but which soon cloy, and at its best will not do for an offering to God. Natural affection, thus, men who know not God may, and do, have; and it is all right, and sweet enough to taste,—a mother's, a brother's love, for instance. Yet, "He who could say, 'Mother, behold thy son,' and 'Son, behold thy mother,'—even in the terrible moment of the Cross, when all was finished—could also say, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?' when He was in the simplest accomplishment of His service. He was a stranger to His own mother's sons, as Levi in the blessing of Moses the man of God,—Levi who was offered as an offering to God of the people (Numb. viii. 11,) 'who said unto his father and his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children.'"^{*}

On the other hand, from the meat-offering *salt* was never to be lacking. It is the active energy of holiness that keeps out corruption; *as* such, a type of perpetuity, as of that which God approved: it was "the salt of the covenant of thy God," the pledge of His presence and eternal favour.

In the last form of the offering, "the meat-offering of the first-fruits," (ver. 14–16) we have one closing picture of this blessed and perfect man; "green ears of corn dried by the fire," yet "corn beaten out of *full* ears." For this "corn of wheat" had no blight, no mildew, there was no failure in its development amid all circumstances that (if any could) might hinder. Yet prematurely (if we may say so) the fire did its work upon Him. "His visage was so marred more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men." "A man of sorrows, and

* Synopsis, vol. i. pp. 132, 134, '60.

acquainted with grief." His "strength dried up like a potsherd." And worst of all, and sorest, in the hour of His bitter trial, forsaken of all else, there was wrung out of the One, dumb as a sheep before his shearers, the agonizing cry, "My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?"

Do we know the blessedness of which *He* spoke, who said, "He that eateth *me*, even he shall live by *me*?"

F. W. G.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

(1.) Q. What is the typical meaning of the Serpent of Brass, Numbers xvi?

A. The words of the Lord Jesus to Nicodemus of course furnish us with the answer, and point to the Brazen Serpent as a type of Himself upon the cross, but in this particular character as "made sin for us." It was the similitude of what had bitten them and was causing death. The brass of which it was made is constantly the type of righteousness in connection with judgment; hence we have the altar of burnt offering, and the laver, both of brass, and in Rev. i. Christ's feet "like to fine brass as if they burned in a furnace." It would therefore show us God's judgment against sin, borne by Christ, "in the likeness of sinful flesh," and "made sin for us."

The connection morally with the 5th verse must be noticed, as it is upon the occasion of the people loathing the manna, the type of Christ in his humiliation, as "light food," that the fiery serpents are sent; shewing us sin, heightened by the rejection of Christ, doing its deadly work.

(2.) How far can we say the atonement was for the world?

In the 1 John ii. 2, Christ is said to be a propitiation—the equivalent of atonement, "for the whole world." In 2 Cor. v. we have "if one died for all, then were all dead." Again Rom. iii. 23, the righteousness of God is stated to be towards all—for there is no difference, for all have sinned; and the basis for this is declared as being the "redemption which is in Christ Jesus." Chapter v. 18., supplies us with another passage in which the same truth is unequivocally stated.

One can see then that the atonement is viewed as a work done by which God can save any body that comes, and enabling Him to throw open His doors and invite every body to partake of the feast. And to limit the atonement to the putting away of the sins of those who believe, would be as if one should limit the resources of one who had given a universal invitation, by the actual number of his guests.

(3.) Q. What are the earthly things and what the heavenly things spoken of by the Lord to Nicodemus?

Entering into the kingdom of God is the subject of our Lord's discourse. That kingdom embraces earthly and heavenly things. A Jew for the millennium needed to be born again as much as one does to enter heaven. A master in Israel ought to have known this, if he had read Ezekiel xxxvi. 24-28.

(4.) Q. What is the difference between the righteousness of God justifying the sinner who believes (Rom. iii. 21-26, and i. 17,) and his being made the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. v. 21)? And is 1 Cor. i. 30 the same as the imputed righteousness of Rom. iv.?

Ans. The "righteousness of God" is His righteous character, which, as manifested on the Cross in the perfect judgment of sin, is clearly shewn to be *for* the sinner, not against him. In the language of Rom. iii. 23 it is "*unto* all,"—that is, "*for* everybody," on the very ground that everybody is "*guilty before God*" (ver. 19.) When any one therefore believes, and *as* guilty takes refuge where God has provided it, in the Cross, this "*righteousness*" is not only *for*, but "*upon*," or rather "*over*" him, as a broad shield which shelters from all attack. Thus *in* coming to the Cross, "*we confess our sins*" as the very thing that Jesus died for, and find God faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John i. 9): *faithful* as well as just, because, if Jesus died for sinners, our plea of *being* sinners is our *title* to what His death has wrought for sinners.

But our being, as believers, "*made the righteousness of God in Him*" is a further thought. God "*has made Him who knew no sin, to be sin for us*;" clearly then, God's righteousness, which has raised Him from the grave and set Him in glory, has given

us also as the fruit of His work, a place in Him. *Righteousness* has done it; and we, therefore, put in this place, are the *expression* of that righteousness which has acted so: we are "made," or become, "the righteousness of God in Him."

As, to 1 Cor. 130, Christ being made of God to us righteousness this is the key to *how* righteousness is imputed to us; but the imputing of righteousness simply means as an expression, the holding a person for righteous—for one against whom no charge can be brought. It is not a certain amount of merit made over to us, but our clearing from all charge of sin. If we ask how that is done, the answer is, Christ is made righteousness to us.

(5.) Q. What is meant by "justification of life" in Romans v. 18?

Ans. The justification which belongs to, or accompanies the possession of, eternal life. It is in contrast with the death and condemnation come in together through Adam's sin. Life and righteousness were as necessarily associated together where God's grace was received.

(6.) The application of Rom. i. 18–ii. 5, is to the state of the Gentile world, as that of ii. 17–iii. 18 is to the Jew. The opening of Chap. ii. would apply to the heathen philosophers, plunged in the very vices they rebuked. But under *some* count in the broad indictment every one would fall, whether now or then.

(7.) Q. What is meant by "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" in Rom. i. 16, ii. 9, 10?

Ans. The Jew was first in privilege, and first, therefore, in responsibility also; but the Greek (or Gentile) according to his measure was similarly responsible and there was no respect of persons with God. As to the gospel also the Jew had been specially singled out to have it preached to him, as Paul himself shewed by his seeking them out first in every city; yet to the Gentile who believed, its power to save was just the same.

(8.) Q. Will you explain Exod. xx. 11, "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is"?

Ans. We understand our correspondent's difficulty to be the

reconciling of the above with a statement in one of our recent articles to the effect that the creation spoken of in the first verse of Genesis may have been ages before the six days' work. The statement produced from Exodus does not really conflict with this, however. He did make *our present* heaven and earth in six days. It does not alter that, that He made them out of the ruins of a former creation. It does not say, He made them *out of nothing* in six days ;—*make* them, He did.

We take this opportunity to assure our readers how glad we shall be to clear up if possible any difficulties which may exist for our readers in any of the papers appearing in "Sound Words." We need to know, of what is presented to us, if it have Divine warrant, and truth is only confirmed by honest and sober enquiry.

UNGIRDING.

THERE is danger in putting the girdle off. While it is on, we are braced for service, and happy, but when some service is over, there is often a feeling of weariness, it may be of the body ; but the danger is in letting the mind, too, slip down into nature for rest. It is a great thing in *resting* to have Christ with us. The "rest" of the disciples after their missions was to be with Him and one another. "Come and rest awhile." If I seek rest in reading the Word, or prayer, or singing, or visiting the poor, or in fellowship in person or by letter with the saints, it will be strengthened for God ; but if in self-indulgence, it will open the door for Satan and the world. "Being let go, they went to their *own company*."

TO-MORROW.

Does each day upon its wing
Its allotted burden bring ?
Load it not besides with sorrow
Which belongeth to the morrow.
Strength is *promised*, strength is
given,
When the heart by God is riven ;
But foredate the day of woe,

And alone thou bear'st the blow.
"One thing only" claims thy care.
Seek thou first by faith and prayer
That all-glorious world above,
Scene of righteousness and love ;
And what'er thou need'st below
He thou trustest will bestow.

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APRONS OF FIG-LEAVES.

“And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked: and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons.” *Gen.* iii. 7.

THE attempt of man to hide his sin, and make himself acceptable to God by his own efforts, dates from the fall, and is but the adding of sin to sin. It is the plainest evidence of the self-will and unbelief that sin is the parent of. The verse before us is thus the foreshadowing of the entire history of man in his *religious* efforts to make himself better in the eye of God and his neighbours than he *knows* himself to be. Man's self-made righteousness is but a cloak to *hide* sin, leaving the heart only the more hardened in sin and unbelief, as his efforts are earnest and sincere to accomplish what he has before him. The more intent he is upon working out his own righteousness, the more held fast is he under the blinding power of the god of this world, that subtle tempter of our first parents.

The examination of our verse will bring this out into relief, and may God, in His grace, use the lesson it so graphically teaches to open the eye of some poor self-deluded sinner who may read these lines, to the utter *wickedness*, as well as *uselessness*, of any attempts to make himself acceptable to God by *anything* he can do himself.

Deceived by the serpent into, first, distrust of God in His goodness, and then into direct disobedience to His expressed will, Adam and Eve had taken of the fruit of the forbidden tree. “Lust had conceived and brought forth sin:” and sin had finished its work and “brought forth death.” Conscience, the knowledge of good and evil, which *pride* of heart had sought to gain against the direct prohibition of God, was now possessed, and doing its work in the breast of the once innocent creatures of God's goodness but now guilty sinners, exposed to their eyes

the ruin they had brought upon themselves, and "they knew that they were naked."

Innocence gone, and gone for ever, *conscience*—"for the eyes of them both were opened," remained in its place, and exposed the nakedness that sin had brought in, the sight of which could but fill their hearts with distress, and dark forebodings of wrath to come. The goodness of God in creation still shone fair around them, but this gave their guilty consciences no relief, and could afford no balm to their sin-stricken souls. It witnessed for God, the God they had sinned against, but offered no shelter from the judgment that, as responsible creatures, they knew they had entailed upon themselves.

Deceived into sin by the tempter, their poor darkened hearts readily enough received *fresh* suggestions from the prince of darkness, and ingenuity, the child of conscience and reason, but begotten amid the dark shades of sin, set itself to work to remedy the breach that disobedience had brought in: "and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons."

Doubtless, well satisfied were Adam and Eve, as they looked upon the carefully wrought labour of their own hands. Their nakedness was hidden from one another, and, as they trusted, from the eye of God too. These "aprons of fig-leaves" were pleasant to look upon to their carnal minds, now at enmity with God. Their distressed hearts were soothed but not healed, and their guilty consciences were appeased but not purged. A blind was thrown over their opened eyes, and their sin was covered up, but not put away. All this was Satan's work, and the deluded victims of his malice, unrepentant and hardened by the work they had just, under his teaching, completed, can again walk amid the fair fields of Eden and pluck the fruits of "the trees of the garden" as if nothing had happened.

Morally their darkness is complete, and Satan, to the entire exclusion of God and His word, is the source of all their thoughts and feelings. Creation still yields them its joys, but the Creator has no place in their minds, and they are happy because "God is not in all their thoughts."

But short lived is such happiness, like the calm that precedes the storm. The whisperings of Satan give place to the "still small voice" of the living God, and the silence of sin is soon broken by the distant thunderings of divine wrath. "And

they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day : and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, 'Where art thou?' And he said, 'I heard Thy voice and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.' " Little availed the "aprons of fig-leaves" now. They did well enough when *only* Eve and Satan were present, but they afford no comfort under the searching eye of God. Vain is all concealment now, and one word from the Lord God drives vanity from the mind of Adam, Satan's veil is torn aside, and the quieted conscience awakes once more to the truth. The appalling reality of nakedness in the sight of God fills the heart of Adam with fear, and fain would he have hid himself from that all-searching eye behind the "trees of the garden," but they afford no shelter, and forth from every covert the guilty sinner has to come and stand before the Lord God in a nakedness that the "aprons of fig-leaves" only made the more apparent, while it added to the sin that had caused the nakedness the evidence of the wickedness that an unrepentant heart had tried to cover it with.

We do not go further into this wondrous scene, where God and a sinner for the first time confront one another ; and where God reveals Himself in the marvellous workings of His grace to remedy the ruin that sin has brought in. This would be to get on God's side of the subject, and we are only concerned at present to show up man's side of things, and to expose fully to light these "aprons of fig-leaves," so that their utter worthlessness may be clearly discerned, and all attempts to *imitate* our first parents be for ever taken away from our hearts. As we have said before, these "aprons of fig-leaves" foreshadow the entire history of man in his *religious* efforts to make himself better in the eye of God and his neighbours than he *knows* himself, and we desire to hold them well up to derision, to the shame of our first parents, and as a warning to any of their children who, under Satan's blinding influence, may be inclined to imitate their wicked folly.

How well would it have been for the entire human race, if the lesson thus early taught to man, indeed with which his history as a *sinner* begins, had been taken to heart. But Adam and Eve seem to have had no power to hand on anything to

their children but a sinful nature that would learn no lessons of which God was the teacher, though doubtless often repeated in their ears by their parents had been this "story of the aprons of fig-leaves," with the moral it taught; that nothing wrought by their own hands could be acceptable to God because they were sinners.

Cain, their first-born, appears upon the scene but to repeat the sinful *folly* of his parents, though in a somewhat different form. and because the labour of his hands is rejected by God, and the hardness of his heart rebuked, he plunges into further sin and imbrues his hands in the blood of his brother. Self-righteousness can brook no rival in the favour of God, and enmity to God and his brother fills the heart of one who is such, to the exclusion of every other feeling. In the story of Cain and Abel we have the history of unregenerate man, from that time to the cross, set before us. Man can but repeat himself; a rejected "apron of fig-leaves" held by hands red with a brother's blood is the full-drawn picture of a self-righteous man. Away with Him, crucify Him, crucify Him, is ever the language of the maker of "an apron of fig-leaves." What a warning should such a picture teach us, whether we look at it in Cain, or in the Chief Priests and Pharisees that surround the cross of Christ.

It is not that God has not taken pains to teach His creature the folly and evil of these "aprons of fig-leaves," for, as if the exhibition of Adam's foolish efforts to conceal his nakedness and Cain's terrible history had not been enough to demonstrate that nothing that they could themselves do could make them acceptable in His sight, He singled out one nation out of all others, and gave them the law,—the perfect measure of what ought to be, and having placed them under the best possible circumstances, bade them try and keep it. The history of this trial which is that of the nation of Israel from Sinai to Calvary, reaches over a period of about 1500 years, and is summed up by Stephen in these words in Acts vii., "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye: Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of this Just One; of Whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers; who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and *have not kept it.*" For this

testimony Stephen is stoned, and again we have a rejected "apron of fig-leaves" held by hands red with a brother's blood. A leader amongst such is Saul of Tarsus, consenting to the death of Stephen, and shortly after, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," to be found on his way to Damascus for the purpose of bringing any such, "whether men or women, bound to Jerusalem."

But where sin abounds grace does much more abound, and the self-righteous persecutor of the followers of Jesus is arrested by the Lord in his headlong course of rebellion against God, converted, and taken up to be the champion of "righteousness without works." Of all makers of "aprons of fig-leaves" he stood foremost, and none as well as he, knew what they were worth in the presence of God. "If any other man," says he in Philippians iii., "thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews: as touching the law a Pharisee; concerning zeal persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count 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, *not having mine own righteousness*, which is of the law, but that which is through faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

The "apron of fig leaves," once so gloried in, has become "dung," and nothing now is found to be of any value before God, but Christ. This lesson is learnt, that "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Rom. iii. 20), and "that to him that *worketh not*, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his *faith* is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 5).

Dear reader, are you relying on anything you can do to make yourself acceptable to God, and gain Heaven by? Do you think that your tears of repentance, your prayers, your singing of hymns, your bible reading, your going to church, your doing kind acts to others, your giving to missionary purposes, your trying to keep the law, and lastly, your having been baptized and taken the sacrament, will save your soul, or put away sins?

Then you are just making an "apron of fig leaves," trying to cover your nakedness like Adam and Eve did. Bringing to God like Cain did, what He only can reject you for, you are doing what the nation of Israel did for so many years, resist the Holy Ghost, and, like them, going about to establish your own righteousness, you have not submitted to "the righteousness of God" (Rom. x. 3), and if you go on as you are, you will surely be lost as they were.

But perhaps you will say, "but they did not believe in Christ at all, and I do." That may be true; still you are doing something to make yourself better in God's sight, and that is rejecting what Christ has done for you, "for Christ is the *end* of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. x. 4.) You are adding law-keeping to Christ, and thus Christ is of no use to you. "Christ is become of no effect unto you whosoever you are justified by law," Paul says, Gal. v. 4. When Christ is possessed by faith the soul needs no doings of its own to make itself *more* secure. The "apron of fig leaves" is once and for ever thrown away, and the heart *rests* in Christ Jesus, "who is God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." The one who has Christ at all, has all these four things; and the one who has not Christ in *his heart* has neither of them, though he may have plenty of everything else: such an one is a mere empty religionist, in whom there is nothing that God can accept, and by whom no fruit is borne to God. Fair enough in his own eyes, and in those of his neighbours, he may be, but there is no life beneath the fair exterior. Like the fig-tree in the twenty-first of Matthew, with plenty of leaves but no figs, he has nothing for Jesus to feed upon, and hence, when He comes, will just be cursed as the fig-tree was. "Many will say to me in *that day*, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wondrous works?' and then will I profess unto you, *I never KNEW YOU*: depart from me ye that work iniquity." Such are the warning words of Jesus to every maker of "aprons of fig leaves."

Reader, be warned in time, and listen again to "the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." "To him that **WORKETH** NOT but **BELIEVETH** on Him that justifieth the **UNGOODLY**, his **FAITH** is counted for righteousness." C. W.

MAN'S SUPPER AND GOD'S.

Luke XIV.

How beautifully everything fits when God is the worker. The encounter at Jacob's Well, the tarrying till Lazarus dies, tell His wisdom as well as His love. And, as in the Scripture before us, what more fit place to work on the Sabbath-day than in a chief Pharisee's house?—Verses 1-6. Could there be a subject who needed more than a Pharisee to learn that all in the first creation is ruined, and therefore rest in it impossible—as well for God as man? In John v., “the Jews did persecute Jesus and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath-day.” He answered, “My Father worketh hitherto (until now), and I work.” Nothing roused them like seeing Him work on the Sabbath. The Sabbath was rest after a week's *perfect* work. “God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was *very good*. . . . And He rested on the seventh day from all His works which He had made.” Work on that day, therefore, by the One who “came forth from God,” was unanswerable proof something wrong had happened in that creation. Had not the Ass or the Ox *fallen* into a *pit* there would have been no call for work. Had not sin come into the world, there would have been no dropsy (v. 2), no impotent at Bethesda (John v.), no withered hand (Mark iii.), no blind eyes (John ix.), in God's way on that day; there would have been no need of His mightiest work carried on the whole length of that day: His death. No one acquainted with man's heart need wonder at the Jews being so much excited to wrath by this one thing. It revealed the ruined condition of man, and of all that was entrusted to him, as a consequence, and there is nothing man seeks to hide from himself as much as that. Even now, in Christendom, where men profess Christ, receive His doctrine as true, have His death staring them in the face, is not *moral improvement* the almost universal idea? Does it not prove clearly that man is not only fallen, but also blind and wilful enough to deny it practically, if not doctrinally? If it were not so would they not have perceived that it was *man* who had broken *God's* rest, and that Christ working untiringly among the ruins was to the end God

might introduce another, the real, eternal Sabbath, which "remaineth for the people of God?" God works when things are in ruin, and rests when they are perfect. Man is the opposite: he insists on resting when all is wrong, and now that "it is finished," now that the work is *done*, and that "to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness," he insists on "doing the best he can." O, man! what wilt thou say when thou shalt appear before Him whose ways thou hast steadfastly opposed?

(7-14.) As seen before, man shutting his eyes against his ruined condition, has nothing left but moral worth. Then as now, and now as then, he makes that the ground of admittance. It is *his* supper. He therefore calls in his "friends, brethren, kinsmen and rich neighbours," *i. e.* those of a similar moral standing. Did any one ever see such "in lowliness of mind, esteeming others better than themselves?" Nay, but each one filled with self seeks out the "chief room." What a scene for God's contemplation! Men, with hearts as they appear before Him, pretending to a high seat! Yet, go where you please, ask the first man you meet, and, except he have been taught of God that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and *desperately* wicked," you will find him a guest at the Pharisee's supper, and looking out for a chief room. He will represent you Heaven as an inclined plane, and all doing their best to get a good seat in it.

This is *natural* religion; what suits the infidel Sadducee as well as the orthodox Pharisee, because it never stirs up the conscience nor reaches the heart.

How truly God has said, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways." (Isa. lv. 8.) He has gazed at the Pharisee's supper, and at the guests there found, and now He will tell what kind of supper would please Him: "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind . . . for they cannot recompense thee." This is *grace*, and, O, how comforting! how soothing! Poor, weary, precious soul, is thy heart sick with the human worthiness sounded in thine ears from every side? Turn and refresh thyself at a feast where thy *need* is considered, not thy *worth*. It is God's feast. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our

sins." (1 John iv. 10.) And again: "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8.)

"For they cannot recompense thee." Sure enough, what can we return to God now for that wondrous salvation which He has prepared for us through Jesus Christ? The most we can do is, like Mary, "Sit down at His feet," and feast on the supper spread out for us. But He will be recompensed at the resurrection of the just," when "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints," (Eph. i. 18) are manifested.

Moreover, the character of such as sit at that feast is shown by the Master's words, "Go and sit down in the lowest room." Grace, seeking out and meeting their need, has made them conscious of their ruined condition, and they are effectually humbled. They can "rejoice evermore," because "they know they have eternal life," (1 John v. 13), they know they "have redemption through His word, even the forgiveness of sins," (Col. i. 14), but they walk with their heads low because they also know and often feel "that in them, that is in their flesh, dwelleth no good thing." (Rom. vii. 18.) These are the ones who can "esteem others better than themselves," not in word, but in truth.

"And when one of them that sat at meat with Him heard these things, he said unto Him, blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." He had felt the contrast, and esteemed "blessed" him who would sit at God's feast. My dear brethren in the Lord Jesus, are we not indeed a *blessed* people? In the midst of all our tears is not our heart lifted up within us at the thought that we are hasting on to see Him?

(15-24.) Thus God's mind has been made known. He has said what kind of a supper He loves, and one feeling drawn toward it indirectly expresses his wish to sit at such an one. So Christ answers, "A certain man *made* a great supper, &c." Yes, dear reader, the supper *is made*. Men may tell you you have something to bring to it, that all is not quite finished, that Christ has done His part and you should now do yours; but God says, He has "made a great supper." He says "Come, for all things are *now* ready." The offering has been made, the blood is on the mercy-seat, and sinners may come in boldly by the blood of Jesus. (Heb. x. 1-20.) If the supper were not

made He would say "Do and live," but now He says, "Hear and live," (Isa. lv. 3 ; John v. 24). Salvation is finished. It is God's work for you through Jesus Christ. You have nothing to do to it nor to get it. All you need is to know your need of it and accept it as God's free gift. Nor has God done as some would represent, *i.e.* shut that supper up so that some should not get at it.

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) Again, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have *all men to be saved*, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth ; for there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who *gave Himself a ransom for all*, to be testified in due time." (1 Tim. ii. 3-6.) *Not one* soul among Satan's ranks will be able to take for excuse that there was no salvation for him. Why then so many lost ?

"He sent His servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, come, for all things are now ready. *And they all with one consent began to make excuse.*" Again, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, *and the world knew Him not.*" (John i. 10.) That is the way man treats God. Not content with departing from blessed Eden, he refuses to recognize the blessed God Himself, and mocks His grace. Surely then, even the freedom of salvation will turn against man in the day of judgment. It was finished, ready, freely offered to all ; by it God was offering to justify the *ungodly*, but man's pride looked down with scorn on such a low seat ; it was too humiliating to own the title of "ungodly," of "lost," of "sinner ;" and his will, whose freedom he contends for so fiercely, led him to choose the wealth, the cares, and the pleasures of earth.

But while salvation is thus offered to man "without money and without price," it has cost God something ; nothing less than His only begotten Son, of whom He says, "Let all the angels of God worship Him."

Think, dear reader, O, think for a moment of what salvation has cost God. And is the One who has so faithfully "finished the work He was given to do" going to get nothing ? Shall the obedient Lamb go empty, and the "roaring lion" get all, because

man's will is for evil? Verily this would be making man the potter and God the clay. Thank *God* it is not so. Thy blood, Thy cross, Thy agony, Lord Jesus, have not been in vain, for God has ordained that Thou "shalt see of the travail of Thy soul and be satisfied," (Is. liii. 11). Accordingly the servant is sent out with the admonition, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and *bring in hither* the poor, &c." The command is carried out, the servant returns with the word, "Yet there is room," and again he is sent out with the order, "Go out into the highways and hedges and *compel* them to come in." God in love provides salvation for a lost world. The world answers by rejection. Faithful to His Son, He will now provide for Him by election. His sovereign grace will now *call out of the world*. (John xvii.) Amazing ways of God! Short-sighted man may form religious parties out of pieces of truth which he isolates from the rest, but, viewed as a whole, how beautiful! Every individual saved being a direct act of God's sovereign and gracious will, which, instead of limiting a salvation more free than the air, but reveals man's wilful and universal rejection of it.

Some precious soul may ask here, but is a sinner saved against his will? To this I reply: Why is it you were in such distress for weeks and months before you found peace with God? Your will, your wretched, wicked will, had to be broken before you would bow to God's will, and be saved through Jesus Christ. There was no *need* of your suffering so. There was nothing in it for God. Christ had done it all. But the Shepherd was after you while you held out against Him as long as you could. All the children of God will find out some day that this is all the part they acted in their salvation, and their walk on the earth is not a little influenced by their recognizing it at the start.

It is scarcely needful to notice, "the servant" here is the Holy Ghost, sent down after Jesus was rejected on earth and glorified in Heaven. And what a lesson for us, beloved fellow-workers. How it should lead us to bow low before our Lord and Master. There is none brought in here who has "not on a wedding garment," as in Matthew xxii., where the "servants" are the ones viewed in service. What the Holy Ghost is doing is perfect. He is after Christ's interests, even as Christ was

after God's, therefore all is right. But in *our* service, too often an hour of sleep, a selfish motive has marked it, and the door has been opened to let in a plant which the Father had not planted. It shall be rooted up to our shame. Oh! that we might learn to yield ourselves up to God as passive instruments in His hand; like the Holy Ghost, stay here, work here, suffer here, only with Christ's interests at heart.

25—end. So far *grace* only—what God has prepared for man—has been set forth; therefore “great multitudes went with Him.” Such is man, and the unbounded selfishness of his heart. Give him, without attaching responsibility to the gift, and he will flock in. But the Lord now throws in salt. He declares He has come to bless, but the blessing is coupled with something that will test and manifest the truly blessed. “If any come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” There is no room for doubting or hesitating. If in anything those nearest and dearest to us, the very ones God holds us responsible to love in nature, hinder our walk with Christ, they must become to us as hated objects, no more to be heeded. And as to our life here, it matters but little if it be made miserable by our connection with Christ, we are following one who gave up *all*, His own life, too, for us. How sweet to give up all for Him, thankful if nothing and nobody hinders, letting go all, if all is in the way.

That is the cost, if Christ is the one we follow. Art thou willing, O man, to suffer that? Thou hast been apparently rejoicing under the sound of His grace, but hast thou reckoned on that if thou *really* set out to follow Him? One may say, this has gone by. Times have so changed, that “suffering loss” is no more a consequence of following Christ. Such we can but refer to 2 Tim. iii. 12: “Yea, and *all* that will live godly in Christ Jesus *shall* suffer persecution.” Mark, moreover, that the admonition is for them of the “last days, when perilous times shall come.” Let true souls throughout Christendom earnestly enquire of God why the sailing is so smooth in their testimony on earth. It is a deserving enquiry which will not be fruitless, if we carry it on to the end before God. It is of importance that we find out, Christ “came not to send peace *on earth, but a sword.*” (Matt. x. 34.)

Such is the cost every follower of Jesus must reckon upon, and yet, if a man begin to sit down and reckon the cost, he is sure to turn back. The man about to build a tower sits down, counts the cost, discovers he has not enough, and does not build. The king fears the enemy, counts *his* men, and refuses to fight. Surely this is not *faith*. Sight reckons on what it has, faith on *the Lord*. Faith never counts, but suffers all; "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

Thus stripped of all, and self-emptyed, David joyfully cries out to the giant, "Thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied;" and he confidently affirms, "This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and with spear, for the battle is the Lord's," (1 Sam. xvii).

P. J. L.

WORK FOR THE LORD.

(An extract from a Letter.)

Now, as to work for the Lord. The simple enquiry, and recorded as the first utterance of Paul to our Lord, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" is the duty and expression of every one distinctly awakened to the claim Christ has on him. This enquiry cannot be too earnestly instituted, or the reply to it too rigidly attended to. The enquiry is the offspring of a soul sensible that the Lord has entire and full claim on me, without the knowledge which authorizes it. The soul feels "I am taken out of the world, and I am given to Christ, and hence I look to Him for my place and occupation *in future in it*." If we are given to Christ "out of the world," it is evident that it is He *alone* who has right to determine our way and course *in the world*.

I could not say, if I believe that I am given to Him "out of the world," that I have any right to re-occupy any place or engagement which I had previously held in the world. True, He does not require or permit me to infringe on any legal lord under whom I was held before I was given to Him—but, excepting where the rights of others would be compromised, I am

Christ's bondsman—vested legal rights are not to be compromised because of my being given to Christ; but I am Christ's bondsman, and necessarily if I am, both from duty and inclination, my enquiry ought to be, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" The more I own and realize the relationship which now exists through grace between us, the more simply and continuously will this be my whole hearted cry to Him. Now if it is, I will of course accede to, and attend to whatever He may intimate to me, and this only. That is, the heart true to Him, and devotedly making this request, will *wait* on Him for guidance and counsel, and would find no real satisfaction in being anywhere or doing anything **which** was not according to His mind; our place and our occupation here would be only determined by the pleasure of Him whose we are and whom we serve; any departure from the tie or rule of this relationship would sensibly interfere with the mutual satisfaction therein known, there would be a break in on, and a disturbance of, the true order of life, and the blessings connected with it.

Nothing so simple and nothing so important in our walk down here! I belong to Christ, and I find it my happiness and His pleasure to do nothing but as He desires and instructs me. *I live where He likes, and I do what He likes.* If we did this there would be no mistakes one side or the other. But we do make mistakes on both sides; on one side at one time, and on another side at another time. At one we *plan* out work for ourselves, and at another we do none at all. Now the first is the most difficult to deal with, simply because the counterfeit deceives one, and hence, while it is comparatively easy to convict the idle or slothful, it is not so easy to convince the Martha that she is unwisely occupied. The work seems so right and necessary, that it appears almost impossible that there could be any plan in it. Nothing so deceives and leads astray as the conscience working at a distance from Christ. For instance, if I feel in my conscience that I ought to be Christ's servant (true enough I am His bondsman), but if I am not near Him, if I am not in His confidence, and I begin to do something to satisfy my conscience, there is no doubt I am doing it legally, and not as simply suits Him. It is to make *myself* easy and satisfied. When this is the case I do not consult what *He* would like me to do, but I do what *I* think best to be done. It is not His

pleasure guides me, it is my own mind, as to what is suitable and proper. It may be quite necessary, as Martha's service, but Martha was evidently thinking of the services which were incumbent on her to render, and not governed by the pleasure of Christ.

Here is where we fail, undertaking to serve where it is in a degree creditable to ourselves, or we get disappointed (if we are truehearted) because we have not the acknowledgment of His pleasure. How can He acknowledge what we have undertaken and done to satisfy our own conscience, and to please ourselves therein! It is evident that when I am occupied with services, however useful and necessary, which I have undertaken of myself, feeling they devolved upon me, that I must lose the sense of His presence. Sitting at His feet, Mary-like, is lost and neglected. There is no growth of soul in Christ. Self is in the service from beginning to end. It is most blessed to work for Christ, it is fruit-bearing; but if my work engrosses me more than Christ, there is damage to me, and I am not working for Him: "without Me ye can do nothing." If I am really working for Christ, I am getting from Christ, and growing up into Him. Sitting at His feet is the natural posture of my soul. Whenever you find any one serving without sitting at His feet, you may be assured they are Martha-like. When any are sitting at His feet, hearing His word, they will not be behind in true and pleasing service. If you begin with serving (as many do now-a-days), you will never sit at His feet, whereas if you begin with sitting, you will soon serve wisely, well and acceptably. The serving quiets the conscience, and the sitting is overlooked and neglected. The Enemy gains an advantage for it is at the sitting the conscience is more enlightened, and the pleasure and mind of the Master are better known, and hence there is damage done, and loss sustained by the soul when service pre-occupies one to the exclusion of sitting at His feet, or where it is *most* prominent.

I never met with any one making service prominent who knew what it was to sit at His feet; but, thank God, I know indefatigable workers who enjoy sitting at His feet above any service, and it is clear that they who sit most at His feet must be most competent to serve, and most in His confidence, which, after all, is *the clue* to all efficient service.

HELPS WITH DIFFICULT TEXTS.

No. 2.

"In all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."—Heb. iv. 15.

There is a very needful caution upon the subject of temptation in the first chapter of the Epistle of James: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of *God*, for God cannot be tempted *with evil*, neither tempteth He any man." It is the tempting *with evil* God is incapable of. He would "tempt" an Abraham, but not "with evil." But then, further, James tells us "but every man when he is tempted"—*i.e.* with evil—"is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." For *evil*—sin—to be a temptation to any man, implies in his soul a liking for it. To be tempted with evil is to be drawn away and "enticed."

For temptation to be possible, then, there must be some responsiveness to it in the soul. One simply passive—without responsiveness—could not be tempted. This has been felt; and hence the difficulty of understanding the passage in Heb. iv. 15 in its application to the Lord "in *all* points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Was sin, then,—could sin be—in any way a temptation to the Lord? Dangerous misconceptions have in fact arisen, and it has been thought that, without yielding actually to sin, there was in reality in Him a sort of feeling of its power, something in Himself to be *resisted*, though he *did* resist.

But the sinlessness of the Lord is gone, if any approach to this be admitted. The words at once apply, "Every one is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own lust." Sin could not even be a temptation to One who had nothing in Him that responded to it; sin could, in short, only be a temptation to a *sinner*.

The words, moreover, of the passage in Hebrews mean precisely this. Leave out the "yet," which is written in *italics*, showing that it was put in by the translators, without any word for it in the original, and then remember that James' "*with evil*" or sin, is just the contrast with Paul's "*without sin*" here, and all is plain. *Man* is tempted with evil when drawn away of his own lust; Jesus, then, could not be tempted with evil, with sin, *apart from sin*, without sin—excepting that—He "was in all points tempted like as we are."

If we connect this with what has gone before, we find that the Apostle has been speaking of Christ as One who can be "touched with the feeling of our *infirmities*;" not sins, but creature weakness; a place where sin had introduced every kind of trial for it. These trials, in every shape, the Lord in grace had stooped to and known; every sorrow that assailed the human heart He had entered into with a heart not incapable but more capable than any other of feeling them fully. He felt and responded to, was "*touched by*" human sorrow, human weakness, can sympathize with it; *not* in any wise with *sin*. You do not want His sympathy with that, but the sharp, two-edged sword of the Word to detect and judge it.

Some may have difficulty remaining as to the temptation in the garden and our Lord's in the wilderness, looking at things in this way. But they are simple enough. In the garden Eve was tempted with a natural object, a part of God's creation, as good as all else in itself. Her soul lapsed from its innocency before he could positively put sin before her, the actual eating of the fruit. In the Lord's case, surely the *things* put before the Lord were no temptation to Him. Tested He was perfectly, and His perfectness brought out fully; but it is one thing to be tempted with things, another to be tempted by people. The first argues that the things have power for you, though you may resist that power; the other implies no such thing, just as in the lawyer or the Pharisees or Herodians tempting Him, where no one imagines that it implies anything. *They* might tempt, and yet withal there might be for Him in it *no temptation*.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

(1.) *Q.* What does the Apostle mean in 2 Tim. i. 3, when he says, "whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience," compared with Phil. iii. 6, "concerning zeal persecuting the Church"?

Ans. Just what our Lord says, "The time will come when he that killeth you will think that he doeth God service." Paul thought so, when Saul the persecutor. It is the striking and evident condemnation of those who would found an argument as to their state before God from their "pure consciences." Men might have that and yet be as far as possible from God.

His word alone is the true test and touchstone for everything; the "*heart*, deceitful above all things who can know it" "There is a way that *seemeth right* unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Twice over does the "wise man" solemnly repeat that (Prov. xiv. 12, xvi. 25.)

Thus Paul was at the same time, in the court of his own conscience, "touching the righteousness of the law blameless," and before God "the chief of sinners." Many are in a similar condition. But the word has spoken out plainly as to man,—as to all men—and declared the one way of righteousness and peace for all. The question is, Have I judged myself by it, and believed His gracious message in the gospel? Nay, if even a Christian, am I cleansing my ways by taking heed thereto *according to His word*? (Ps. cxix. 9.) The Church's "water-washing" is "by the *Word*." (Eph. v. 26.)

(2). Q. Is there any difference between the "*foundation* of the world and the creation of it?

Ans. They are different ideas but referring to the same time. The first expression is equivalent to the "*beginning*." Creation tells us from whom and how it had beginning. The place in which each is used has its perfect fitness.

(3.) A correspondent referring to an expression used in the article entitled "Evidences and their Scripture Use"—"There is no word of God that *I* am born again"—refers us to 1 Peter, i. 23, and other Scriptures. We think he must have misunderstood the meaning of the sentence he quotes. The necessity of people being born again, in order to eternal life, was not in question at all. That necessity is most clear. The point is "*how shall I know I am?*" Those leaning upon their inward experiences here have to appeal to passages which speak of the *character* of those born again, and to ask themselves, "*have I this character?*" The drift of the article in question is that we have the Word of God for our being *sinners*, if we have not for our being born again, and as sinners, we are called to trust and rest in Jesus as our Saviour. Whoever does this may know he is born again, not by groping for evidences of new birth to see if he may rest on them.

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 merely *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 when 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.

 THE SISTERS OF BETHANY.

What hope lit up those sisters gloom,
 When first they sent His help to crave,
 So sure that, hearing, He would come,
 And coming, could not fail to save.

Counting the distance o'er again,
 Deeming Him near and yet more near,
 Till hope, on heights she climbed in vain,
 Lay frozen to a death-like fear.

Watching with two-fold strain intent,
 The expected steps, the failing breath,

Till hope and fear together spent,
Sank in the common blank of death.

Beyond this burning waste of hills,
Beyond that awful glittering sea,
'Mid those blue mountains lingering still,
Have our faint prayers not reached to Thee,

Or are the joys and griefs of earth,
To Thee, whose eyes survey the whole,
But passing things of little worth,
That should not deeply stir the soul ?

His tears ere long shall lush that fear
For every mourning heart for ever ;
And we who now his words can hear
Beyond the hills, beyond the river—

Know that as true a watch He kept,
On those far heights as at their side,
Feeling the tears the sisters wept,
Marking the hour the brother died.

No faintest sigh His heart can miss ;
E'en now His feet are on the way,
With richest counterweight of bliss
Heaped up for every hour's delay ;

That nevermore should hope deferred
Make sick the heart that trusts in Him,
But nourished by His faithful word
Grow brighter still as sight grows dim.

FAITH should be energetic, active : I am not to be merely musing about the glory ; but the certainty of Christ's having apprehended me for it, is to set me looking right forward, pressing onward to the goal. What is feeling for Christ, if it does not separate the heart from the world ? It is a different thing saying "I know the Cross," and saying "I have found the thing which I can go round and round the world glorying in, filled with astonishment and delight."

"SOUND WORDS."

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MAN'S NEIGHBOUR.

Luke x.: 25-37.

THE various ways in which our Lord met and answered oftentimes the same question from different questioners, it is most instructive to see. He never answered a question simply *as* a question, but the state of the soul of him who put it. It is just there that in reading His answers people make such great mistakes. They take often the question simply *as* a question, and no more; and thus, if a man comes, for instance, asking, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life?" and hear Him reply, "What is written in the law? . . . do this and thou shalt live," they put it down as what needs no further argument, that the way of eternal life for man is by the keeping of the law.

But the same word of God says, "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." (Gal. iii., 19.) Is that a way of life? And what then about the Lord's answer?

Scripture solves this difficulty very simply. "For if *by the law is the knowledge of sin,*" (Rom. iii. 20,) and what it says, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God," (Rom. iii. 19,)—then it is clear how the Lord in answer to this questioner is seeking to give *him* the knowledge of sins. For this He uses the law, with one whom, when he takes the ground of human goodness, He assures "There is *none* good but One, that is, God."

The case before us is different again from this. "A certain lawyer stood up and tempted Him, saying, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

The question is the same as in the former case, but there a real-enquirer, however self-deceived,—here one "tempting Him." This makes the difference.

The Lord again appeals to the law : " What is written in the law ? how readeſt thou ? " " And he answering ſaid, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy ſtrength, and with all thy mind ; and thy neighbour as thyſelf. And He ſaid unto him, Thou haſt answered right : this do and thou ſhalt live."

Even ſo. It is all ſimple enough, dear reader ; and the preacher of the goſpel in the preſent day does not in anywiſe contradict the Lord's ſaying. If " this do and thou ſhalt live " ſatisfies you, and you are aſſured of ſtanding well before God upon the ground of loving Him with this all-abſorbing love, and your neighbour, too, juſt as well as yourſelf,—none will ſay that God will not accept that. Only remember, it is, " Do *this*"—not half or a quarter this, or as much of it as you can, or as you pleaſe to think you can. " Do *this*" are the Lord's words ; "*as well as you can*" is Satan's interpretation of it ; for which you will find no Scripture warrant from Genesis to Revelation.

But, you ſay, " Of courſe we do not pretend to do it altogether." Then, if you go on that ground, you are under the curſe ; for it is written " Cursed is every one that continueth not in *all* things that are written in the book of the law to do them." And, moreover, that is not merely what the *Old* Teſtament ſaid, but what the *New* Teſtament ſays, and for that very reaſon it adds that " As many as are of the works of the law are UNDER THE CURSE."

Instinctively the poor ſinner to whom the Lord ſpoke felt it. " But he, willing to juſtify himſelf, ſaid." Why juſtify himſelf when no one accuſed him ? Ah, conſcience had ſpoken in him, and his excuſe was the evidence of a conſciouſneſs of fault, which nevertheless the heart roſe up in its pride to reſiſt. Dear reader, do you want to juſtify yourſelf before God ? It is the natural inſtinct, alas ; but the very effort ſhews you dare not leave it to God, in whoſe hands nevertheless it only is. You cannot reſt aſſured that he will do it ; that is, you cannot reſt at all.

" And he, willing to juſtify himſelf, ſaid unto Jeſus, ' And who *is* my neighbour ? ' "

And what an answer that brings out ! How it expoſes the narrow ſelfiſhneſs which can riſe ſuch a queſtion with need, in the countless ſhapes in which it meets us, before the eyes ! It

is what the legal spirit engenders. The cold estimate of duty reckoned by a self-occupied mind, which is sure to seek to spare itself as far as may be, instead of the unreckoning self-sacrifice of love occupied with its object. The Priest and Levite are the examples of the first; the Samaritan of the second. A little heart thus would have decided the lawyer's question for him. It was his shame to ask it.

But there is much more than this. Hid in a parable, for a solemn reason, (comp. Matth. xiii. 13,) the Lord gives us a wondrous picture of One whose heart had made him neighbour to the ruined and helpless among men. His, who had no duty to the fallen, but love which had found in men its object, and which, looking for no worth in them, or claim, poured itself out in unexhausted fulness. Oh that some soul, heedless and careless, might be wakened up even now by this tale of love, to find answer in a new way to the lawyer's question, "AND WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?"

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead."

Do not lose the beauty of that description by making it a general picture of man's condition. Its individuality is meant rather to arrest the eye of some consciously ruined and despairing one. The Lord's words are not cold theological statements, but fresh *from the heart for the heart*. If *you* are on this Jericho-road, stripped, to your shame, and wounded, to your hurt, a convicted and perishing sinner, it applies to *you*.

The road to Jericho was, and is, a downward one. From the city crowned with the glory of Jehovah's presence, whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord—with his back upon all this, and his face toward the city of curse, the traveller journeyed. Upon this road was he stopped, plundered, wounded, thrown aside without remedy to die. It is the spiritual history of many. The sudden seizure of conviction could be figured by nothing more simply than the onset of robbers; and he who was but a short time ago well to do, in his own eyes well-clad and flourishing, has become a bankrupt, naked and perishing sinner.

Dying without help—lying in his blood upon the road, incapable of even seeking the succour that he needs,—such is the

Lord's own picture of the misery that drew Him down to save. It is not sin in its revolting side, as enmity against God that is seen in it, but the helpless misery it has wrought. Has my reader ever known spiritually what it was to be in such a state!

"And by chance there came down a certain priest that way." It is a noteworthy thing when the Lord Jesus speaks of chance. It means that the priest was no God-sent messenger to this wounded man. And so it proved: "and when he saw him he passed by on the other side."

"And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side."

Think of the hope in his heart when those human forms met his fading sight, and human eyes peered into his! But no help for him was there. The men of law were not the ministers of the needed mercy. Nor have they now, more than then, help or hope for one that is simply lost; for the law says "Do;" and what can such an one "do?" Ah, you may better go and talk of work to the half-dead man upon the roadside in the picture, than talk of it to the whole-dead sinner whom he represents.

So the priest and the Levite pass and give place to another. "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was." Why a Samaritan? It was the name of reproach they had hurled at Him: "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan!" It was meant to convey the thought of one who walked outside the prescribed path of the law, and whom the law denounced. If the Lord take that name, there is meaning in it we may be sure. And indeed how came He where we were, but by being "made in the likeness of sinful flesh," and "a curse for us!" And how could His mercy reach unto us but by His taking a path outside of law? "And when he saw him he had compassion on him."

Here is that pity of God, true and effective, and equal to the need—which the true gospel bears witness to—which all mixed gospels tend to obscure and nullify, and which the soul needs so greatly, both for peace and to bring it in full reality to joy in God Himself.

That He loved me—not when a saint but when a sinner—loved me when I was *dead* in sins (Eph. ii.: 4-5;) loved me so as to give Christ for me, ungodly and without strength; this is the truth by which I know God in every deed, and which bows

my heart before him in adoration and delight. Oh, the joy of knowing His joy who bears me on His shoulders, shepherd of the lost, and when he cometh home, calleth together his friends and says "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!" Joy over me! Joy in the presence of the angels of God!

Take me this prodigal with the rags of a far country upon him, put him under rule and discipline, let him reform and get back something of his former respectability before he meets his father, the meeting may be tender as ever, but the wondrous display of a father's heart out-poured over his dead alive again, could it be the same?

I want for my heart, I am jealous over it—this bringing together of my sin and His love, my ruin and His might on my behalf. I delight in such words as these: "when he saw him he had compassion on him, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him." All the doing was on the one side here. And with what thankful joy the eyes of the wounded man must have looked on all this activity of love on his behalf. Did he grudge to be its debtor, think you? Do you, that the Lord should serve you? The faith that says, Well, it is love's joy to serve, and He came down to serve; He whom all things serve came voluntarily down to do me service, that is what honours Him, for *it credits Him with what He is.*

But come, do you know what this oil and wine are? Do you know what the power of the Holy Ghost (which is the oil) mingles with to form a salve for a wounded soul? The "wine that cheereth God and man" is the remembrance of the poured out blood of Jesus. He has entered in with that blood into heaven itself. The witness of its value is his own place at the right hand of God. Offered to, and accepted of God, the spirit of God bears witness of its efficacy in cleansing from all sin, and setting the cleansed one apart to God as purchased and redeemed for ever. This is the Samaritan's balm for our deadly wounds. For whom was it shed, this blood of Jesus? See how he pours it in Himself, how He applies it! He does not leave that to you, He applies it Himself. The blood was shed for *sinners.* You may be clear, if you are that, it is for *you.*

And then, on and on, towards a bright eternity, the love which

has visited you will keep and care. So runs this parable: "he set him upon his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee." There is the care of the Holy Ghost for the saved in the time of Christ's absence. And because it is exercised often-times, through human instrumentality, therefore this present payment and future reckoning besides. But how the same love shines out from first to last, on to that "coming again" which faith lays hold of and anticipates. "Surely, I come quickly." "Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus." F. W. G.

THE VALLEY OF BACA.

(NOTES OF A LECTURE.)

Read 2 Samuel, xv.: 13—xvi. 14, and Ps. LXXXIV.

My object in reading the chapters I have is, that in them we find something that in this day is very rare, and which I am sure, as we look at it a little together, with the Lord's help, we shall say, "Would God I knew more of it."

What I refer to is simply this, that we have here before us a man passing through the most trying circumstances, and yet one who looks out of it all and puts his trust in God, and so goes on perfectly calm and at rest, come what will.

Now what we find ourselves constantly saying is, that, if this thing were set right that is a trial to me, or if this difficulty were removed, I should be free to enjoy the Lord more.

But change the circumstances, and remove what appears to be a hindrance to our enjoyment, and what will be the result? Shall we be more happy than before? No, we should not, for though circumstances might be altered and brighter, yet what is at the bottom and causes the unhappiness is there still. Whatever I may be I carry the same heart of distrust with me, and, until we have learned to judge that, there is no true rest. How often do we try, and vainly too, to get things right here, and overlook all the time the blessings we might be enjoying where we are. We forget that he has said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the

world;" and along with this: "These things have I spoken unto you that in me ye might have *peace*." And if really in the sanctuary of God's presence, we should say often, "I would not have it otherwise if I could." Not that our hearts should not feel the state of things around and amongst us, nor that there is not much in ourselves and elsewhere that should rightly exercise us: surely there is, but we have this in God's word: "Be careful for nothing." What! not careful about anything? No, "careful for *nothing*," absolutely *nothing*. And how can this be? Is it that there is nothing to give us care and sorrow down here? There is much surely. But we have in what follows how it can be, "In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanks giving, let your requests be made known to God." (Phil. iv., 6.) What a relief! There is not a sorrow or a burden that I am not privileged to bring there and tell into His ear. And what then? "The peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds by Christ Jesus."

Just look at Paul, and see **where** he is at the time of his writing this, and how far circumstances are affecting him. We find him in prison at Rome, in bonds for the Gospel, shut out from the work which was so dear to his heart, and what effect has it upon him? Does it cast him down? No—look at what he says in chap. 1. He would have them know that his "bonds had fallen out rather into the *furtherance* of the gospel." "I do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." He thought of Him who was carrying on His own work notwithstanding all that came in seemingly to hinder, and with all the evil before him fully and felt by him, he would tell the saints of a joy and rest above all the sorrow. What effect could circumstances have on a man like this? None whatever;—circumstances can have no power when our confidence is in God, but when that is wanting, we are easily affected by them. They only test how far we are leaning upon God, and simply trusting Him.

But we may give up our Nazariteship and neglect to walk with God, our strength is then gone, and we are "weak as other men," and just like Samson, say in view of our enemies, "I will go out, as at other times before, and shake myself." But "he wist not that the Lord had departed from him." The provocation of the Philistines brings out this, but his strength was gone before; and so with us, the trials only prove where we

are. They do not *make* us weak, but, if we give way before them, they prove that we have departed from the source of strength. And as we have God by Jeremiah, when recalling to the hearts of Israel the cause of their ruin, saying, "My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." God is practically given up, and something else taken up with.

We see again with Israel at Sinai the same thing. They had got a golden calf in the camp, in the place of God, whom they had turned away from, and when Moses had been in intercession with God, and entreats for their forgiveness, God says that he will not go up in the midst of **them**, but will send an angel before to lead them to the promised land. His threat of judgment made them mourn, but the land flowing with milk and honey and an angel to lead them there, suited very well. But Moses goes deeper. Nothing suits the man of faith but God Himself. Israel may be satisfied with an angel by the way, and the land at the end, but faith says, "If *Thy presence* go not with us, carry us not up hence." Let us not move a step on the way without that. What was the angel's presence, and the promised land to him, if Jehovah withheld His presence?

And it was just this that brought Israel to Bochim, as we read in the book of Judges, and David into the place in which we find him in these chapters, "Passing through the Valley of Baca." The place of strength, because of self-judgment, had been left. It was there that the "ark of God" had made a way for them through Jordan. The reproach of Egypt had rolled away, and Gilgal tells of not only deliverance from the "iron furnace," but of entrance into the promised rest, and circumcision is renewed. In all their wars, at first, they returned *there*, to the camp at evening. And where is our Gilgal but at the cross of Jesus, the heart returning there to meditate upon its glories and the results for us of not only deliverance from Egypt but entrance into Canaan?

There must be walking in self-judgment, denying the flesh a place, to walk in confidence with God and consequent strength. If this is not done, another thing will surely come—we shall find, instead of strength at Gilgal, tears at Bochim. (Baca and Bochim both from the same root, meaning tears or weeping.)

And may we not ask ourselves, Am I at Gilgal and finding there strength through the circumcision of nature, the judgment of it as before the cross?

But we get when Israel left that, God did not give them up—they did not gain victories, 'tis true, but God still follows them. What wondrous grace and what comfort for our hearts!

So God uses Bochim to discipline and break us down, as he did with Israel, and here also with David.

David had sinned against the Lord, and is here driven from his throne into exile by his son, and he gets to Baca, and what he finds even there is refreshment and blessing, when bowed to the hand of God. He "makes a well, and the rain fills the pools." There is no place in which God cannot bless us, if we are in the state of soul to receive it.

The first thing I would notice here is the unselfishness that comes out in David. He would send Ittai back, he would not have others to go into exile and sorrow with him. But Ittai, true-hearted and devoted, would cast in his lot with him, and share his fortunes whether in rejection or glory. And such is the path of the Church, sharing with Christ His rejection, as soon His glory.

But it is David under discipline we are engaged with now, and the next thing we have to witness is his telling Zadok and Abiathar to carry back the ark of God into the city. Now why was this? Was it that David did not value it? Witness the joy he had in bringing it from Ephrath (Bethlehem) to Zion, type of the journeying of the true ark the Lord Jesus from his birthplace to the cross, the place where, or the work rather by which, God could find a rest among sinners. Why then take back that ark but to show us that God's rest is undisturbed—remains the same, notwithstanding all the ups and downs of His people, and that rest is where his people look in faith while passing through the trials of this scene? "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts," &c. And therefore he says, "If He find pleasure in me, then will He bring me back, and show me both it and His habitation."

And is it not so for our hearts amidst all the circumstances that summoned us here? Where can one turn to for comfort and rest in this evil world? Is there one thing not spoiled by sin? Well, if there is nothing here that the heart can find

rest in, think of God's tabernacle being open to you. When man had spoiled all down here, both for God and himself, God opens heaven by the cross to sinners, and says there is the place I have for you now. And where can our hearts turn from all this scene of failure and ruin? not to the Church, or things being set right here, either in it or in the world, but to God's habitation, in the blessed assurance that He who has gone to prepare a place for us in there in the Father's House, will come and take us to it, that we may be with Himself where He is.

All this with David is, "*If He delight in me:*" a question we cannot raise, who are accepted in the Beloved; but he adds, "*if He say, I have no delight in thee: behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good to Him.*" What a blessed state of soul this was! He says God's will is best; if I am never brought back, yet He does what is right. What lies at the root of half our trouble is that we are not come to this in our souls—our wills are too unbroken; the moment we are broken in spirit we are happy; nothing but self-will hinders our blessing. We like to have our own way naturally, and practically deny God's right to order everything in our circumstances for us. But God will be God whatever people make of it; and He does what He pleases, and where He pleases, and when He pleases; but what He does is always right. But can we say, "*Let God do just what He pleases with me?*" There is this thing that is a trial, and that thing which I should like changed; but whilst in prayer I can tell Him all these things, and find relief about them thus, my heart should say, "*Let God do as seemeth good unto Him.*"

What we often do in circumstances that try us, and varied pressure that comes on us, is to turn to wretched expedients instead of the living God. But look at David here, his heart pressed with sorrow, his own son driving him from the throne and seeking his life, yet he accepts it all at the hand of God, and looks out to the place of His dwelling, and leaves all to God to order for him.

They speak to him of Ahithophel being among the conspirators. Now David knew him to be a crafty man, and one likely to do him much harm; and what does he do? He turns to God and says, "*O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel to foolishness.*" He casts his cares upon God. He

goes to the top of the hill and worships, and there receives an answer at once. He finds at once comfort for his heart and rest about the evil of Ahithophel, and there finds the suited man to do the needed work in Hushai.

In coming to the 16th chapter, we find what is sorrowful, in the easy way in which David was deceived by Ziba about Mephibosheth, but we pass from this to a brighter part of the scene. Shimei takes advantage of his sorrow to heap reproach upon him, and attributes his suffering to a wrong cause, and openly curses him. Deliverance is easy, and Abishai would go and "take off his head," and the Spirit of God marks out his being "surrounded with all his mighty men." He had power to deliver himself from his enemy. But for David, God is seen in it all, and deliverance must come from the hand of God, and he will have no other. He would have God put him right, and accepts at his hand the chastisement for his sins. God is the one who occupies his thoughts.

And this is what we have in Ps. LXXXIV., which refers to this time. David's thoughts are about God's house, and His altars, and the One who dwelt there, when himself in exile, and passing through the valley of Baca. He is weeping as he goes along. And what about? About failure. And yet David in his palace, a great man, was not half so happy as when driven out into exile and looking to God's house. He was satisfied with the excellency of Him who dwelt there, and longing to be with Him.

David had enough to give him a bad conscience and a troubled heart; and surely he felt it all, and rightly so. God had forgiven all, according to the word of Nathan, "The Lord hath put away thy sin;" but he was reaping the fruit of his sin, and that fruit was bitter in itself. Yet so gracious the God we know that there is no place in which He will not bless. Even here there is a well springing up in the place of discipline for failure. Have not we found it so ourselves, according to our measure, oftentimes? Peter got his heart into this scene, his self-confidence leads to a thorough breakdown, and he denies the One he professed to love beyond the rest. A look from that Blessed One sends him out to weep bitterly, and after He is risen the Lord goes on to restore his soul; and did not he find a well there? Surely he did. He had his heart probed to the

bottom, that the cause of failure might be seen and judged, and then the well was opened, an abundant spring.

But that is not all, "The rain also filleth the pools." Not only is a well springing up there, but blessing comes down from above. There is no thirst left. It is not saying, "My moisture is turned into the drought of summer," but refreshment full to overflowing. May we not more and more covet this place—not the failure of course—but the blessed sense of what God is to us? What He wants to do is to get at our hearts, and to do that He must break down our wills. He has a controversy with all that is of the flesh in us, and when our confidence in that is broken, He leads us on from strength to strength: "Every one of them in Zion appeareth before God." And this is what He is doing with us, teaching us our weakness, bringing our hearts to own it, and then bringing in His strength for us. Now the end is all triumph and praise.

It is in the sense of this that David can say, although the world had spread out its glories before him, "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand; I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of *my* God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

"The Lord God is a sun and a shield; the Lord will give grace and glory." "He will give grace;" He *has* done this, and "He will give glory." You can only have it from Him, and He will give it. What blessedness is this, beginning with grace and ending with glory! But there is more than that: "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." All along the way we have Him doing this, blessing us at every step. Does He give us every thing we *want*? Oh, no; but "no *good* thing will He withhold." He meets us in every need we have, giving in His love what is 'good for us. Are we happy in its being so? "O Lord of Hosts blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee." R. T. G.

A WORD TO A YOUNG BELIEVER.

MY DEAR M.,

I DON'T forget you, and often do I hope that your soul is cleaving fast to the Lord Jesus, and feeding on that rich pasture which He provides for the lambs and sheep of His flock. Per-

haps the most important thing for us is to keep our first love bright and real. You will serve him whom you love. The great motive in the heart of Paul was the love of Christ: "*He loved me,*" he said; and that which the Lord Himself pressed thrice on Peter was "*Lovest thou me?*" Full well does the Lord know what is the mighty spring of faithfulness to Himself, and that which stands higher in His estimation than intelligence or gift is simple love to Himself. He delights in the heart that values Himself. He could say of her who had taken her place at His feet to hear His word, that she had "*chosen the better part.*" He could say of her who had anointed Him for His burial, rather than lavish the cost of the ointment on the poor, "*She hath wrought a good work on me, and wheresoever the gospel shall be preached, this also that she has done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.*"

On the other hand, what led Ephesus to leave off their first works? Simply the fact that they had left their first love. Ah, what a secret! How closely the Lord observes the pulsations of the heart, the movements of the affections! How sensitive He is to the smallest alteration of His throne there!

Yes, you will serve and obey gladly Him whom you love. Does your heart ever become weary of the word and ways of your Lord and Saviour? Does it find less freshness, sweetness, and delight in learning of Him? Has the world come in to spoil and wither? Think of His love, and charge your soul to retain the sense of it as a treasure. "*Keep yourselves in the love of God,*" said Jude to an apostatising Christendom; "*The Lord direct your heart into the love of God,*" said Paul to a suffering Church; and easy it is to discover what furnished the wondrous impulse to that same apostle in his words, "*I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom,*" &c. The constraining love of Christ, apprehended in, and responded to by, our hearts, is that which alone can keep us true and faithful in a world where everything takes the character of a hindrance rather than a help to our heavenward course.

Dear young brother, you must be passing through much experience of the evil ways of this world in your busy life in ~~the world~~. Remember that you have your own part to play upon the stage of life—as a witness for Christ. It is well to recollect

that God is commenting on our life. He is our Biographer, as He was of Abel, Enoch, &c., in Heb. xi.; nor is any event omitted by His careful pen. Take care of the little things, and the great ones will not be overlooked. Rest not in present attainments. Thirst for more of God, as the hart for the water brooks. The Lord bless you. I trust all are well. My fond love to your family, and all the saints. I am well, and working still for the glorious Master.

Yours in the Lord,

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE INSPIRED BOOKS.

LEVITICUS—(Continued from p. 97.)

The peace-offering, as its name imports, speaks rather of the *effects* of the work of Jesus than of the work itself. The offering is given in the 3rd chapter, the laws relating to it in the 7th. Its character is sufficiently simple, as the only sacrifice of which the offerer himself partook. The priest had also his own part. The fat, especially of the inwards, is that which belonged to God. "The use of this symbol, fat, is sufficiently familiar in the word. 'Their heart is as fat as brawn.' 'Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked.' 'They are enclosed in their own fat, with their mouth they speak proudly.' It is the energy and force of the inward will, the inwards of a man's heart. Hence, where Christ expresses His entire mortification, He declares they could tell all His bones; and in Psalm cii. 'By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin.' But here, in Jesus, all that in nature was of energy and force—all His inward parts were a burnt-offering to God, entirely sacrificed and offered to Him for a sweet savour. This was God's food of the offering, 'the food of the offering made by fire unto the Lord.'"^{*}

The peace-offering furnishes thus, as it were, a common table, where God and man, and the priest also, the mediator between God and man, find common satisfaction and delight. It is the aspect of the work of Christ which Luke, of all the gospels, presents throughout. The fatted calf furnishing the table for the

* Synopsis, vol. i., p. 230. 166.

prodigal is but one, though a beautiful, expression of it. All through it God is speaking of a Saviour and salvation, of forgiveness of sins, and peace, bringing home to man's heart the assurance of that which angel-voices from that Saviour's birth, yea and before His birth, announce with joy. Man—his need met and satisfied—catches the tone of it, and his praises, too, significantly begin and end the book. Even the cross has this peace-offering character, and instead of our having there the Lord's cry of forsaken sorrow, the witness of the drinking of the cup of wrath against sin, He twice cries, "Father;" and a dying thief by His side, the suited expression of the efficacy of that by which peace was wrought, goes the same day with Him to Paradise.

I notice but one point more as to the peace-offering: that it is burnt *upon* the burnt-offering; beautiful tale, and simple to read, of the foundation of our peace in that full acceptance of the Beloved wherein we are accepted. That is whereon peace for us is founded, not in the mere putting away of sin, however perfectly it might be done.

This closes the "sweet-savour" offerings. The two following, the sin and trespass-offerings, present both, though not in equal degree, the judgment of sin; and that is no sweet-savour to God, nought in which He delights, however needed, and however much He who bore in grace that judgment, was (as He ever was) His delight. This last is expressed by the fat, still and unvaryingly put upon the altar, however else the victim might be dealt with.

The sin-offering is, of all the five, the most various in regard to what God would accept as such. But in the lowest forms of it this is plainly given as His gracious accommodation to the poverty of the offerer: "If he be not able to bring a lamb," &c.; "if he be not able to bring two turtledoves." In this last case, that of extremest poverty, the offering brought is of fine flour, and there is no shedding of blood at all, although "without shedding of blood is no remission." It is clear thus, that this "fine flour" was not at all what in God's sight was needed as a sin-offering, but what the poverty of man's apprehension of what was needed might bring instead. Still, if it was Christ brought by faith, Christ trusted as a Saviour, God could and would accept Christ for him who trusted Him, however dim the apprehension of the work done, and needed to be done by Him.

for sin. Thus Peter, with divinely given faith, owns "the Christ, the Son of the living God," and is distinctly pronounced "blessed" because of his faith. Yet the Lord speaks of His death, and so ignorant is this same Peter of what was needed in a sin-offering, that he starts from it with horror: "That be far from thee, Lord." None could be now so ignorant of course. But so the word of God illustrates what it fully assures us of, that "He that believeth in Him hath everlasting life," dim as the *understanding* may be as to the proper character of His work.

(To be Continued.)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

(1.) *Q.* What is the meaning of 2 Tim. ii.: 12, especially the last clause, "If we deny Him, he also will deny us." Whom does the "we" comprehend?

Ans. It is a general proposition and applies to any one. There are very many such statements in Scripture, where the whole force would be lost, or positive error would result from limiting their application to any special class among professing Christians. For instance, here, suppose we were to say the "we" meant *real* Christians, it would imply the possibility of their being finally denied by Christ. If, on the other hand, we made it apply to only mere professors, it is plain that, *as such*, without anything else, they would be denied. But now, apply it to the whole mass of professors, true or false, and there is force and propriety in the statement: "if we are denying Him," for that is the force of the Greek present, "He also will deny us." What underlies all this class of statements is the truth that those who are the saved by grace are also "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them." And thus, "as many as are *led* by the Spirit of God, *they* are the sons of God." (Rom. viii.: 14.) God would not have His own blessed grace abused to cover unholiness of life and walk. It does not limit or make little of that grace to say so, but, on the contrary, magnifies it. It would be making little of it to suppose that the "grace which

bringeth salvation" did *not* also "teach us to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world." (Tit. ii.: 12.) That the salvation is for sinners, yea the chief, is most true, and wonderful as true, but the sinner saved is brought in heart to God, and so a change of life is the result.

Thus, in the midst of a mass of professors, of whom, for the most part, we can only say "the Lord knoweth them that are His," it is most needful—due to Him whose grace we own, and due to souls who may be, on the one side, deceiving themselves as to their own condition, or, on the other, stumbled by the evil ways of professing Christians—to maintain the Divine principle that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord,"—that "if ye live after the flesh, ye are about to die; but if through the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."* (Rom. viii.: 13.)

No one who has true faith in Christ will ever be lost; but then true faith purifies and sanctifies, so that the general truth of such statements is not set aside by the grace that saves us, but maintained. Such an one may be conscious of feebleness and inconsistency, but if feeble, he is still in heart Christ's, which is the very principle of holiness.

You may say "Peter denied Christ nevertheless." So he did; and had he persisted in it, must have been denied. True, it was a denial forced out of him by the pressure of circumstances into which he had got without God, and where, therefore, he had no strength to stand. Him whom he denied he believed in and loved. Yet I could not accept even that as setting aside the application of 2 Tim. ii.: 12 to such cases, common as, alas, they are. All sin is sin, and He "with whom we have to do" cannot suffer it. It is the road to death.

But believers "have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." This does not upset the principle in the text; but grace works in conformity with the holiness of God, bringing the soul to humbling and repentance, and the feet back into the way of life. The grace of God is, of course, sovereign to do

* The difference between the two futures here, (not expressed in the common version,) is very beautiful. Those who live after the flesh are *about* to die. Yet they may not; God in mercy may interpose. On the other hand, those who through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, are not merely *about* to live, but *shall*.

this at any time for any one. But it only establishes the truth of God's jealousy for holiness.

The principle, then, in 2 Tim. ii. 12 applies to all professing Christians, true or false; and grace conforms the true ones to it. For the rest, the passage remains as a solemn warning to those who would turn the grace of God into license for a careless life, or covering for an ungodly one.

(2.) *Q.* John xiv.: 12: What are the "greater works?" or rather, in what way can I, even by the Spirit, do greater works than the Lord when on earth?

Ans. Our Lord's words find a key to their interpretation in that truth so prominently announced in the Gospel of John, the coming of the Comforter to bear witness of the glory of the One, who having glorified God upon the earth had been glorified by Him at His right hand in heaven. Thus we find in ch. vii., "the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Before the rock was smitten, the rivers could not flow forth in the desert. Thus, even during the time of the Lord's sojourn on earth, there was hindrance to the full flow of blessing. But His work being accomplished, Himself on high as having put away the sin that hindered, and the Spirit of God come to bear witness of the value of His work, and the glory of Him who did it, the fulness began indeed to flow out. Pentecost was a blessed assurance of what had begun. And if men were the earthen vessels of this unmeasured grace, it was only the more a witness of Divine power, and a testimony to Christ.

Thus, contrasting Pentecost and its converted thousands with the scanty fruits apparent of the Lord's own personal ministry, I understand the Lord's saying, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, *because I go to my Father.*"

But when it is asked, in what way can I do these greater works? I question very much if it be true we can. We have the same Spirit surely, just as really as the the first Christians, and for our individual joy and peace, and strength and holiness, we may reckon on Him now as then. But power in testimony, of which this verse speaks, is another matter. The Church has failed and disowned her Lord, and falsified the testimony entrusted to her. We are in the last end of long, long

years of decline, in the midst of a moral ruin, apparent to the men of the world themselves. In such a state of things faithful souls will still find blessing in the testimony no doubt; but they must be content to find it in a way wherein they have themselves to own the sin and dishonour done to their blessed Lord by His own so long.

After *Babylon*, you have no more eternal power, nor signs, nor multitudes even gathered under the power of spiritual leaders, till New Testament times. We have had our *Babylon* also, and God will not forget it, though He still loves to bless and save, and keeps a book of remembrance for those that fear Him too. But He would have us like the men of *Issachar* to have "understanding of the times," and recognize the solemnity of the Church's condition—of our own, for we have all had part in it. Pentecostal outflow is no more. The Lord's word is yet, however, to those faithful to Him, "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it;" but He can add, in connection with that, only "for thou hast a *little* strength."

THE GREAT SHEPHERD.

"I sat under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste."

Sweet to trace his toiling footsteps,
 Here amidst the desert sands;
 Bear in memory all his sorrow,
 Thorn-clad head and pierced hands;
 Learn his love beside the manger,
 Learn it on the stormy wave,
 By the well and in the garden—
 Learn it by the cross and grave.

Yet not only in remembrance
 Do we watch that stream of love,
 Still a mighty flood outflowing
 From the throne of God above;
 Still a treasure all uncounted,
 Still a story all untold,
 Unexhausted and unfathomed,
 Fresh as in the days of old.

Christ at God's right hand (unwearied
 With His people's tale of sin,)
 Day by day and hour by hour,
 Welcoming each wanderer in.

On his heart, amid the glory,
 Bearing all our grief and care,
 Every burden, ere we feel it,
 Weighed and measured in His prayer.

Fragrant thus with priestly incense,
 Every want and sorrow tells,
 Thoughts that fill the heart of Jesus
 In the glory where he dwells.
 All His love, His joy and glory
 By His Spirit here made known,
 Whilst that Spirit bears the sorrow
 Of His saints before the throne.

And the One who felt the sorrow
 Pleads before the Father's face,
 Knowing all the needed solace,
 Claiming all the needed grace.
 We so faithless and so weary,
 Serving with impatient will;
 He unwearied in our service,
 Gladly ministering still.

Girded with the golden girdle,
 Shining as the mighty sun,
 Still his pierced hands will finish
 All His work of love begun.
 On the night of his betrayal,
 In the glory of His throne,
 Still with faithful patience washing
 All defilement from His own.

When the Father's house resoundeth
 With the music and the song,—
 When the bride in glorious raiment
 Sees the One who loved so long—
 Then for new and blessed service
 Girt afresh will he appear,
 Stand and serve before his angels
 Those who waited for Him here.

He who led them through the desert,
 Watched and guided day by day,
 Turned the flinty rocks to water,
 Made them brooks beside the way—
 He will bring them where the fountains
 Fresh and full spring forth above,
 Still throughout the endless ages
 Serving in the joy of love.

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTIFICATION.

My aim is simply to bring together a few texts upon this point and to give, as far as God enables me, as exact expression as possible of the Scripture doctrine.

And first, as to justification: it is simply acquittal from all guilt—a different thought from pardon, for pardon supposes guilt, but on the other hand quite different also from the pronouncing meritorious or entitled to reward. “By Him all that believe are justified *from* all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses;” “He that is dead is freed (*marg.* justified) from sin.”

What justifies is the blood of Jesus,—just what people call the passive obedience of the Lord, and which many strangely reject as giving title to heaven. “Being justified by His blood.” If we read also that “He was raised again for our justification,” it is because Christ being raised from the dead was the witness of our sins, which were laid on Him, being gone before God. His resurrection was the formal act, so to speak, by which we were justified by God.

As to *how* we are justified,—it is through faith, which is the reception of God’s gift of Christ, offered freely to “whosoever will.” We are thenceforth identified with Christ or “in Christ” before God, and “justified in the name of”—or as represented by—“the Lord Jesus.” His death becomes ours thus,—His blood actually, and His resurrection formally, justifying us. Dead with Christ, “he that is dead is justified from sin.”

Our place then as believers is in Christ risen from the dead. All the full value of His work, of His life and death in one blessed whole, is ours as there, and the place He gets, glorified by God in virtue of it all, determines the place we get as identified with Him. Of course it is the place He takes as man (which He is still, true man,) I speak of. The glory of His Godhead none can share.

As in Him, if we speak of what we have in Him, we say perhaps first of all, that we have righteousness. Not what the Scripture means by the "righteousness of God." We are *made* that in Him,—not *have* or possess it, nor is it imputed to us. *Righteousness* is imputed, but that is just and simply the equivalent of saying, "sin is not imputed." (See Rom. iv. 6-9.) Christ being "made of God" to me "righteousness" is but another way of expressing the truth just now stated of our justification in Him. "By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." This obedience had to be, because of what we were, "unto death" itself, "even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii.)

"The righteousness of God" is another thing. It is uniformly throughout Scripture the righteous character of God,—His attribute of righteousness. It is not a righteousness which God *gives* or *works out*, but which He *has*, and therefore surely acts in. Any one may see by the very same epistle in which the whole question of our justification and acceptance is treated of, that it is used where the thought of His giving righteousness could not be introduced, e.g. "if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God." (Rom. iii. 5.)

On the other hand, where the apostle speaks of his "having righteousness of (in the sense of 'from') God" he does not use the same expression. (Phil. iii. 9.) The Greek reads plainly "from."

The wonderful thing is, that the righteousness of God has been revealed on the side of the sinner. A work has been accomplished which has declared God's righteousness (necessarily as against sin) in such a way that I say, "It never *was* manifested as there." At the cross was declared "His righteousness as to the passing over of sins that are past, (*i.e.* of past times) through the forbearance of God;" and by the cross is declared "His righteousness in this present time, so that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Thus God's righteousness is His character, displayed in a certain acting of His,—here in justifying a believer. The cross is His righteousness in this. His righteousness therefore justifies the sinner. It is thus on the principle of faith in Jesus Christ towards everybody, ("unto all") because all are sinners; and wherever there is faith, it is "upon," or "over," all that have it. (Rom. iii. 21-26.) That is, it is the shield that protects, or the hand that covers their nakedness.

But the righteousness of God has also been manifested in another way : viz. in raising Christ up from the dead and setting Him in the heavenly places. To that righteousness He appealed as against the world. (Jno. xvii. 25.) And Himself says, the Spirit of truth, coming after His ascension and glory, would thus convict the world not only of sin in not believing on Him, but also of *righteousness*, (clearly God's), because He went to the Father and they saw Him no more. Righteousness gave Him in virtue of His work done, a place in the heavens. But the work being done for others, "God's righteousness" is displayed no less in giving us a place in Him. Thus, He being made sin *for us*, we are "made God's righteousness in Him."

But thus the "righteousness of God" remains simply His own character, not imputed, nor imparted, nor conferred on us; and our being made it is just our place in Christ shewing it forth. Righteousness is imputed to us, clearly; and Christ is our righteousness before God. If any should say that the latter term means something more positive than only clearing from all charge and blame, that it involves the positive side of His whole blessed obedience in life as well as in death, and our standing in the value of it all, it may be that it does so. It is surely true that we do so stand at any rate, and may be the truth there. This would make it more than our justification in Christ simply. But it may give fuller meaning to such texts as Rom. v. 17: "They which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness;" and also, (ver. 19), "by the obedience of One many shall be made righteous." The doctrine is the same, though the words may differ by which we express it.

THE PLAINS OF MAMRE.

Gen. xviii.

ABRAHAM is "the father of all them that believe;" it is not strange therefore, that his life should be a sort of pattern-life of faith. Any one may see how largely it figures in the inspired record in Heb. xi., of those who "by faith obtained a good report."

Of this faith, as influencing the life, the apostle tells us, the characteristics are, that it is "the substance" or substantiating, "of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It thus

puts the possessor of it outside the visible things through which he walks, through the power of a hope which is outside. It cuts across nature—necessarily so, because nature is fallen away from the God to whom faith comes, and with whom it walks.

And so with Abraham. The God of glory had appeared to him, called him, and separated him to Himself. From country, kindred and father's house He had brought him out into a land by promise his, but where in the meantime he had no inheritance, no, not so much as to set his foot on. To be true to the call of God with him was not simply to follow things that were true and pure and honest, comely and of good report, but, beside all this, to be a pilgrim and a stranger, taking no root in the soil, having no abiding city, living in "things hoped for" but "unseen."

A previous history of this book of Genesis may give additional plainness and distinctness of application to the present one. In Noah's time, the old world had been judged, and a new one emerged out of the baptismal waters of the flood. This new earth God had blessed and entered into a covenant with it, and from the ground of the old world so judged, a man had passed in the grace of God through the very waters of judgment, into the new scene of blessing. Surely the type of him to whom as "in Christ, a new creature, old things are passed away and all things are become new." His name "Noah" means "*Rest*." And the rest of new-creation it is that introduces us to the Abraham-life and walk of faith.

This life is a pilgrim life necessarily, for we walk through the old creation still. By *faith* we have seen it covered with the waters of another flood, of which the "waters of Noah" were but the anticipation and the type. But then faith is "the evidence of things" as yet "unseen." And though for faith and in Christ we have passed through the judgment of all flesh, and out of the scene of judgment altogether—crucified, dead, buried, quickened and risen with Christ—for sight and sense we are still in the old creation, and linked with it too by a body which has not yet received its redemption, as the soul has. "*We wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*"

Thus are we pilgrims and strangers in the *old* creation because "in Christ" we are in *new* creation; nay, strangers to ourselves,

and set to "keep under the body and bring it into subjection." To be true to the call of God, we must be no less but *more* fully pilgrims than even Abraham was. For the true heavenly light has fully shined and has made manifest the darkness, and if "sanctified and sent *into* the world" it is as those to whom their Lord has said, "Ye are *not* of the world even as I am not of the world."

Thus Abraham's life is but the type of ours. Called to Canaan, a land his own yet not his own, he walked up and down there, heir of that goodly heritage, not yet possessor. His tent was characteristic, as his altar was. True, the page of his life was not an unblotted one. But still he was characteristically "Abram the Hebrew," that is the "passenger," the "pilgrim." And he remained in the place which necessitated it. If he had been mindful of that country from whence he came out, he might have had opportunity to have returned. It was of God that his obedience to the Divine call should be fully tested. He abode true to it, his heart only lifted the more heavenward by the trial; and God was not ashamed to be called his God.

Thus Abraham's tent and his altar were in companionship. And very bright was the pilgrim life of him who was called "the friend of God," and with whom as a friend, the Lord Almighty held familiar intercourse. Only more wondrous in its way the fulfilment of that promise of One in whom God has spoken to us after a nearer sort: "If a man love Me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

Let us remember this, while we try to read a page of Abraham's history, that for us there should not be the occasional visits and appearances of the God of all grace, but that abiding manifestation to the soul, of which the Lord Jesus speaks. Redemption has made this difference. As soon as that was accomplished, though but in an external manner in Israel, the foreshadowing only of that which we enjoy—God could come down and dwell with the people so redeemed. True, it was in a manner answering to the character of the redemption wrought. Still, a pledge of what would be when the reality had been effected, when, after Jesus had been glorified, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, should come. "Ye know Him," says the Lord to His disciples, speaking of that day, "for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

This is more than Abraham's portion, much as was that. There are some parts however of the Old Testament page, which clothed with the light of the New, get as it were transfigured. These we must take in to get the full picture designed by Him who is the Author as fully of the Old Testament as of the New—of Genesis as of John.

Can we refuse thus to interpret those plains of Mamre where we find Abraham's tent so often pitched, and which, we are told, were "in Hebron"—when we know that Mamre means "fatness," and Hebron, "alliance, association," or as we may term it in New Testament phrase, "communion?" Who of us will not think of those plains of pasturage where the Good Shepherd guides and secures His sheep, where in fellowship with the Father and the Son we do indeed find that which feeds and enriches the soul?

"And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre, and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day. And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him, and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent-door and bowed himself toward the ground, and said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant; let a little water be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on; for therefore are ye come unto your servant. And they said, So do as thou hast said."

Very beautiful to see the Lord God coming to meet man upon common ground, as one may say; not even in angelic glory, but as man. He has done it fully now, we know. "Three men stood by him." Not two angels and the One before whom angels veil their faces. Yet it really was so. But One whose delights were with the sons of men, One whose prerogative it is that He *can* "empty Himself" as no creature can, *by* emptying to fill His creatures with His fulness.

But Abraham's practised heart knew under all disguises Him who stood there.* He was of the same company with those who in after days could say, when the Son of God came robed in flesh,

* "My Lord" (Adonai) in verse 3 is a word only applied to God. It would be better "Lord," simply.

"We have seen his glory." And his heart is ready to *welcome* too at once the One he has recognized. There is none of the unbelieving cry so often heard afterwards, "Let not God speak to us," "We have seen God and we shall die." No, he meets the Lord God in the simple confidence of faith, and entertains Him in the way in which He is pleased to present Himself. If He stoop to come as man, Abraham will not say, "That be far from thee, Lord," but as man receive Him, putting before Him undoubtingly his cakes and butter and milk and the calf which he has dressed. Once again might it be said, "He staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief,"—for a "promise" that presence of the Lord was—"but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." Nor does faith get a hesitating answer from the God it glorifies. So "he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat."

We may well stand also a little and look on. Do we in the like unsuspecting way receive even the Christ now come to us, God manifest in the flesh? Or do we draw back in any wise from His approaches as if He knew not the full reality of the place which He had taken, or else the full reality of what *we* are, among whom He has come? I cannot find that Abraham even put his dress in order, to appear before the Lord Almighty. His best and his worst were not so far apart as to make him think of it. There was no preparation of himself to appear before Him who knew him through and through. Just what he was, whatever he was, the love that met him was worthy of reception then and there. And then and there he welcomed it. All the sweeter because he *was* unworthy. He who says, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me," says it to rebuke the unbelief which would make us *wash the feet first ourselves*. Nay, *He* must do it. He who knows infinitely better than we do His own holiness knows, better than we do, how to conform us to it, and has *taken upon Himself* the doing that.

And I know not what does cleanse the feet, if His love do not. And I know not what will give even the true knowledge of how dirty our feet are, like Jesus stooping down to wash them. But at the same time, *He* must cleanse; and I just turn to Him, the poor worthless, helpless creature that I am, and drink in that love, which, because it *satisfies, purifies*.

And the Lord can eat and drink of Abraham's food under the tree at Abraham's tent door. Yes, His "*delights*" are with the sons of men. The fruit of the travail of His soul *satisfies* Him. Love has brought Him down so low, that a Samaritan *inner* may minister to Him if she will. "Give me to drink." And when they came back from the town with food, He was so satisfied, they ask, "Hath any one brought Him ought to eat?"

And Abraham has now got into the place where the long cherished desire of his heart shall be fulfilled. Sarah shall have a son. The son of the bondmaid shall not be the heir, but the son of the freewoman. Nature is now dead, for Abraham is near a hundred years old; and Divine power and grace are free to show themselves. Oh, to have got fully there! to the end of expectation as to ourselves, where self-righteousness and self-sufficiency no more remain to hinder the display of divine power in us! Fitly is it joined with what we have been already looking at—faith which will be content to be as it were foolish in its simplicity, yet God-honouring, and God-honoured.

I speak but of one thing more. What springs from a soul freed from itself, and in communion with Him who is in His grace thus stooping to man His creature? Why the heart flows forth in the same channel with this grace of God; and the scene being what sin has made it, the wants and misery and sin everywhere press upon one, till the heart, again over-burdened but now with other than its own cares, pours itself out in its creature-weakness to Him on whom it rests. This is intercession, and is what the chapter closes with. From Abraham, his friend, God will not hide what He is going to do. In the wonderful language of Divine condescension, He speaks as exercised and tried by the report of Sodom's wickedness. He had not watched (as it were) for this evil. The cry of it had come to him. He would go down and see if things were altogether according to the cry of it which had reached him. If they were not so He would know.

Thereupon that wondrous intercession follows: a plea for mercy founded upon righteousness—a plea which, as He invited it, He goes with, step by step, until the faith of even Abraham fails, and he can ask no more. Then the Lord left communing with Abraham, and went His way.

I do not comment. May the simple facts speak home to our

hearts, and the truth of God assert its power over us, and may you and I, reader, know every feature of this scene intimately as we ought.

F. W. G.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INSPIRED BOOKS.

(Continued from page 136.)

Yet on the other hand, this is not made light of. On the contrary, as we shall see, the fuller the apprehension of the cross the nearer and more abidingly is the soul brought *consciously* to God. That which is needed to maintain a priestly place in His presence is widely different from that which is needed to bring the soul into the really Jewish place of "one of the common people." This latter place is indeed the place of no Christian *rightly* now, for all such are priests, but their own *apprehension* of their place is another thing. And here the apprehension of that place is distinctly seen as connected with the apprehension of the perfect putting away of sin by the cross.

The first form of the offering is that for the priest, the full reality of what was needed to give the Christian (for all such are priests) his place before God (Ch. iv. 1-12.) The bullock is slain, and wholly burnt (except the fat) upon the ground outside the camp. The blood is sprinkled seven times before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary, and the horns of the altar of incense are anointed with it, too. The rest of the blood is poured out at the bottom of the altar of the burnt-offering. The apostle (Heb. xiii.) dwells upon the fact that *only* where the body of the victim was burnt without the camp did the blood go into the sanctuary. This applies fully only to the day of atonement, for then only was the holiest of all entered. But no other blood than this ever entered even into the outermost sanctuary. This marks clearly the momentous fact, that though atonement is by blood (and so it is ever stated) it was only the blood of a victim burned outside the camp that could really bring nigh to God. And this place outside the camp is the place of the leper, cut off from the congregation, and shut out from the presence of God (ch. xiii. 2 Chr. xxiv. 21.) And such was the place our blessed Lord took when, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, He was made sin for us, who knew no sin.

Wrath endured, the full depth of sin reached, God can open the sanctuary, and give a place in His presence where, in the complete security which the blood sprinkled before Him bestows, the heart can freely pour itself out in praise, the blood anoints the incense-altar. The type here is not the full image of what we have, as Heb. x. 1 reminds us: because for us the veil is rent, and we have "boldness to enter into the holiest" itself.

Yet in the type this is implied in a very peculiar and blessed way. For the "anointed" priest is the *high-priest*, he who presents the whole people before God, the well-known figure of Christ Himself. The literal application supposes the sin of the high-priest himself, and his place secured, his altar of incense anointed with the blood of the sin-offering. As a type, it is Christ confessing the sin of His people (as our High-priest himself knew no sin) and thus the place He takes before God, He takes for them and they in Him.

This the next offering confirms (13-21.) The sin-offering for the whole people is treated exactly as that for the high-priest, the blood in the same way sprinkled before the veil and anointing the golden altar of incense. The congregation takes, as it were, the place of the high-priest himself.

Thus far the divine thought, the perfection of the offering. In the next two cases the whole character of it is lowered. Here the ruler (22-29) and one of the common people (29-35) are substituted for the high-priest and congregation of the former two. And what does this imply but the losing sight of Christ as the representative of His people, if not also as the One who loved and gave Himself for His church? His Lordship is recognized; and the "goat" here put for the "bullock" in the former case, speaks still of the Lord as a substitute* on the cross: while its being a "ruler" here instead of a high-priest, tells of how His being a representative *in glory* also is lost sight of. The result is, there is no blood-sprinkling in the holy place nor anointing of the *golden* altar at all, but simply of the altar of burnt-offering, in the outer court, to which any "one of the common people" might approach.

* For this "goat" is the type of a sinner, as in Matth. xxv. very plainly, and is prominent in connection with the sin-offering everywhere: thus speaking in it of the Lord in the sinner's place.

Now, I have said, this is a place which no Christian has. It is Jewish; but nevertheless a place which may be taken, and is, wherever the standing in Christ is not practically apprehended. Such are they who are always coming afresh to the cross, the altar of burnt-offering, sheltering themselves from judgment by it, but never brought in the knowledge of a place in and as Christ before God into the condition of purged worshippers in the holy place.

The lower grades still fall short even of this, and there are various interminglings of the trespass-offering (ch. v. 6) burnt-offering (7), and lastly even, meat-offering (13) as before noticed. All this tells on the one hand of the poverty of man, but on the other of the grace of God, who knowing what Christ is for Him, where He is trusted in, can still be gracious, spite of the cloudiest apprehension of His atoning work. Still, in all, His work is owned as needed, and Himself as made an offering for sin.

We pass on now to the trespass offering, and here a very distinct feature presents itself. Sin is looked at in the sin-offering in its own intrinsic character as evil; in the trespass offering as *injury*—"harm done" (ch. v.: 16.) Along with the ram for an offering there was to be brought, in silver shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, the sum estimated to cover the harm done; and a fifth part more added to it. This was to be given to the priest when the wrong was done to God, to the person wronged when done to man. Thus there was in each case not mere restitution but over-payment; while, on the other hand, the death of the victim witnessed still the solemn truth that, whatever might be done in this way, "without shedding of blood was no remission."

The application of all this is simple and beautiful, telling us that God would not only have atonement made for sin, but reparation too for injury; and that in this also He is not content with *bare* restitution,—there must be more than the mere effacing the results of sin; a positive gain, an over-plus of blessing, must remain to those who have suffered from it. The two characters of trespass, against God and against man, are very distinctly and beautifully marked in this offering: the first in ch. v.: 14-19; the second in ch. vi.: 1-7. And even so, in every sin that ever was, there has been this double injury, God robbed

of his glory, man shorn of his blessing; while in the work of the Lord Jesus there has been remembrance made of both. He who restored that which he took not away has repaired the double injury, and in such sort that both God and man have reaped from His work more than ever sin had robbed them of. Man had lost Adamic life,—he has gained (the believer has) eternal life in Christ; he had lost innocence—he has gained in Christ “righteousness and holiness of truth;” he had lost earth—he has gained heaven; he had lost a human paradise—he has gained the “paradise of God.” And then as to God, if His righteousness, wisdom, love were in question through man’s sin,—where would man or angel now look for the display of these His attributes but to that “wondrous cross,” where the rays of divine “light,” meeting the storm of divine wrath against sin, broke into the many-coloured beams of the bow of promise!

To all this I can but thus briefly refer. I would mention, however, that to these two offerings, (sin and trespass) the first two gospels plainly point. Matthew is the divine exposition of the sin, Mark of the trespass-offering. The cry of abandonment upon the cross, given in each, shews us the opposite side of the truth to that exhibited in the “sweet savour” offerings; while just here, in Matthew, lest any should attribute knowledge of sin to Him who was “made sin for us,” the “it is most holy” (vi. 25) of the offering is found again in the threefold witness of him who betrayed, of him who condemned, and of heaven itself (in the dream of Pilate’s wife) to the spotless perfectness of the sin-bearing victim (Matt. xxvii. 4, 19, 24.)

Mark does not give us this, but his gospel, being the blessed picture of the ministering Servant-Son, gives us thus His really making up to man the injury sin had wrought. And so, too, the cross needed to have the darkest character, if it would shew us the dishonour done to God repaired, and righteousness, as well as love, vindicated in the trespass-offering.

Then the cloud is removed. God and man, in Luke as in the Peace-offering, can fully meet. The tale of salvation and forgiveness can be told and listened to. And in peace and fellowship with God we can go on to learn, as in John, all the virtues of the *burnt-offering* and its “meat-offering” too: Christ in His person and work, as seen by the eye and estimated by the heart of God, before whom and-unto whom He lived and died.

ON CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE. (2, 193-5)

I BELIEVE that there should be much more of simple divine experience in our soul than there is. Some have been rather turned from this by certain absurd methods of speaking on Christian experience, arising, I judge, from misapprehension on the subject. "Come ye that fear God, and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul." I might take that passage as expressive of what I understand by experience—it is what God has done for our souls. Experiences are the sensible fruits of the Spirit's presence in us, leading us into communion. But conflicts have been confounded with experience. This has obscured the subject I believe. Conflicts are the results of the renewed mind meeting the old lusts,—meeting them in any form, whether as occurring to bring in bondage and fear, or as tempting to stir up sin, and thus to blot the conscience. Rom. vii. may be read as a place of conflict, but experiences are not conflicts. Experiences are the results of the blessed operation and grace of the Holy Ghost, upon the renewed mind,—awakening its hopes,—strengthening its faith,—enlarging its understanding, or helping its intercession. Rom. viii. may be read as a place of experience. This is the difference, I judge, between these two chapters, and accordingly the Holy Ghost is not named as in action in the viith of Romans; but the parties there are, as I have observed, the renewed conscience (of course I know the fruit of the Spirit,) and the lusts.—The one meeting the other, conflict as the result is raised between them.

But when we meditate on the character of that Spirit who dwells in us, the forms in which He is revealed as acting in our souls, we may then see how much more rich our experiences should be than they are. He is the blessed living power within, giving efficacy to what we have in Christ, if not hindered. God is said to have sealed us with the Holy Ghost. He has in that way, and by that gift, appropriated us individually to Himself. But this seal has a large and glorious character on it, the impressions of which we should *know*, and that is our experience.

This Seal or Spirit thus given to us is an unction (1 John ii.) As such, He is the power and light of all knowledge in us, in the mystery of Christ. (Col. ii.) But the Spirit as the unction is *in us*, to give those materials their real and due power, that they may not lie as cold inert masses in the mere understanding, but affect us as they should, being so divine and glorious.

This Spirit is also a witness. (1 John v.)—As such He is the assurance, and rest, and liberty of faith in us. We have the grounds or materials of the full assurance of faith in the person and work of Christ; (Heb. x.) but the Holy Ghost is in us as the witness, to give those materials their power, so that our souls may indeed enjoy the rest and liberty, and the blessed stability of heart with which such strong ground of confidence in God should fill us.

This Spirit is also an earnest. (Eph. i.)—As such He is in us the joy of hope.—We have in our Jesus all that can animate hope, and draw forth the longings and boundings of the soul toward the future glories—promise and revelation largely furnishing this. But the Holy Ghost is in us as an earnest, to give these promises and revelations their due attractions, so that they may not merely be looked at, or understood, but may lead the heart to gladness or other affections, worthy of the hope of such inheritance.

Now if the Holy Ghost be in us in such characters as these, what rich experience in our souls might we not reckon upon—what strength of faith when the witness is in us!—what joy of hope when the earnest is in us!—what light, and largeness of knowledge when the unction is in us! No doubt there is another kingdom, the power of which sadly hinders and defiles, but still this kingdom of God, and the presence of the Spirit in such form of life and power is *also a reality*, and we may count on great things; but it is but little that we either know in ourselves, or generally see in others. We want the more due culture of this new kingdom, which is “Righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.”—We want the power to watch and pray—the power to let the fire kindle by meditation—the power of simply believing all the rich and glorious things that are spoken, and the power to refuse the rising of that rival and other kingdom in us, which is ever watchful of its own interests.

I have observed before on the difference between conflict and experience. It is, I judge, well to note this—Conflict arises from the renewed mind dealing with, or getting into collision with the lusts of the old nature, and the power of the enemy. Experience arises from the renewed mind dwelling in its proper element, and dealing with the truth or the precious things of Christ, in the power of the Holy Ghost who dwells there. Con-

lict comes from this mind being dragged downward, and out of its due place.—Experience comes from its being drawn upwards, towards its own proper place; and these two chapters to which I referred,—Rom. vii. and viii. give us the divine, though different provision for these two conditions. “O wretched man that I am,” cries out the renewed or quickened soul under pressure of conflict, “who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”—The relief comes through Jesus, “I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” In its communion, or experience, the same renewed or quickened soul is conscious of “infirmities”—it knows not how or what to pray for as it ought.—The relief comes through the Spirit, “The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered, and He that searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” This is divine teaching of the greatest comfort. Jesus ends the conflict—the Holy Ghost perfects the communion of the poor saint; and in this viiith of Romans I must suggest one other thing, it shows us the Holy Spirit's presence and grace with the saint in two respects.—First. When the saint is strong, being in that communion which the dispensation calls us to, and is crying “Abba Father,” then the Spirit joins in this, and by His testimony. Second. When the saint is weak, unable to conduct the communion in full intelligence or power, not knowing what to pray for as he ought, then the Spirit helps the infirmity, and puts His perfect communication with the mind of God in the place of our imperfect communion. (See ver. 16, 26.) This is the two-fold office of the gracious Spirit noticed here, so that whether we be strong or weak, He is for the saint, warranting our confidence,—helping our weakness.

O for simple faith to *know* and *enjoy* His love.

J. G. B.

THE THREE WITNESSES.

. 1. John v 6-12.

It is well to remark that “witness,” “record” and “testimony” in this passage are exactly the same thing, the same word in the original. The 11th verse gives the subject of this testimony, and it is twofold. “God has given us eternal life.” It is not

something already in man, or an improvement or modification of this nature as born of Adam. It is the gift of God: "God hath given to us eternal life."

Secondly, we learn where this life is found, and how possessed. Again it is not in the first Adam, but in the Son of God. There and there only, as given to us, is it found. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." It is only by possessing Christ that we have life at all, that is, spiritual, divine life. It is God's gift, and possessed by possessing His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The apostle calls three witnesses to prove his assertion,—the spirit, the water, and the blood. They bear witness to this truth of where life is to be had—in the entire setting aside (for faith) of the old man, and having the Son of God and life in Him. He came by water and blood, cleansing and expiation. This is the necessary condition and character for us of eternal life with God. But where are these to be found? Christ came in the power of both. But the water and the blood came out of His side, and He died,—every link broken with the first Adam. He had been enmity against God, proving it in rejecting Christ, and Christ was gone. As regards men in the world they were to see Him no more. Death has come in, and closed absolutely and for ever all connection between Christ and the world. The water and the blood—the cleansing and the expiation—came only from a dead Christ, when all was finished between him and the first Adam. In death to it and the world alone could cleansing and expiation be found. Death of the old man alone cleanses us; death alone expiates sin.

The third witness, first in operation actively, is the Spirit. He only came when Christ had wholly gone out of the world. Cleansing, expiation and the Spirit characterize our state in eternal life. But these are only had in the Son, the Second Adam; the first has no part in them. It was because he was lost and at enmity that these things came. It was through death and totally setting him aside before God that all that belongs to eternal life is to be had. It is in the Son in contrast with the first Adam, and he who has the Son has it, he who has him not, has not. It is in Him alone, now gone on high, to the exclusion of the first Adam, judged and condemned and set aside, but in grace and power toward us.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

(1.) *Q.*—Is it necessary for a saint to fall away before the Lord could use him in service, or is God glorified in a saint falling? Would it not be better for him to continue in grace or good works?

Ans.—To walk with God is surely what a saint is called to, and in his walking thus God is glorified, and *communion* with Him is the spring of all true service. But the experience we gain of His grace, often through our failures, enables one to speak of that grace to others in their shortcomings. "When thou art converted (restored) strengthen thy brethren," is the Lord's word to Peter; and in Psalm li. David says, "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee." He had just been confessing his own transgressions and looking for restoration. The great thing is to remember that we must be broken down as to our own self-confidence that we may be fitted to serve Him. If we walk with Him we shall find out what we are, and judge ourselves as we go along, and learn his grace as we advance. If we walk in self-confidence, we need to be broken by a fall. "Pride goeth before destruction and an *haughty spirit* before a fall." Peter's self-confidence led to his fall. That only made manifest his previous unhumiliated state. If he dishonoured his Master and brought sorrow on himself, yet he learned a good lesson by it, and his self-confidence was broken. We see the Lord Jesus, in dealing with him, not speaking of the sad fruit that came out, but He proves his heart about his self-confidence, and makes him judge that. Cut off the root and the fruit is sure to wither. And so it is not "Did you deny me;" but "Lovest thou me more than these," referring to his saying "Though all forsake thee, yet will not I."

It would be a bad thing to be looking for a fall to humble one, and so excusing a present bad state. Better to confess one's unhumiliated condition and ask Him to keep us from Satan's service. A fall may come in an unexpected way. If we are in Satan's hands, he will try and do his worst with us, be sure.

We must distinguish, too, between a fall and falling away; the last is to be lost, as "it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance."

(2.) *Q.*—Has Matt. v. 23-4 any present application, or is it only for the Jewish Remnant?

Ans.—It would be a sad mistake to limit the blessed teachings of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount, to the Jewish Remnant, even although it was Jews who were addressed at the time. A principle of all importance to be observed is found in the verses. No offering can be acceptable to God, nor can I be in a state to offer, if there is anything between me and a brother, and I have not done what lay in my power to reconcile him. What we need is, not to avoid the edge of Scripture, but to court unflinchingly its judgment. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me."

(3.) *Q.*—Referring to the answer 4, in April Number, a correspondent wishes to know if infant baptism is to be considered as "moral wickedness," or a doctrine which "dishonours the Lord in person or work."

Ans.—To count baptism, either infant or adult, by sprinkling or immersion, as held by Christians generally, to be moral evil, shews great want of spiritual, or even *common* discernment. There is, of course, a right and a wrong to the question of baptism, as to every other scriptural truth. Various views of it are held conscientiously by godly persons, and will be, doubtless, till our Lord comes. Our part is to remember the exhortation of the Apostle in Romans xiv. Much as perfect agreement is to be desired, and that all should "speak the same thing," yet it is not so, and these differences of judgment in matters not touching fundamentals, only ought to bring into exercise grace in our ways towards others. Let each see what he does himself is done to the Lord, and leave the rest until each "gives account of *himself* to God."

(4.) *Q.*—Explain Matt. xii. 43-45.

Ans.—The passage refers to the nation of Israel cleansed from their idolatry for the time. Their house is "swept and garnished," but "empty" of its true occupant. At the restoration from the captivity, the temple was rebuilt and the Jews refused idolatry. But when Christ came he met with rejection, and the house so left empty will be re-occupied when the beast sets up idolatrous worship again, and their last state will be worse than any that preceded. To make its application plain, it is added, "Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation."

The parallel passage in Luke xi. 24-26 is individual. Compare also 2 Peter ii. 20-22.

(3) Q.—What are the “psalms” spoken of in Eph. v. 19 and Col. iii. 16, as distinguished from “hymns and spiritual songs?” Are they the Psalms of David? And what about the use of the latter as a part of Christian worship?

Ans.—The word “psalm” in its strict or primitive sense denoted a song sung to a stringed instrument—harp or lyre. From its application to the “book of psalms,” I have no doubt it got a wider signification. While the “hymn” was certainly a direct ascription of praise to God, and the “spiritual song” or “ode” reached out to the widest expression of spiritual feeling where there ought to be no address to God at all, the “psalm” never lost the form of direct address to God, and yet was by no means necessarily praise as the hymn was. It might be that; it might on the other hand be the pouring out of penitential sorrow, supplication, intercession, in short whatever in substance the “book of psalms” represents. It would thus cover the “hymns” also in meaning, as the “spiritual song” would cover both; but I apprehend the apostle first using the larger word, “psalms,” adds to it the “hymns” to keep in distinct prominence before the soul the characteristic Christian element of praise, which a psalm might lack, and that “spiritual songs” is added to give the freest room for the expression of all spiritual feeling.

As to the “psalms” being the psalms of the Old Testament, and their suitability for Christian worship, that many in part or whole could be used so, I do not doubt. On the other hand, some are the prophetic anticipation of the Lord’s sufferings (as e.g., the xxiind); others again so essentially Jewish, it would be hard to make them speak a Christian language, and the imprecatory parts of many certainly not what in the day of the Lord’s present long-suffering grace our hearts (as led by the Spirit) could use as expressive of their own desires.

More than this, the psalms *never* put us into the place of children of God, crying “Abba, Father.” Not once is the word uttered: “like as a father pitieth his children” is the nearest to it, but clearly not the same. Nor do they suppose us to be “purged worshippers” having “no more conscience of sins” (see Heb. x. 1, 2.) Neither do they speak of a heavenly inheritance, still less of membership in the body of Christ.

Their deep importance and value for our souls is not hereby lessened, as witness that 22nd psalm, to which I have referred.

LEAVE IT ALL WITH JESUS.

I LEFT it all with Jesus
 Long ago ;
 All my sins I brought him,
 And my woe.
 When by faith I saw him
 On the tree,
 Heard his small still whisper,
 " 'Tis for thee,"
 From my heart the burden
 Roll'd away—
 Happy day !

I leave it all with Jesus,
 For He **knows**
 How to steal the bitter
 From life's woes :
 How to gild the tear-drop
 With His smile,
 Make the desert garden
 Bloom awhile ;
 When my weakness leaneth
 On His might,
 All seems light.

I leave it all with Jesus
 Day by day ;
 Faith can firmly trust him
 Come what may :
 Hope has dropp'd her anchor,
 Found her rest,
 In the calm, sure haven
 Of His breast ;
 Love esteems it Heaven
 To abide
 At His side.

Oh ! leave it *all* with Jesus,
 Drooping soul !
 Tell not half thy story,
 But the whole :
 Worlds on worlds are hanging
 On His hand,
 Life and death are waiting
 His command :
 Yet his tender bosom
 Makes *thee* room—
 Oh ! come home !

"SOUND WORDS."

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"DESPISE NOT PROPHESYINGS."

1 Cor. xiv.

THE 14th chapter of 1st Corinthians is remarkable as being the only Scripture in which the order of the church when "come together into one place," is declared. This should give it surely some importance in the eyes of those who believe that He who "loved the Church, and gave Himself for it" has not ceased to love and care; and moreover that the Head of it has not given up His headship.

For those who think the mere matter of the conduct of the meetings of the saints a thing of no or of small importance, it is well to note how solemnly the chapter closes with the assurance that the things the apostle wrote, were "the commandments of the Lord."

Have they ceased then to apply, or been recalled—these commandments? Or was all this care taken for the church at the beginning, and is it now no more?

"Surely not the care," people reply; "but the gifts regulated in the chapter have ceased, and therefore the regulation of them also."

But then it is not true that the chapter as a whole occupies itself with merely the regulation of gift. It rather gives, as I said, the regulation of the assembly as "come together." "Let your women keep silence in the assemblies" did not stir the question of whether they had gift or not. Some in fact *did* prophesy, the chief thing regulated in this chapter; but the thing here is, they might not do it in the "assemblies;" outside that, what they or others might do is not in question at all.

Then again—"Every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine (a teaching)." The latter surely has not ceased; no, nor the former, for there is no ground for supposing it was any inspired or even freshly prompted utterance. What was to guide in the

bringing forth of all this in the assembly, was the principle, "let all things be done unto edifying."

Thus the whole chapter treats of the assembly, and the case is supposed of an unbeliever coming in, while such and such things were going on in the assembly, and what the effect would be upon him who came in. Now suppose certain gifts had ceased—as plainly "tongues" and "interpretations" have—this would not destroy the general principles which were to govern in this "coming together." Points of detail might cease to apply, while yet the principles remained untouched. Even in those days the gift of tongues might be wanting in some assemblies; but that would not affect the general application of the chapter to them. If they had but a "psalm" or a "teaching," it would apply. Indeed these were, and are, a sort of type or sample of what occupied the assembly when come together—the psalm addressing itself to God in praise or prayer with the melody of hearts conscious of His "favour better than life," while the teaching addressed itself as from God to men. The one was worship; the other, ministry. Certainly, if these two abide, we are not altogether destitute of what may furnish forth our assembly; and had we nought else, the principles of the chapter would apply to us.

It is indeed plain, that the apostle has especially upon his mind two things as connected with the assembly, but which affected his mind very differently. These were prophecy and the gift of tongues. He saw them priding themselves upon the latter and falling into utter folly in their pride, so that they were actually exposing themselves to shame even before unbelievers through it; speaking with tongues that no one understood, and where no one could enter into or be edified by it. Comparatively speaking, prophesying was made of little account in the presence of this more showy gift. That which was "a sign to those that believed not" was usurping the place of that which spake unto believers "to edification and exhortation and comfort." If in the assembly then the rule was, that all things should be done to edifying, the prophesying which was expressly intended for that, was really the greater and the better thing.

Thus he bids them "covet to prophecy," but on the other hand only "forbid not to speak with tongues." They hold in the apostle's estimation a widely different place. I am in a measure prepared to hear of the disappearance of that which men

were so much abusing. On the other hand, the more I think of the place which prophesying holds with him, as that which was for “edification and exhortation and comfort,” so that he exhorts them to covet it as what edified the church, the less I can suppose it possible to pass away until that church was perfected and removed to heaven.

On the other hand I can understand it still being a thing slighted and overlooked by men to any conceivable extent. I find, both here in 1 Cor. xiv., and again in 1 Thess. v. 20, (which latter passage couples together the two warnings, “Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings”), the assurance that they were already doing so. There was that in the nature of this precious gift which exposed it peculiarly to the slighting and disesteem of man. What had then begun may well have advanced in our day to the utter denying of the gift altogether.

If we enquire, then, as to the nature of this “prophesying”—a “prophet” was, according to the strict meaning of the word, “one who spoke for another;” and the name was given among the heathen to those who spoke for a god and made known his will to men. It was by no means necessarily in the utterance of prediction properly so called; for this another word was used which the Scriptures do not employ. Even a “poet” was a prophet, as one who spoke for the Muses, thus speaking, as was supposed, under a sort of inspiration, not merely from his own mind. So even Paul speaks of a “prophet” of the Cretans.

The New Testament knows nothing of a mere seer of the future. The prophet was one who spoke *for God*. Thus “a man of God” is so often the beautiful and significant designation of a prophet. In days of darkness and apostacy they stood forth on His part whom men had forgotten, and brought His word and will to them. Their predictions were but a part of these utterances, which dealt with the moral condition of those addressed, calling them to repentance; encouraging, warning, comforting, exhorting, instructing in righteousness. Of such the most distinctive feature was that they were “God’s men.” Very significantly the apostle Paul speaks as if “all Scripture” were written for such. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the *man of God* may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). Here was

the necessary condition of prophesying, that truth and devotedness to the living God which enabled them as living near Him to know His mind. This underlay that saying of Amos, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing but He revealeth it to His servants the prophets." Like that again in Revelation: "to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass."

It might be thus made known in different ways,—by positive fresh revelation, which for us since the completion of the word of God has ceased to be; or by the Spirit in living freshness, using that Word according to what Paul says to Timothy. The man of God it is who in either case has the mind of God as to the scene through which he passes. To such an one "the knowledge of the Holy is understanding."

Now, if this be the basis of prophesying, it is no wonder that the apostle so highly values it. If prophesying be just speaking for God, God's own utterance in the midst of His people, it is easily to be seen how people should be exhorted to "covet" it, and that earnestly. "Love," seeking not her own, would yet seek that which was so profitable "to edification and exhortation and comfort." Distinct enough from "teaching" it did not necessarily infer any gift for the latter, nor indeed, any for public speaking at all. "Five words," and those not the speaker's own, might suffice: the Word of God simply read might carry its own simple and intelligible meaning to the hearts of all present. Not eloquence in anywise, nor the power of presenting the truth in orderly arrangement was needed. The Divine utterance might come in broken words and sentences, and be still the fulfilment of the injunction, "If any man speak, let him speak as oracles of God," so that even the simplest there, or the unbeliever coming in there, should come under the power of that word, be convinced of all, be judged of all, and the secrets of his heart being made manifest, should fall on his face, and worship God, and report that God was of a truth there. The apostle coveted this for them, and would have them covet it also for themselves; this direct dealing of God with heart and conscience, from which man might indeed shrink, but which was fraught with blessing for him none the less.

I need scarcely say, that the meeting of the church in this 14th chapter of 1 Corinthians was even on this account a "open" meeting, in this sense and for this purpose, that God

might speak in His own sovereign way by whom He would. It was thus, in the fullest way, open ; so much so that man might and did abuse it there at Corinth. “ Every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation.” He states the fact, does not pronounce as to whether right or wrong, but only adds, “ let all things be done unto edifying.” That it might be so, those that had gift of tongues might speak, two or three, not more, and only when there was an interpreter. The prophets similarly two or three. Only the women were absolutely to keep silence in the assembly. There was no other line of prohibition whatever, as to who should be the speakers.

This open door, so widely open, was a special need. It might be abused. It was. That did not alter at all the actual necessity. It would not better it to shut God out, even by pre-arrangement that those who were most gifted should be the speakers. Who had title to arrange this ? None among men ; not one. Scripture recognizes no power of this sort in the church, short of the Church's Head. As to the use, it may shut out, no doubt, some species of disorder, but only at the expense of the very worst disorder.

Gift is not spirituality. The church at Corinth came behind in no gift ; yet the apostle could not speak unto them as unto spiritual but as unto carnal, even as to babes in Christ. It is no disparagement of gift to say that thus, without the accompaniment of spirituality, the possessor of the most precious gift might be quite incompetent to edify. And, alas, men change and men decline. The highly gifted sometimes even by this means lead those who follow them the most astray. Hence when the church is gathered together, God will have no voice raised to exclude His. In perfect wisdom He may put aside the most gifted at His will, to bring His word in by some poor, plain man, who has been upon his face before Him, and has learnt His mind where man learns best, in the lowest school. He, whom perhaps they would all have excluded from teaching them, who is indeed, as to measure of gift, below any there, may be the very one brought forward to teach them all.

And so the apostle puts this power of prophosying before them, and exhorts to covet it. Such a gift as love alone that had Christ as motive and men's blessing the

desire of the heart could covet. It would lead in no easy path. The very word "despise not prophesyings," may shew to what it leads. And what has been the history of prophets ever! "God's men" must, of all men, be men of faith, content to wait on God, and walk with God, and perhaps walk solitary else. "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" Do you think that in assemblies of Christians that could not be! Well for us, if it were. But sure am I of this, that no man in his senses would take up the vocation that I speak of, to win praise from even saints.

But where are the "men of God?" Amiable, kindly men, I can find many. Just, honest and upright, not a few. Saved men who know it and thank God for it, are much fewer, but still many. But where are the men, to whom "to live is Christ?" Where are His bondsmen, absolutely His? Is it not what we all are, as bought with His precious blood? Is it what we are in practical reality?

There are few things more to be coveted for the assemblies of the saints, than this "prophesying." Men may teach truth, and teach it well; but that is quite another thing. The prominent place given to prophesying in this chapter which regulates the assembly's coming together, ought to assure us of its special importance in this place.* That importance is, that the voice of the living God should be heard by His people, distinctly addressing itself to their need, their whole condition at the moment. How different a thing from people speaking to fill up the time; or the cleverest speaker, to supply the absence of a teacher; or once again, the teacher himself because he is a teacher, or has something in his mind which has interested or impressed himself! "The word of the Lord by the prophets" was none of these: it was a direct address from the heart of God to the hearts and consciences of His people. And still, "if any man speak," he is to speak "as oracles of God," as God's mere mouth-piece.

But it is one thing to affirm that that *ought* to be, another thing to say, it is. It is one thing to say "I should do this,"

* A teacher's meeting is quite distinct from this assembly coming together. He is responsible to teach surely; and the saints no less so to hear, but it is another matter.

and another thing to say, "I have done it." Lowliness there will surely be the truest wisdom. We need claim nothing: "He that judgeth is the Lord."

F. W. G.

FAITH.

"Faith cometh by hearing."—Rom. x. 17.

The heart, if I may so express it, enters heaven when it listens in faith to the story or tale of grace.

The work and fruit of grace is all our title to heaven itself by and bye. The story or tale of grace, listened to by faith, is all our way, and our only way, into heaven in spirit now.

The self judging of the holy principle, and the doings and obedience of the righteous principle, in us, are good and needful; but it is not the property of such things to lead us to, and seat us in heaven. It is the silent attitude of faith listening to the story of the grace of God, that constitutes the present heaven of the soul.

We have some illustrations of this silent listening of faith, while grace is rehearsing or exercising itself, given us in Scripture. Look at Genesis iii. The Lord God speaks to Adam, among the trees of the garden, of present penalties on him and his wife, but in His words to the serpent He lets fall on *Adam's* ear the tale of grace, which told him that the charm of the serpent's promise should be broken; that instead of alliance between the deceiver and deceived, there should be enmity, and that in that enmity the one who stood for the deceived (God's gift also) should at all personal cost be fully and gloriously the conqueror.

To this tale of gospel grace Adam listens, listens in silence. There is nothing else for him. But through the Spirit, this so works on his soul, that he comes forth from his distance into God's presence; and his heart is so filled with the tale of grace, and with that only, that he seems altogether to forget the present penalty. He comes forth calling his wife "the mother of all living," thus owning the mystery which had been revealed to him, and that only. This is full of blessing. This is a beautiful illustration of the virtue that lies in a believing silent listening to the tale or story of grace. Adam was borne in spirit, not only away from that distance into which sin and conscience had

driven him, but beyond the fear or thought of present sorrow, to which his history in the world was about to expose him. He was at the gate of heaven in spirit.

Look again at Zech. iii. Joshua is before the angel of the Lord, and Joshua's accuser or adversary is there also. Joshua appears in all defilement and degradation. The tattered garments of a prodigal but poorly hide his shame and nakedness—nay, they rather witness and publish it; he has nothing to say for himself, and his only wisdom is not to attempt or affect anything; he is deeply and thoroughly silent. But there is One in the scene who can speak, and does speak, and Joshua *listens*. And what does the listening Joshua hear? What tale falls on the ear of this polluted one, whose very pollutions make him dumb? The same precious story of grace. For Joshua (in his filthy garments) hears the Lord Himself—none other or less than He—rebuking his accuser. He hears the same Lord humbling him as a brand fitted for the burning, no better than a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction; but he hears at the same time that he was *chosen*, and that all the provisions of the house of the Lord were to be used for him, and the servants of the house commanded to be active and stir themselves for him.

This was the tale of grace, which the silent listening sinner hears. And what a gate of heaven that moment was to him! To Joshua, in spirit, heaven had now opened itself, and he enters and sits there.

Look at the same heaven opened again in Luke xv.

The earth had shown itself a scene of thorough weariness and disappointment to the heart and mind of Christ, as we see in chap. xiv. It was not because it was the place of either violence or fraud, of either the lion or the serpent. The varied moral scenery of chap. xiv. had been laid in the religion, and in the social friendliness of the human family. Nothing coarse or repulsive had marked it—no blood had stained, or guile of the serpent disfigured it. But the heart of Christ takes its journey through it all, grieved, wearied, and disappointed, and nothing gives Him rest or refreshment until sinners and publicans come to hear Him, (xv. 1.). Oh, the blessedness of such an attitude and moment both to Him and to us! There it is that we (and the spirit of Jesus wearied with man) gain the bright heaven of God. Jesus left the Pharisees' feast and the

company of an admiring following multitude, and now found Himself *listened* to by sinners; and followed by a crowd that had miscalculated their strength to be on such a road, but listened to by poor harlots and publicans, who had nothing to give, nothing to promise, nothing to undertake or pledge for themselves; but who came only for what they could get from Christ's stores of boundless grace; and therefore heaven opens itself—and the parables which listening faith is invited to hear, tell of heaven's joy over listening sinners.

As a simple soul, soon after the word of grace had quickened it with the life of Christ, breathed out—

“ 'Tis not for what I give Him,
It is when I believe Him,
I feel His love, and hear Him
Bid me be happy near Him.”

When the Lord had read from the 61st of Isaiah that wonderful Scripture which publishes the riches of goodness or grace, *He closed the book.* (See Luke iv.)

This action was full of meaning, and of comfort too. It tells us, that when Jesus had caused us to hear the tale or story of grace, He had discharged His ministry. And that story (if listened to and received by faith,) would be every thing to us; and in a fine sense, *we might close the Book*, as Jesus did; we might pause, and muse, and meditate, and again and again turn in our minds this one happy, powerful, elevating tale of grace.

It would work liberty, and joy, and confidence, and real gospel sanctification for us and in us (through the Spirit), as it has done in thousands of sinners like us. But as this tale of grace is listened to in *silence*, as it is to be listened to in *solitude*. We are not only to listen while God Himself rehearses it to us in the Gospel, but we are to be there *alone*, apart from our fellow creatures. It is to be between God and our own souls; we are not to think of others at all. It would disturb the soul in such a sacred moment. For the thoughts of others might ensnare us; we might remember their excelling in strength beyond our measure, and be led to fear and to unbelief. Therefore, as we are to be *silent before God*, thus speaking in grace, so are we to be *alone with Him*; that is, our fellow creatures, as well as ourselves, are to be set aside; for God is to be everything when the question of our peace is to be transacted.

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE INSPIRED BOOKS.

LEVITICUS, (CONTINUED.)

The application of the offerings to our own offering of ourselves to God has been already instanced in the burnt-offering. This secondary application is necessarily implied in the primary one. Atonement was of course Christ's alone to make, and our acceptance is in Him alone. But that very acceptance in Him implies that we are to be conformed to the likeness of what God has made us already so. What He sees us in Christ He is actualizing in us.

Thus if the burnt-offering represents the principle of absolute devotedness to God in the full energy of heart and affection, this fitly begins for us the lesson of what our sanctification is to be.

If the meat-offering shows us Christ as born of God, "Son of God" as to his manhood even, and as man anointed with the Holy Ghost, so are we born of God, (only it is for us, *new*-birth, and the old life yet remains in us) and have the unction of the Holy Ghost.

In both these offerings we may notice however, the proper end of them is *only* fulfilled in Christ, and no way in us. "Acceptance for atonement" was only the result of His offering—is not at all of our's. So in the second case, the "bread of God," "bread of life" for us, He is, *alone*. Our offering may in some feeble measure be compared to his in character; the offering of it is never for the same end as His. Therefore, in the Peace-offering, where the name indicates that the result of the work of Christ is before us, man can come only in as receiver and partaker. To sit at God's table is his part alone, and an abundantly blessed one. There is *no* secondary application of the offering, I conceive, at all.

In the sin-offering, on the other hand, the application to ourselves is plain and important. For if He, to furnish the sanctifying blood for us, suffered without the gate in the place of wrath and curse, *we* have to go out unto Him also without the camp; owning the guilt and judgment of the old man, and giving up the ground of nature and the link with the old creation. This is a necessary part of our sanctification, which the Book of Numbers enlarges on, as especially in the law of the Nazarite, and the ordinance of the red heifer.

Finally in the trespass-offering we are again permitted to follow the footsteps of the One who alone made full and proper restitution for all the consequences of sin to God and man. We follow Him in this, when amid the world unblest and unsatisfied, even out of us the rivers of living water flow, which first flowed from Him, and in Him have their perpetual spring. This is the man-ward side. In the God-ward side of this we follow Him when we make good in the world, even against ourselves, the honour due Him. "I am glorified in them," wonderful to say, can be better said of those whom He has quickened out of the dead, than of unfallen creatures.

This, then, begins Leviticus with the picture of our sanctification in its several features; beginning with the inward devotedness of the heart to God, and ending with the out-flow of the Spirit in the path of service. A new life and the unction of the Spirit,—a place at the Father's table *inside*,—a place *outside* the world with Christ,—these are the separate elements, which go to make up its character. Blessed for us to see God's thoughts of what we are to be. Blessed to find the perfection of all in Him, who is put into our hands in every approach to God—His spotless offering. Our delight in Him as reflected in the peace-offering, fitly forms the *central* feature in the picture of a saint.

The section which follows, to the end of the seventh chapter, is still occupied with instructions regarding the offerings, but with reference to the priests themselves, their duties and their rights in relation to them. The word of the Lord to Moses now is, "Command Aaron and his sons." We are thus summoned to learn what belongs to *our* priesthood.

As to the burnt-offering, (chap. vi. 8-13,) we first learn that it is to be ever maintained before God, the fire of the altar never to go out. This was (and is) the *first* duty of the priest. The interpretation is simple: Christ in the perfection of His atoning work, wherein and according to which we are accepted, is to be ever before the eye, and for the heart of God. So indeed He ever is. But our hearts are perpetually to keep Him in that place, and thus do we bring to God the true material of worship.

The meat offering (14-23) furnishes the food of the priests: the males alone might eat it, for there is needed in order to communion the full reality of priest-hood; it was to be eaten without leaven, as we are to keep the feast with the unleavened

bread of sincerity and truth ; and moreover in the sanctuary, the place of practical nearness to God.

The eating of the sin-offering (24-30) typified on the other hand the solemn entering into what sin was before God, but into Christ's offering for it. Here again the males eat it in the holy place ; and to it a special character of holiness attached. There was one and the same law as to the trespass-offering. (Chap. vii. 1-7.)

Finally, as to the peace-offerings : three classes are mentioned. The first, where for thanksgiving—some mercy of God calling out the heart in praise—the worshipper eat of the offering only the same day. If it were a vow, wherein devotedness expressed itself more, he might eat also the second day. So also if it were a free-will offering, the spontaneous expression of the heart's joy in God, where no special mercies called it forth. In both these cases communion lasted longer than in the first case, where the soul was more engaged with its own benefit. In all cases, for real communion, what was fed upon, what furnished material for it, was the Peace-offering, Christ, and nothing else. A blessing of any kind might make me bring my offering in praise ; but it is the offering I bring and feed on, that through which alone all blessings come.

Two things were to be guarded against. The joy and freedom of soul abhorred association with uncleanness, peace could not be peace with evil. Beside this the outward, and formal participation in the peace-offering might go on longer than the inward reality. Just as the *mamma kept* would corrupt, so here that which was fed upon might change in character—not Christ surely, but what was once present to my soul as Christ, might lose freshness and change into corruption.

More than the priests feed on the peace-offering : it is the fatted-calf set before prodigals brought home, to participate in which requires no enlarged apprehension of our place with God. Still a special part belonged to the priests alone, namely the breast, which was waved before God as presented to Him and then became the portion of the priests. It is simple what this wave-breast is, a type everywhere of those affections of the heart, into which in Christ (and as first His for whom He lived, whom He glorified,) we as priests may enter. Another part yet belonged solely to the priest who sprinkled the

blood—a type of Christ as priest Himself—and that was the right shoulder. He alone knows who has, as Priest gone in for us before God, what it is to sustain the burden of all the need of His people. *He feeds* upon this shoulder,—finds His own joy in this gracious care and labour which He has undertaken for us.

F. W. G.

NOTES OF A READING ON I. JOHN.

CHAP. I.

Is the Gospel it is “*in the beginning.*” Christ was there present before, and in the beginning of everything. In the Epistle, it is Christ as “*from the beginning*” of Christianity. When He became flesh it was a new beginning for men,—of course there must be redemption to bring us into it. God is delighted in the thought of His own Son becoming a man, and thus with Christ all begins afresh. Compare Prov. viii. 31, 2 Tim. i. 9, Titus i. 2. There are four reasons why Christ became a man in Heb. ii. and spoken of respectively in verses 9, 15, 17, 18.

Important to see what eternal life itself is, not its effects merely, which Christians talk so much about. It is all well to see the *effects*; but eternal life is Christ *Himself*, and he who has Christ has eternal life. Then, for those having eternal life there is fellowship with the Father and the Son—common thoughts and feelings. All this is individual, through the effect of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, as spoken of in John xiv. 20, not the *body* truth. We have to remember that if there is fellowship with the Father and the Son, it is fellowship with God, where all is light and holiness. If I am walking *right*, fellowship with God is my joy and comfort, but if I have been walking carelessly, the first effect of the light in God's presence is to make me judge myself, because the sight shews me at once what is wrong. We ought always to be in unclouded communion with God, and thus have abiding joy. As Christians, we walk in the light, because the true light now shineth. There is no veil now. God has come outside the veil, and if with God at all I am in the light—the only God whose presence I can be in, because the true light now shineth. We don't always walk *according to the light*, but we are always *in the light*.

The 7th verse is the absolute Christian state. The 8th verse that of a deceived believer. The 10th verse one who denies having sinned at all—he makes God a liar, such an one is no believer. The 9th verse applies to the first coming of a believing sinner to God and to the subsequent confession of sins by a believer for restoration to communion.

There is no such thing as a Christian looking on to future sins, but to the power in Christ to be kept *above* sin; communion for the time is totally destroyed by *one* evil thought. Christ's advocacy leads to the acting of the Spirit down here in our hearts to exercise conscience, lead to confession, which restores to communion. The flesh is not recognized by God at all in the Christian. Without law flesh is so bad God has to bring a deluge in to put it all away. Under law it simply transgresses. God's Son comes and it crucifies Him. The Holy Ghost comes and the flesh resists Him. Taken up into the third heaven, it gets puffed up about it. Guilt is never imputed to the Christian by God, and this is the ground of the advocacy of Christ.

CHAPTER II.

The 3rd verse is not the ascertaining whether we are in Him, but in contrast with those who were pretending to a knowledge beyond Christianity. Those *did* know Christ who were following and obeying Him. The Holy Ghost never produces doubts, but the Holy Ghost makes me believe in Christ, and doubts flow from reasoning on what I do believe. I cannot believe on Christ without having an interest in Him. Obedience is more than merely doing what is right: we are to do Christ's commandments, we have to do *His* will in everything. We are sanctified "to the obedience of Christ," (*i. e.*) to obey as He obeyed. Not against my will, doing what I am told: Christ had nothing of this kind. His will was *always* to do His Father's will, and He kept His Father's commandments and abode in His love.

Propitiation looks towards God. Reconciliation towards men. Atonement is merely the old form of expressing reconciliation. Popularly atonement and propitiation mean the same thing. In life Christ was reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing to them their trespasses, but they would not be reconciled and therefore He has to go farther and make propitiation, and

the ministry of reconciliation comes in. Christ and God are mixed up in the epistle of John; in obeying God we obey Christ.

In Matt. xi.—“*My yoke.*”—Not the yoke imposed by Christ, but *Christ's own yoke*, as that under which as man He was Himself; it is the *character* of obedience, “Learn of me.” We know God as having His nature. I don't know the nature of angels or how they love and feel, I have not got their nature. John does not say we *ought* to love God, but we *do* love God. “We love Him because He first loved us.” We are never told *to be* what Christ *was*: He was sinless; but we are told to *walk as He* walked. Just do as He did, be “imitators of God, as dear children.” Christ was the manifestation of this in man. The old commandment is what Christ was and said while upon the earth. It is new as flowing from the new place in which Christ is, and now as in us: “Which thing is true in him and in you.”

Brethren applies to those standing on Christian ground, not the brotherhood of mere humanity. John deals with the love in relationship, not philanthropy, there is no divine love in that; an infidel loves his fellow-man, and will go in for all that is good for man, but he hates the name of Christ and those that are associated in that name in that relationship. John has no idea of a Christian being uncertain of his relationship to God as a child, or as to forgiveness of sins.

In the 1st, 12th, 23rd verses all Christians are spoken of. In the 13th verse three different classes of Christians are spoken of, so again in the 14th and 18th verses. The last time is not proved by the world being filled with the gospel, but by there being “many antichrists.” Man has ruined everything committed to him, the last and best thing put into his hands being the Church. Jesus the Christ is denied by the unbelieving Jew. The Father and the Son by apostate Christendom. The present danger to the “*little children*” are the antichrists. The safeguard is the truth taught by the apostles. This is what alone is “from the beginning.” In 1 Cor. ii. it is truth revealed by the Holy Ghost, truth communicated by the Holy Ghost, and truth received by the Holy Ghost. All spiritual power is by the word. The Lord silences Satan, when every thing is at stake, by a single text of Scripture. This was enough for the Lord and enough for Satan. The Word of God, like the person of Christ, adapts itself to all the possible wants

of man because it is divine. In abiding in the truth that they had from the beginning, they would abide in the Father and the Son. The word is the revelation of God—the eye of God, as in Heb. iv., “all things are naked and open.”

Note in the 28th verse, it is not “*ye*,” but “*we* may not be ashamed.” If they did not abide in Christ the apostle would lose his reward in the saints at the coming of Christ.

CHAPTER III.

In the same way as God and Christ are constantly intermingled, so the saints are identified with Christ, and “the world knows us not because it knew not Him.” When Christ appears we appear with and like Him. So Christ is our standard by the way, and our privilege is to be as like Christ as we possibly can,—purified as he is pure. Christ has sanctified Himself, set Himself apart in glory, that we may be “sanctified in the truth.” The first part of verse 5 is the condition out of which we are taken. Then we have, “In Him is no sin.” Christ is our life; this is the condition into which we are brought, and as abiding in Him in whom there is no sin, we don't sin. There is sin in us, but in Christ as the one in whom we abide, there is no sin, and He is our life. It is not the contrast of two natures. Paul looks at the dead thing, and the life working through death. John looks at the living thing, and there is no sin.

Our heart condemns us not when we are walking according to the love of Christ actively towards others, and in obedience: “He that keepeth his commandments.” “We know that he abideth in us by His Spirit that dwelleth in us” is not the inward workings of the Spirit in each believer, but the great fact of His having been given to the believers at Pentecost.

CHAPTER IV.

False spirits are persons coming to the church as teachers of false doctrine. “Greater is he that is in you” refers to the Holy Ghost amongst the saints corporately but not as the church—the body. Bowing to the truth shows the spirit that is of God, and contrariwise the spirit of error shews itself in setting aside the written word. The special testing truths at the present time are the presence of the Holy Ghost forming the body, and the coming of the Lord. At the Reformation the truth of Christ on

the cross and justification by faith came out with much clearness, but nothing more. The word without the Spirit tends to legalism. The spirit without the word is imagination. It is "the sword of the Spirit" in Eph. vi., and the defensive armour is completely on before the sword of the Spirit is taken up.

This as to truth—one side of what Christ is. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The doctrine of the epistle is "the life" in us. Truth and love are within, still the soul does not rest in self, though the evidences of life are there, but in what love is, as flowing from God to us. He that loveth is born of God;" still, the manifestation of love for proof is the "love of God towards us;" then comes the "love in us," and lastly the "love with us," with the perfect knowledge of it. We are *dead* in sin in verse 9, and need life. We are *guilty* in sin in verse 10, and need propitiation. "No man hath seen God at any time." Christ was the manifestation of God in the world. Christianity is God dwelling in us, and this for our own enjoyment, but of course the manifestation of God to the world through the one in whom God dwells, follows. "The truth" in the highest sense is what God is as love. "God is love;" this is the full truth that tests and saves the soul. Whosoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him. Perfected love is God dwelling in us; of course effects will follow, but love is perfected in the one in whom God dwells, simply because God does dwell in him. It is the fact that is in question.

CHAPTER V.

We love the children of God because they are born of God. If we love them for the Father's sake we can't go into disobedience with them. Obedience is the proof of *true* love to the brethren, because it shows that God is in the heart; otherwise, it is only loving pleasant company. Truly believing that Jesus is the Christ proves such an one to be born again, but he may be ignorant of the higher truth of his person, though sure, sooner or later, to go on to the other truth; but if, when the truth of the Son is brought before one who says he believes Jesus is the Christ, he denies it, it would show the unreality of the first work in his soul. The world ministers nothing to the new man. walking by faith tests the state of the affections. We have a path through the world but no object in it. It is a great thing;

for the mind of man to recognize, that he is under authority—has positive commands to obey.

There is no cleansing but by death. There is no cleansing of the old man. If I only get Christ as my new life, I am not yet cleansed, I am cleansed by death. Blood clears the conscience of guilt, by death I am actually cleansed in practice. I have new thoughts and feelings. Faith realizes the death of the old man. I don't get the cleansing, the expiation, and the Spirit until Christ is dead and risen. Christ totally rejected by the world, lifted up from the earth on the cross, becomes the centre of attraction God-ward for all men, let the result be what it may. The Spirit, the water and the blood agree in one,—that life is thus in Christ the Son, through death, not an amelioration of man. The water and the blood come first in history, but the Spirit in the work of grace in the soul, as the witness, comes first, and applies the water and the blood. I say to a man, "have you got the Son of God"? He says "no." "Then you have not got life," I reply. This is an entirely different thing from mending man. Man is simply evil, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one. We are in the Son, not in Adam. "This is the true God and eternal life." The soul has to watch against what is not God. It may be religiousness and intellectualism. The question is, is it the Son of God? is it Christ? All else is idolatry, whatever its pretensions may be. The children of God have to keep themselves from this.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

(1.) *Q.*—Did Jesus really love John more than the other disciples, and can it be said now that the Lord loves an obedient disciple more than one who has strayed away?

Ans.—The words certainly imply that the Lord loved John in a peculiar way beyond the rest. There was in John that which approved itself to Him, and drew out his approbation. He was thus "the disciple whom Jesus loved," as the one whom He could have peculiar pleasure in. It would be equally true now, that the Lord loves the one best in whom most *what* He loves is displayed. He is going to make us all much more than what John was. The difficulty in understanding this is from the one word representing both complacent delight on the one

hand, and on the other that kind of love wherein God loved us even when we were *dead* in sins, and for His great love raised us from the dead.

When God took us first there was nothing in us to love, and yet He loved. But as He works out in us what He will surely perfect in us all, His love is drawn out to the work of His own hands, humanly speaking, all the more.

If we may argue at all as to *what* the Lord loved in John, or if we may better speak of what He loves to see in us now, and what admits us into the place of one who leaned upon His breast, I would say, without doubt, that He loves best the faith that entertains best *His* love. I believe John had no high thoughts of himself; but simple thoughts of grace. Not that he never strayed, though *he* will least stray who is most conscious of the love set upon him, but that simple faith in that love gave Him enjoyment of it, and boldness in access to the place of rest upon his Lord's bosom. May we prove it for ourselves.

(2.) *Q.*—What is the meaning of Col. i. 24? I do not understand how there could be anything "behind" for Paul to fill up in "the afflictions of Christ."

Ans.—It is not a question of atonement of course at all, but of sufferings which love to the church had brought Paul into. He was filling up, in his turn, what was lacking still in those afflictions which needed to be endured in labour for the church down here, in a world opposed to God. And these afflictions were Christ's in this way, that not only had He led in this path of suffering, but that He was the real author of all the labour. From His love to His church the apostle himself and all his labours resulted. It was still Christ labouring and Christ suffering, though in another.

(3.) *Q.*—What does the word "death" mean in Rev. xx. 13, 14?

Ans.—What we ordinarily call "death." Death had the bodies, "hell" (or hades, rather) the souls of the dead. Each gave up what it held. But as it is only a question of the *wicked* here, the result was that "death and hades," put figuratively for their tenants, the bodies and souls of the dead, "were cast into the lake of fire." This personification of death and hell are frequent in Scripture.

(4.) Q.--What is meant by Christ's "obedience in life, as well as in death," referred to in 1st article in SOUND WORDS? If His righteousness is imputed, why did He die?

Ans.—It is never said, "*His* righteousness is imputed." *He* is my righteousness. I could not exactly say He is "imputed." Righteousness *imputed*, if I confine myself to Scripture thoughts, is simply *sin not imputed*. (Rom. iv. 6-8.)

But in the last question asked, "His righteousness" is evidently taken to mean His obedience in life *alone*, whereas the very words referred to speak of His obedience *in death* as well. So that the question, "why did He die?" is so far already answered.

What our correspondent has in mind is plainly the old Puritan doctrine of Christ's obedience to the law in His life being imputed to us for righteousness, so that on the one hand His death was excluded from the making out positive righteousness, or title to heaven; and also, law-keeping made the measure of His life, and of our acceptance before God. The statement in SOUND WORDS involves neither of these thoughts. For in the first place Christ's obedience in death is put foremost in this making up of righteousness. In the second place, His obedience in life was not mere law-keeping, but far more, while his obedience in death was not law-keeping at all, although the law was magnified by it, but in the fact that He bare its curse, not kept it. In the third place, law-keeping is in no way the condition of our acceptance with God. The law no way promised heaven at all, nor the place we have with God, which is in Christ. It was the measure of what would be righteousness in a mere man on earth, which would never have raised him to heaven, but kept him on earth without dying had he fulfilled it. But it entered that the offence might abound, and man be proved a sinner by it, *not* made righteous. Thus being simply condemned by it, God has delivered us from that condemnation by the death of His Son. If He could have fulfilled the law in His life for us, so as to work out righteousness by law, His death would have been needless indeed. He died, and delivered us from condemnation and from law and He, risen and gone up to God, is the measure of our righteousness and acceptance before Him. All the righteousness of His life and death attaches to Him there, and is ours in Him, but law is not the measure of it.

"SOUND WORDS."

VOL. III.

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No. 10.

AN ADDRESS

TO MY BROTHERS AND FELLOW-MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH WHICH IS CHRIST'S BODY, KNOWN BY WHATEVER NAME.

BRETHREN :—The test of even an apostle's message was the truth that he brought. Even the signs of an apostle wrought before men's eyes "in signs and wonders and mighty deeds" were never sufficient of themselves to accredit to his hearers the word he carried. The truth was its own commendation, and needed no other. Our Lord's own appeal was, "If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" And our Lord's own assertion is, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers."

This is my comfort in addressing you, who personally have no claim or title to be heard. If the voice be Christ's, you will recognize it. If your will is to "do God's will," you will "know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Neither claiming nor desiring anything upon my own account, if I bring you God's Word, your responsibility is to Him as to how you hear it.

Nearly eighteen hundred years ago, an apostle wrote that it was "the last time," and gave this sign of it, that there were "many Antichrists" (1 John ii. 18). "Many Antichrists" were then, for the apostle, a sign of the last time; and more, that "last time" *had already come*.

In men's thoughts those are the fresh first days of the Church's history. The vigour of youth was still upon her. In the memory of him who wrote the words before us, Pentecost yet lived. And on every side around him as he wrote the word of God was growing and multiplying. More than two centuries of struggles and of triumphs were yet to precede its conquest of the whole Roman world. Yet here, before the very earliest "antiquity" to which men so fondly now look back, before the

canon of Scripture yet was closed, or the last apostle had passed away, the words of that surviving apostle himself, (inspired words, Scripture which "cannot be broken,") assure us that even then the end, morally, had already come for the professing Church; not triumph (alas) nor a millennium—"the *last time*" and "many Antichrists."

Already had the apostle Peter uttered a warning as to the same thing. That there should be false teachers among Christians, privily bringing in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and that many should follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth should be evil spoken of. (2 Peter ii.)

To which Jude could add, when *he* wrote, that these men were already there; so that it was needful for him to write, exhorting earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. "For," he says, "there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation. ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ." There was no remedy for all this; the Lord was coming to execute judgment upon them. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied *of these*, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment upon all."

Quick work of ruin, brethren, in what had been once so fair. Apostles even yet in the Church and the canon of Scripture not completed. Yet there, *in that Church*, were the objects of judgment, and the Lord coming to execute it!

But we may go back further still, and put the testimony of another inspired writer side by side with Peter, Jude, and John. In Paul's address to the Ephesian elders, mingled with the sorrow of his own departure from them, was the sadder foreboding of evil which should quickly follow to the Church of God. "For I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock; also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." And this so soon began,—so rapidly developed, that in his second epistle to Timothy, he writes as of a notorious fact: "This thou knowest, that *all they which be in Asia* are turned away from me."

Asia, the scene of so many labours! Was Europe better?

From Rome he writes to the Philippians, and he says, "All seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ." "Many walk, of whom I have told you before, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ."

Thus East and West were together departing from the Lord. And how does the apostle,—no man of gloomy views or narrow mind he at least,—how does he look at the future of that Church declined and yet declining from its primitive faith and love? "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." "Preach the word, . . . for the time will come that they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables." "This know also, that in the *last* days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness and denying the power thereof."

This is the apostolic picture—with no room for a millennium in it, no prospect of general revival or recovery, but the reverse. "The mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way; and *then* shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit (or breath) of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming." Thus there is not a break in the darkness up to the coming of the Lord. The *last* days are the perilous ones. The *last* time is known by the "many Antichrists." And that time, however God's long-suffering has protracted it unto the present, had morally already come when John the apostle wrote.

Brethren, if this be so, where are we? As surely as the Word of God is true and reliable, the general Church is far gone on the path of decline towards the full apostacy that yet shall be. (2 Thess. ii.) A form of godliness there may be, and yet "perilous times." Dangerous work to be floating with the tide, accepting things because our fathers did; dreaming, after eighteen centuries of sad and miserable failure, that even now we are to undo these centuries of wrong-doing, and do, after all, what yet was never done! Was there not energy and faith and love of old? Were not apostles equal to you in every natural and supernatural

qualification for the work they gave their lives to? Does it not wise daunt you that the apostle Paul should have to say of places where all the signs of an apostle no whit behind the chiefest had been done among them, "All that are in Asia have departed from me?" or will you convince him of his error in predicting only an increase in evil, and the last days worst?

But you say you have God's promise and assurance that you shall convert the world. For He has said that "righteousness shall even fill the earth as the waters cover the sea." True, He *has* said this. But He has *not* said you are the ones to do it, but the reverse. "*Israel* shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the earth with fruit." Is that the Christian Church? Indeed there is nothing plainer in the Word than that it is not. If you will listen to one who says he speaks to the Gentiles as the apostle of the Gentiles, he tells you plainly that just as the casting away of the Jews was the reconciling of the world, so the receiving of *them* back shall be life from the dead, (Rom. xi. 15.) Moreover, he bids you as Gentiles "be not highminded but fear, for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee." "Behold, therefore," says he, "the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell (the Jews) severity; but toward thee (the Gentile Church) goodness, *if thou continus* in His goodness; otherwise THOU ALSO SHALT BE CUT OFF.

Brethren, *have* we continued in God's goodness? Why, then, talk of *revival*, if there has been no decline? But there has been, as even the Scriptures themselves shew; which shew, too, there will be no general recovery. What is the alternative, then? *Cutting off*. Yet God's purposes shall be accomplished. "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so ALL Israel"—the nation, not merely individuals—"shall be saved: as it is written: There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."

Mark the definiteness of all this. Israel nationally blinded, till God has His complete number of Gentiles gathered in, then *all* Israel saved; and how? By the gospel? No, but by the Deliverer coming out of Zion. And it is distinctly added: "As concerning the *gospel*, they are enemies for your sakes," treated as such; their own distinctive promises held in abeyance, that

God may gather the Gentiles into the Church; "but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake; for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Words how often quoted, but how seldom applied as the Spirit of God applies them here, the calling and promises of the nation of Israel.

Thus, if the receiving of Israel be life from the dead for the nations of the world, the "gospel" is not the means of their reception, but as long as it goes on, they are enemies for your sake. When the fulness of the Gentiles is brought into the Church, the dispensation will change, the Lord come, and Israel received as a nation, be life to the nations of the world. Till the Lord come, then, there is no millennium, no conversion of the world by the church. On the contrary, the expectation of it is the denial of the shame and failure of eighteen centuries, the proud self-assertion of Laodicea, "rich and increased with goods, and needing nothing," not knowing that she is "wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," and that the Lord is saying, "I will spue thee out of my mouth."

Beloved brethren, for this fatal and disappointing dream of the world's conversion by your means, you have given up the practical hope of the Lord's coming. Persuading yourselves things are going in the main right, you are accepting, with little scrutiny, the ways and means and associations by which you imagine the end you have in view is promoted. Yet the Lord is just ready to judge the whole scene, and your own individual part in it. Yes, judgment is to close the scene which just now may seem so full of promise. *Judgment at the coming of the Lord.* For that coming we are taught to watch, because we know not when the time is. This is the answer at once to the mistakes of those who set times, near or remote, for His coming; and, on the other hand, to those who would put it off to the end of the millennium. You know not *when* the time is; therefore, the Lord says, watch. You cannot *watch* for what you know will not come for a hundred years; how much less, a thousand.

Nor can you say that the coming the Lord bids us watch for is not a real and personal one, except by such a mode of interpretation as would throw all Scripture into confusion, and all ordinary language too. For the Lord tells us it is a coming in

the clouds of heaven with the angels, which all the tribes of the earth shall mourn to see, because it shall be in judgment like the flood; a day when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory and all the nations be gathered before Him; and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats. (Matt. xxiv., xxv.) Yourselves apply these last words to the time of His real advent, and it is quite evident it is the same coming throughout both these chapters. Thus for this coming it is you have to watch, because you know not when the time is.

Yet, brethren, how many of you give ear to the exhortation? You have suffered Satan to rob you both of the comfort and the admonition of your Lord and Saviour's words. And hence a multitude of errors, and of what He will judge as evil and dishonouring ways.

1. You lower the authority of Scripture by attributing to it human exaggeration, and therefore falsehood. How could a man, not led of your interpreters, suppose that that coming spoken of in the terms of the 24th of Matthew, was either death, or high-flown language for the simple destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans long ago? If it be so, why should there be any real coming of the Lord at all? Why should not all the passages about it mean something else than they so plainly say? No wonder it should be thought that prophecy can only be clearly interpreted by its fulfilment if these are really its interpretations! But our inheritance, brethren, our "exceeding great and precious promises,"—what about them? Are *they* not unfulfilled prophecy? What if in result all these should dwindle down proportionately; just as the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven has dwindled down into the sacking of a Jewish city?

Alas, infidelity thanks you for the lesson which it has not been slow to learn; but the simple and ignorant man, whom you have delivered blindfold into the hands of your interpreters, will scarcely thank you for the proof, that the grand and blessed Word of his God is but as to much of it a more than half deception,—and *how* much, he cannot know.

From hence a wide uncertainty results. The wise and learned differ, it is found; how then shall the *unlearned* be sure? And "charity" is invoked to cover all mistakes, by asserting—save as to some fundamental points, (that is, some points believed

to be essential to men's salvation,)—the humility of universal doubt. Indeed the Lord has said that "whosoever will do God's will shall know of the doctrine;"—but then you must not say you do "know." You have your opinion; I have mine. Between the two the authority of the Word is gone. The Bible is God's Word, no doubt; but it is scarcely "what *saith* the Scriptures" any longer. It is, "what say your doctors?" And in despite of His own word, His sheep cannot know Christ's voice from the voice of strangers!

2. But another thing. The Scripture saith, "The whole world lieth in wickedness." That applies, you think, only fully to the past; Christianity is rapidly changing that. As we progress towards the millennium the world must certainly be growing better. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," says the apostle. But that, too, has ceased to be. Doubtless it was of such a change already begun at Corinth that he wrote: "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us; we are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable but we are despised." It is very true, we get on far better with the world in these days. And times so changed make it difficult to understand how we "are *not* of the world." All its harmless pleasures we partake of; all its honours we aspire to and obtain; we find it our positive duty to "get on" in it, and do good to ourselves, that men may speak well of us; we do not believe that Satan is the "prince of this world," for *we* are its soldiers, its magistrates, its politicians.

Brethren, where *are* we? *Is* this progress, or is it deterioration? Is the "offence of the cross ceased," or have we ceased to bear it? And are these words "hard sayings," which we do not bear even from the lips of our Lord and Master? "But woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for so did their fathers of the *false* prophets."

3. But the Church, too: the Church it is that all the nations are to flow to yet. Kings are to be its nursing fathers, and queens its nursing mothers. It is the heir of all Jewish promises, the divinely appointed successor to Israel's place and portion. Nay, it is but one and the same Church all through, that

Jewish and this Gentile. Its law is ours; its union of church and state, its earthly head, its priestly order, its ceremonial services and its worldly sanctuary; its earthly blessings and dignities, contended for and maintained by carnal weapons: all, all are ours. Points of detail may be changed without disturbing the essential unity. The Church, Jewish or Christian, is all one. So you maintain; with what result it is not difficult to see.

For, brethren, the Jewish nation, or church—for the nation *was* the church—was no pilgrim or stranger upon earth assuredly. "Days long in the land"; "blessings in basket and in store"; "to be the head only, and not the tail" among the nations, and their enemies smitten before their faces; these were the things plainly, though conditionally, promised them. If you are successors to all these, *who* are the successors to the apostles and the primitive witnesses for Christ?—"fools," and "weak," and "despised"; "hungry," and "thirsty," and "naked," and "buffeted," and "having no certain dwelling-place;" blessing when reviled; -persecuted and suffering it?

The law is your rule of life, and holy, and just, and good it is, though as many as are *of* its works—upon that principle—are under the curse; as the apostle says. But whose is the "rule" of being a "new creature in Christ Jesus," crucified to the world by His cross, and glorying in it? (Gal. vi., 14-16.) You find no pilgrim or stranger-ship in your rule, and that may suit you; but you find no glories of the new creation in it either; nor does it speak to you as a heavenly people, sanctified, and sent into the world as the Father sent His Son. All this is nowhere; the Christian's place no higher than the Jew's; the standard of walk no different; for, of course, if the law is your rule and was the Jew's, there cannot and ought not to be any difference between your walk and his; your place in Christ and its responsibility is gone, for of this the Jew knew nothing.

But "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Brethren, what does this mean: "a new creature"; a new *sort* of creature, as the word implies? Do you go back to Adam, the pure and innocent man in the garden which God set him in to dress and keep? Nay, *that* would be no creature new in kind. Adam, even pure and good before his fall, was yet "of the earth, earthy." Is Christ but the first man set up afresh? Nay, verily, he "is the

second man, the Lord from heaven." Let men cavil as they please, He is a *heavenly* man; a *second*, another sort; a "*last Adam*," head of a new race, beginning of a new creation. And you and I, who believe, are "in Him," seen and accepted before God, "in the *loved*." "As is the earthly, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the Heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." The image of it we have not yet, true. That will be ours in the day of His coming. The *thing we are*.

"Heavenly" and "in Christ:" oh brethren, think you we realize our place and portion? "old things passed away, and all things become new?" Do you and I know what it is to look up into those heavens, where the Son of God sits in glory all His own, and see and recognize in Him what we are before God: "as He is," even "in this world"? Can we say quite confidently, each for himself, "Yes, we are identified with Him who represents us there before the eye of God? as He is, in whom no spot was ever found nor can be, but perfectness after God's own heart wholly?" *That* it is to be in Christ, a new creature. Our rule is to "walk *in Him*," as being what we really are: heavenly, citizens of heaven, pilgrims and strangers upon earth.

All the rest the cross has ended for us. We have died with Christ out of our old Adam condition; our old man is crucified with Christ. The flesh is in us still indeed, but in us as a foreign thing; and we are not *in it* before God, nor identified with it in anywise, but with Him in whom it was never found. We are in Him,—as He is.

Brethren, *can* we own this, and seek to get on in a world that crucified the Lord; whose prince and god is Satan; and friendship with which is enmity against God? Can we claim rights where we are dead? Can we take up carnal weapons, where He has bidden not to resist evil? Can we take the law with others, where God has shewn us grace ourselves? Can we be magistrates and politicians, where Satan is really prince? Can we find ease and enjoyment, where every step of *His* way led Him on to a death by wicked hands, even the death of the Cross?

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven, but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword. . . .

He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me. . . . And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it : and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

" Sell that ye have, and give alms : provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, . . . for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning ; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching : verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and shall come forth and serve them."

(To be continued)

OUR JOY IN HEAVEN.

Luke ix. 28-36.

LET us look a little at this Scripture, as showing what our joy in the glory will consist of. We have the warrant of 2 Peter i. 16, for saying that the scene represents to us the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is what we wait for. Our souls are not in a healthy state unless we are waiting for God's Son from heaven. The Church is not regulated in its hopes by the Word and Spirit of God, unless it is looking for Him as Saviour from heaven, (Phil. iii.) And this passage, as declaring to us specially what will be our portion when He comes, is important to us in this respect. There are many other things in the passage, such as the mutual relations of the earthly and the heavenly people in the kingdom. These it might be very instructive to consider, but this is not our present purpose, which is to consider what light is here afforded on the nature of that joy which we shall inherit at and from the coming of the Lord. Other scriptures, such as the promises to those who overcome in Rev. ii. iii., and the description of the heavenly city in Rev. xxi. xxii., give us instruction on the same subject ; but let us now particularly look at the scene on the holy mount.

" And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings,

he took Peter, and James, and John, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening." It was when Jesus was in the acknowledgment of dependence—"as He prayed," that this change took place. This then is the first thing we have here—a change such as will pass upon the living saints when Jesus comes.

"And behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias." They were *with Him*. In 1 Thess. iv. after stating the order in which the resurrection of the sleeping, and the change of the living, saints will take place, and that we shall both be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, all that the apostle says as to what shall ensue is, "and so shall we ever be *with the Lord*." But in this passage there is not only the being with Christ, but there is also familiar intercourse with Him. "There talked with Him two men." It is not that He talked with them, though that was no doubt true; but that might have been, and they be at a distance. But when we read that *they talked with Him*, we get the idea of the most free and familiar intercourse. Peter and the others knew what it was to have such intercourse with Jesus in humiliation; and what joy must it have been to have this proof that such intercourse with Him would be enjoyed in glory! And then it is said "they appeared in glory." But this is secondary to what we have been considering. We are told that they were with Him, and then they appeared in glory. They share in the same glory as that in which He was manifested. And so as to us: "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." "The glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one; even as we are one; I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved me."

But there is another thing still. We are not only told that they were with Him, that they talked with Him, and appeared in glory with Him, but we are also privileged to know the subject of their conversation. They "spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." It was the cross which was the theme of their conversation in the glory—the sufferings of Christ which He had to accomplish at Jerusalem. And surely

this will be our joy throughout eternity, when in glory with Christ,—to dwell upon this theme, His decease accomplished at Jerusalem. We then read that Peter and they that were with Him were heavy with sleep. It shows us what the flesh is in the presence of the glory of God. Peter made a great mistake too, but I pass on.

“While He thus spake, there came a cloud and overshadowed them; and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud saying, This is my beloved Son; hear Him.” Peter tells us that this voice came from the excellent glory. “For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Now Peter and the others had entered into the cloud; and thus we get this wonderful fact that in the glory, from which the voice comes, saints are privileged to stand, and there, in that glory, share the delight of the Father in His beloved Son. Not only are we called to the fellowship of God’s Son, Jesus Christ; we are called to have fellowship *with the Father*. We are admitted of God the Father to partake of His satisfaction in His beloved Son.

“And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone.” The vision was all gone—the cloud, the voice, the glory, Moses and Elias—but Jesus was left, and they were left to go on their way *with Jesus, knowing Him now in the light of those scenes of glory*, which they had beheld. And this is the use to us of those vivid apprehensions of spiritual things which we may sometimes realize. It is not that we can be always enjoying them and nothing else. But when for the season they have passed away, like this vision on the holy mount, they leave us alone with Jesus to pursue the path of our pilgrimage with Him in spirit now, and with Him in the light and power of that deepened acquaintance *with Him*, and fellowship of the Father’s joy *in Him*, that we have got on the mount; and thus to wait for the moment of His return, when all this, and more than our hearts can think of, shall be fulfilled to us forever.

J. N. D.

Faith is a very simple thing,
 Though little understood;
 It frees the soul from death’s dread sting,
 By resting in Christ’s blood.

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE INSPIRED BOOKS.

LEUITICS. (Continued.)

IN chaps. viii. and ix., the consecration of the priests follows, the high priest with the rest, yet his distinctness at the same time maintained in the fullest way. From the high priest, the whole priestly family derive their dignity; their descent from Aaron is their title to priesthood. So with the last Adam, the Quickener from the dead, the giver of His own life to those who from being children of the first Adam become thus the children of God. These from their relationship to Him derive their priesthood.

They are washed first with water, Aaron and his sons together. For us it is the spiritual change the effect of new birth, to which our Lord refers in Jno. xiii. where He speaks of "him that is washed;" or, as in Heb. x. 22, where we are exhorted to "draw near" to God (the privilege of priests) having our "bodies washed with pure water." For Him it was never new birth, nor could there be change or ought to wash from; but the word of God applied itself to Him, a lowly and dependent man, and He as man lived by it, and it witnessed to His perfectness, as One who was even by virtue of His manhood "Son of God."

This excellency of His is quickly manifested; for next, Aaron is taken and clothed alone. The robes of glory and beauty are put upon him, while priests and people look on together. Then the tabernacle is anointed, and its vessels and the altar sprinkled with the holy oil, and finally this is poured upon the head of Aaron. Thus without blood could He be anointed, and He alone, whose personal perfectness caused Him to be heard from the horns of the unicorns, and "saluted of God," in resurrection, "an high priest after the order of Melchizedek." (Heb. v.) Thus (as the apostle witnesses in the day of Pentecost,) "he, being by the right hand of God exalted, has received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost," that is, the Holy Ghost as promised of the Father.

Thus the tabernacle, God's dwelling-place among the people, and all its vessels, altar and laver too, are anointed together with Aaron. The personal perfection of Christ, to whom the Spirit bears continual witness in delight, is ever before God as

His ground of intercourse and fellowship with man. He, who in the days of his flesh having offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him who was able to save Him *out of* death, was heard for His piety, and answered in the glory of resurrection from the dead. Thence came the sanctification of God's dwelling among and intercourse with man. Quite true, that for all this the blood of atonement was needed, as on the day of atonement was fully indicated (Lev. xvi.), the holy place, tabernacle and altar being then expressly reconciled with *blood*. But here we have what gave its value to the blood itself, the personal perfectness through all of Him who shed it.

He needed to die, for he found man in death. His "piety" caused Him to be heard and *saved out** of death. Upon that for us all depended. If He were not arisen, we were yet in our sins. Thus the Holy Ghost received by Him in resurrection fills the whole scene with the witness of His perfectness, and consecrates and justifies our approach to and fellowship with the Father.

Aaron thus being robed and anointed, Aaron's sons are next clothed, and the sacrifices being offered, the blood is put upon the right ear, the right hand, and the right foot of each. They are thus set apart in the power of the blood which has been shed for them, to God. Aaron here takes his place among them, no longer as it seems a type of Christ, but one needing in common with his sons that sanctifying blood. For this reason he offers for himself in the next chapter: we are reminded thus of what it is always needful to remember in looking at these legal types, that "the law had a shadow of good things to come, but *not* the very image." Aaron and his sons together here then represent the common priesthood of believers, set apart to God according to all that is meant for heart and conscience by the blood of Christ put upon them. It is the token of their old life ended and a new begun in the faith and love of Him who has saved them; ear, hand, and foot His, to hearken to, serve, and walk after Him.

Then their hands are filled with the choicest portions of the sacrifice, and with the cakes of the meat-offering, and these are waved before the Lord, and afterwards offered up to Him upon

* Heb. v. 7; where the A. V. has "from," but the Greek "out of."

the altar. It is the simple and blessed token of Who is to be the occupation and the offering at all times of the priests of God. After this, the oil and blood are once more sprinkled over them and their garments, and then they sit down in peace to feed upon their own portion.

Seven days they keep the charge of the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. On the eighth day there are special offerings, but now for the *people*, not the priests. Aaron then blesses the people; and Moses and Aaron having gone into the tabernacle of the congregation come out and again bless them. Immediately upon which the glory of the Lord appears in the sight of all, and fire comes out from His presence and consumes the sacrifices. (ch. ix.)

Neither priests nor people are thus forgotten before Him. If the former represent the believers of the present day, the "holy priesthood" of 1 Pet. ii.,* those who belong to the true holy places in the heavens,—the people are no less certainly, as distinct from these, the representatives of Israel as a nation, who belong not there. Thus the seven days of priestly consecration are the present Christian period; while with the eighth day a new "week" begins, when an end of sins is made for Israel, and "everlasting righteousness" brought in for them. The full blessing comes with the appearing of One hidden from them in the sanctuary for a season, who unites in Himself the Moses and Aaron character, the true Melchizedek, a "priest upon His throne."

We are soon reminded, however, that the things in Israel's history "happened unto them for types" and were but shadows of the glorious future. The outburst of the people's joy has scarcely passed, before the priesthood fail, and God has to sanctify Himself in judgment against those who refuse His word and ways. Nadab and Abihu offer strange fire before the Lord, which He commands them not, and fire comes out from the Lord and devours them. It might seem a slight thing to be visited so heavily. Will-worship is a light offence with men, but God's thoughts are not as our thoughts; and Aaron is bowed in silence before Him. The prohibition of wine and strong drink when going into the tabernacle, does not, I think, imply

* Among whom believers of the Old Testament will surely have a place.

that Nadab and Abihu had been under the influence of it, but while surely a suited thing for such as men are, and as they had proved themselves, bids us beware of fleshly stimulus and excitement before Him who is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

PEACE WITH GOD AND THE PEACE OF GOD WITH ME.

There are two states which must exist at one and the same time in order to ensure happy and steady walk. The one is peace with God, the other the peace of God with me.

In the first, my heart so rests in God's satisfaction in the work of His Son on the cross, that it is His satisfaction which I share. I cannot reach up to or measure the satisfaction of God, or know fully how He was glorified in the answer of Christ to all the holiness of God; but as I taste of His satisfaction, I know why He can kiss me in rags and receive me into His house and home; so that my conscience is not only satisfied about my sins, but I am lost in the satisfaction of God, who can and does receive me according to His love and righteousness. It is then that I have peace with God; there is not an element to disturb; God has freed me through Christ from every atom of the offending thing. He has done it according to His own nature, that He might receive me to Himself according to His love. His satisfaction is proved in the resurrection of Christ, and I trust in it, and not in the satisfying of my own conscience about my sins, and then and there I have peace with God.

This is one state, and if this state be not preserved, there will be no surmounting the general pressure of nature, or atmosphere around. In this state you are like the cedar tree, with nature and purpose to rise in height above everything; its course always upward, for in that direction is its growth. The heart at peace with God always finds that upward and above is its retreat and home, and to this end all its strength and energy tend; and unless you are strong and matured in peace with God, you will not be able to keep His peace in your circumstances, which is the other state.

Now this additional state, God's peace keeping my heart and

mind through Christ Jesus, is not enjoyed unless I have learned confidence in God, to open all my heart to Him, and let Him see in detail the good and the sorrowful in my heart. It requires much confidence to do this; to empty out all the furniture of the heart to God, praising Him for the good parts, and calling His attention to the broken ones. It is then the peace of God keeps the heart and mind through Christ Jesus. The greatest favor that God could confer on any one on earth is, that one like you or me should be kept, in the midst of the most exciting elements, in the same state as the Blessed God is on His throne. Surely it passeth all understanding; and then it is that you are not only a cedar tree, but everything you do or touch, every bit of furniture in your heart is made of cedar wood, and bears its fragrance. In peace with God as an evergreen, you soar to the heavens, and having made known all your requests to God, you have His peace imparting its wondrous value to you in everything here.

J. B. S.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

(1) *Q.*—How did Christ's dying upon the cross pay the debt of the believer? and how was the cross the sinner's place? was not hell his place?

Ans.—Our Lord "paid the debt" for the believer by "bearing our sins in His own body on the tree." This bearing sins implies His taking the full weight of Divine wrath because of them. The cross was the sinner's place clearly in such sense as this, that "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." "He was made a curse for us." That was the meaning of His cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me."

As to hell, it *will* be the sinner's place, *for those with whom nought else avails*—the place prepared to receive the devil and his angels, but which will also receive all who have part with them. But it is only the adjudged home of the finally lost, which the Son of God could never enter.

(2.) *Q.*—Is "the Spirit that dwelleth in us," in James iv. 5, the Holy Spirit, or what?

Ans.—Clearly the Holy Spirit; no other could be spoken of as "dwelling in" Christians. The passage is a difficult one,

however, and the translation in the common version, although the Greek is capable of it, seems not to give the true sense. There is no such quotation from Scripture to be found, as it supposes. And "lusting to envy" could not in any way be attributed to the Holy Spirit. The Bible Union version renders it: "Do ye think that the Scripture says in vain, The Spirit he made to dwell in us has jealous longings?" Alford gives very similarly, "Do you think that the Scripture saith in vain, The Spirit that he placed in us jealously desireth us?" But both versions give as a quotation what seems not to be one. Still it might be a quotation of the sense rather than a verbal one. The chief difficulty is that the word for "envy" does not seem ever used in a good sense for holy jealousy. For this reason the rendering of the London New Translation seems preferable,— "Think ye that the Scripture speaks in vain? Does the Spirit which has taken His abode in us desire enviously?" This removes all difficulty.

FRAGMENTS.

THERE is a silent witness to the divinity of Jesus in Scripture, and, (while really and truly a man,) a contrast between Him and all other men, which has profoundly interested me. When man is blessed, morally blessed, elevated, he must have an elevated, and indeed, to be taken out of self, a divine object before Him. *Jesus* was the object even of heaven, instead of having one. When Stephen is before us, heaven was open to him as it was to Jesus; but he sees the Son of man in the heavens and that fixes his view, and lights up his regard with the glory he saw. Heaven is opened upon Jesus, and the angels are His servants; He sees it opened, and the Holy Ghost descends, witness that He is Son of God. But *He* is changed into no other image by it; *He* has no object to which to look up, but *heaven looks down on him*, and the Father's voice declares, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

“What a moment it is, beloved, when the soul becomes conscious that it has to do *immediately* and *personally* with God. Peter was brought to that moment in Luke v. 8. He was overwhelmed with a sense of the *divine majesty*, or the glory, which he had just discovered in Christ. It was that glory which was sinned against, Gen iii, and since that day no child of Adam can stand its presence—we have all come short of it. Rom. iii. 23.

But though Peter falls before it, he does not go away from it. The accuser in John viii. *retires* from the *conviction*, but Peter, though convicted, falls before Him who had convicted him.

There is a great moral distance between these two states of soul. And accordingly, the very next moment, the glory that had overwhelmed him, comforts him. “Fear not,” says Christ, “from henceforth thou shalt catch men.” The glory *exactly* suits itself to Peter’s condition, in *divine grace*, as before it had overwhelmed in *divine majesty*, and the *amazed* Peter becomes the *happy* Peter.

Why, I ask myself, should I find it harder to stand before the glory in *divine grace*, than to fall before it in *divine majesty*? It is wretched legal flesh and blood, wretched self-righteousness, and sore working of the old unbelieving heart. But O how glorifying to God that the soul overwhelmed by the sense of the *divine majesty* should rise in the sense of the *divine grace*!

The Lord, I know, loves a *real, true* dealing of soul with Himself, and therefore He is most tender of the sin-burdened conscience, and the war-worn heart of a long-convicted soul. He dwells in the high place with such. (Is. lvii.) But still, He is not *fully* known, till *divine grace* mingles its healing light with the humbling power of *divine majesty*. J. G. B.

LINES

WRITTEN BY A COVENANTER ON HIS PRISON WALL ON THE MORNING OF HIS EXECUTION.

A bright ray is glowing
 O'er the river of death;
 I fear not its flowing,
 With THAT LIGHT for my path:
 Blest beam of HIS tracing
 O'er the gloom of that river,
 Who, its horrors embracing,
 Has calm'd it forever.

"SERVING THEE."

Father, I know that all my life
 Is portioned out for me ;
 The changes that will surely come
 I do not fear to see ;
 But I ask Thee for a present mind
 Intent on serving Thee.

I ask Thee for a thankful love
 Through constant watching wise,
 To meet the glad with cheerful smiles
 And to wipe the tearful eyes ;
 And a heart at leisure from itself,
 To soothe and sympathize.

I would not have the restless will
 That hurries to and fro,
 Seeking for some great thing to do,
 Or secret thing to know ;
 I would be treated as a child,
 And guided where I go.

I ask Thee for the daily strength
 To none that ask denied,
 And a mind to blend with outward life,
 Still keeping at Thy side ;
 Content to fill a little space
 So Thou be glorified.

And if some things I do not ask,
 In my cup of blessing be,
 I would have my spirit filled the more
 With grateful love to Thee,
 More careful than to serve Thee much,
 To serve Thee carefully.

There are briars besetting every path
 Which call for constant care ;
 There is a crook in every lot,
 And an earnest need of prayer ;
 But a lonely heart that leans on Thee
 Is happy everywhere.

For a service which Thy love imparts
 Can have no bonds for me ;
 For my secret heart is taught the truth
 That makes Thy children free ;
 And a life of self-renouncing love
 Is a life of liberty.

"SOUND WORDS."

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AN ADDRESS.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 190.)

4. The effects of not watching have been in every way disastrous. You are waiting for death and judgment rather than for Him who has conquered death and borne judgment for you. These are indeed the common portion of men as such. "It is appointed unto *men* once to die and after that the judgment." And you have forgotten so the distinctness of your own portion, that you account it enthusiasm for a man to say with the apostle, "we shall *not* all die," and almost heresy to affirm as the Lord does, that "whosoever heareth His words and believeth in Him that sent Him, shall *not* come unto judgment."* Yet both are simple Scripture statements, which the holding fast the Lord's coming gives to the soul in full and unclouded reality. For those who are watching for Him, what more simple than the apostle's language, "we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord"? Is death to these a necessity, a thing "appointed"? And as for judgment—though we shall all give account of ourselves to God—when "the Lord cometh to execute judgment upon all," even Encch tells us, "He cometh *with* ten thousand of His saints, (Jude 14), or, as Paul says, (Cor. iii. 4), "When Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

. "For this we say unto you by the word of God, that we

* In the common version of John v. 24, "condemnation," but the word is almost everywhere else translated "judgment," and is the ordinary word for it. The Bible Union version and Alford's Revision both give "judgment."

At verse 29 the word rendered "damnation" is the same and should be similarly corrected; also in 1 Cor. xi. 29: "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh *judgment* to himself"—here not eternal judgment, but chastening.

which are ALIVE AND REMAIN unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thes. iv. 15-17). That is our portion who are His, living or dead, when He comes: "Every man in his own order; Christ, the first fruits; afterward *they that are Christ's* at His coming." Mark that! Not *everybody* at His coming; but "*they that are Christ's* at His coming." That is the Divine "order." "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and *we* (the living) shall be changed." Thus shall we go up to meet the Lord. It is the fulfilment of His own promise: "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, *I will come again* and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

Blessed, blessed words! Are they a call to judgment, think you, reader? Do you expect a sentry and a challenge at the door of the Father's house? or to be put on trial, and judged according to your works, to see if you have title to enter there?

Does He *not*, then, "know them that are His?" May there be in the company of those "raised in glory" or "changed," and having "put on the image of the heavenly," one who perchance may yet have no title to be there? And the "dead in Christ," who have been many of them more than a millennium "absent from the body, and present with the Lord"—will you put them on trial too, to see if they were indeed rightly there?

No, it is all forgetfulness of the place we have with Him,—of His love, and of the value of His work. We have forgotten, that if it be true, as it is, that "God shall judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained,"—it is written no less, that we "are *not* of the world, even as *He* is not of the world," and that "*as* it is appointed unto *men* once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and"—blessed alternative of man's natural portion—"to them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation."

This is our hope, beloved brethren, to be with Himself before He comes to execute judgment, and when He does appear for that, we know that we also shall appear with Him.

The common doctrine is a cloud upon this precious hope, and no indirect question of the very certainty of salvation itself. If the day of judgment is to decide who are the saved ones, it is no wonder if many think they cannot be sure even as to themselves before. And if we are to be judged then according to our works* who but must shrink from the thought of it! The result is, on the one side, legality seeking to rest on its own performances in view of the day of judgment, and on the other the lack of comfort and assurance because on this very ground. How different the believer's position as stated in Romans v., where "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." How different a thing it is, to be seeking to make oneself fit to pass the judgment, and recognizing the grace which has already given me a place in Christ in the day of grace and of salvation! "Herein is love made perfect with us (see the margin), that we should have *boldness in the day of judgment*, because as He is,"—as Christ in glory is,—“so are we in this world.” (1 Jno. iv. 17.) The day of judgment will not upset the confidence of the day of grace, for we shall be with Him, and like Him, the judge, before that day comes. We are now as He is. When He shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory.

Bear with me a little, beloved brethren, yet; and suffer a further question. We have spoken of that Church so dear to Christ, for which He gave Himself. If I turn to the picture of it which I have, in its first bright days, it is impossible not to ask of that Church which is the body of Christ, united together and to Him by that Spirit by which we are all baptised into that one body (1 Cor. xii.)—where is that Church now? It still remains, you say, scattered throughout the various bodies of Christendom. Well, that is true, no doubt. But then, what

* Those who will be so judged are the wicked dead, who are not raised with the saints at the Lord's coming; "the rest of the dead," who "lived not again till the thousand years were finished." They are judged therefore at the end of the millennium, when the heavens and earth flee away from before the face of Him who sits upon the great white throne (see Rev. xx. 4-13)

scattered it? And more, what *keeps* it scattered? Was it an evil for it to be scattered? And is it not as great an evil for it to continue scattered?

You may say, "we neither scattered nor can bring it together again." That is true, too: neither you nor I can undo what has been done. But we can surely own the evil, and *ourselves* cease from it. And that we are called and bound to do.

And then, what about these various bodies of Christendom, among which (you say) the *true Church* is scattered? Plainly they are not the true Church themselves, for that very reason, that the *true Church* is scattered amongst them. If, then, they are not the true Church, what are they? Do they even *represent* the true Church, as far as an outward, visible body may?

They do not, for they are *not* one body, even professedly, but *many*; and by the very fact of what they are, to be a member of any one of them, is to be *not* a member of the rest. Thus these bodies do not even represent the Church of God. They are societies of people who are associated together upon the ground, not of membership in the body of Christ, but of holding certain views which *distinguish them from other Christians*. And that,—suffer me to say it, brethren; the appeal is to scripture in the matter,—that is true sectarianism, "schism" in the Bible sense, "schism in the *body*" (of Christ.)

Mark it, then, brethren: it is no schism to be outside *these* bodies. It is a duty; for by the very fact of being united to *them*, I separate myself so far from all those who though true and devoted Christians, cannot give in their adhesion to the creed or to the regulations of the sect.

The moment I get the true thought of the Church of God, I see it to be a body into which Christ the Head admits, and He alone, for He alone baptizes with the Holy Ghost, and by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body. Scripture owns no other membership than this—the being members of Christ,—of His body. If you and I are such we belong already to the Church, and have to "receive *one another*, as Christ received us, to the glory of God." He who imposes conditions is guilty of dividing the body of Christ, not he who cannot in conscience come under the conditions. That discipline is to be maintained is of course true, but that is not in question here.

Aside from this, the gathering together of Christians as such, apart from all denominational distinctions, is the only "assembling of ourselves together" that the Scripture knows.

Do you say, "Well, but that assembly of Christians as such must be subject to the order which Christ has instituted for His Church"? I answer, surely so; but that is too small a loophole to admit all or any of the ecclesiastical systems of the day. Tested by the Word of God, these all founder upon this, that they put into men's hands the power which alone belongs to Christ, give Him nominal headship but not actual, and subject the conscience thus to men and not to God.

All human regulations, however wise and expedient in their design, yet as regulations necessarily do this. Who has power to regulate in the Church of Christ, but Christ? Not the whole Church together, much less any class or section in it. Are not the scriptures able to furnish thoroughly to every good work? What want we more? Are all your creeds, confessions, canons, and what not, clearer and more forcible than the Word itself? Are your liturgies the supply of a deficiency which the Head of the Church has not provided for? Alas, is it not all sheer dishonor done to Him, and in reality a subtle form of unbelief in His only authoritative Word?

But again I read that Christ has given gifts to his Church: some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers. The apostles and prophets remain as the foundation (Eph. ii. 20); the others carry on the building to this day. Evangelists labour in the world outside; pastors and teachers in the Church inside. The possession of the gift entailed the responsibility of using it (1 Pet. iv. 10); for He who gave it could not have made a mistake in giving it. Now, once more, suffer me to ask,—and if it be folly, bear with me in my folly,—whence did men get the control they exercise over the gifts of Christ? Who gave them power to ordain, or appoint, or choose, or send out, or locate and settle the servants of another master? Is it no interference, think you, with Himself, that *He* has given the gift to use, but *you* are to give the authority to use it?

I ask for Scripture to shew that men were ever ordained to teach or preach at all. It is too scanty a foundation for it to adduce that Paul and Barnabas were separated to a special

work among the heathen, by the imposition of the hands of prophets and teachers, (Acts xiii.) In the first place, Paul certainly was not ordained then, for to some of the very people to whom he was then sent, he declares that he was "an apostle, not of men, nor by man," (Gal. i, 1). Secondly, the work they were set apart to was simply a definite mission among the Gentiles, which Ch. xiv. 26, tells us was "fulfilled;" but Paul's apostleship did not end with that. Thirdly, they were *prophets* as well as teachers who acted in the matter. And, lastly, "the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul," not see if Barnabas and Saul are proper persons to be separated. In other words, He pointed out to them directly those whom He would have sent, not gave them authority to choose and send.

Then Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in every city. And afterwards Timothy and Titus as apostolic delegates did the same. But though an elder should be "apt to teach," his vocation as an elder was not to teach, but to "oversee." It is well known that the word "bishop," the elder's official title, means "overseer," and is so translated, Acts xx. 28. They were elderly grave men, fathers of families, who could show by the careful training of their own families that they knew how to take care of the Church of God. They tended, were shepherds to—(as the word translated "feed" means, Acts xx. 28; 1 Pet. v. 2,)—the Church of God. If they had gift, they labored in the word and doctrine, (1 Tim. v. 17,) but they might rule well without that. Not that they were separate classes of elders, for which there is no scripture at all, but if they had gift they used it; yet it was not confined to them.

These elders *never* ordained. Apostles did, and could depute others. In Timothy's case, who was no elder, when a spiritual gift was given to him by prophecy, it was accompanied with the imposition of the elders' hands. That is the whole scripture on the subject. As for the successors of apostles, or of Timothy or Titus, they exist in the fables of tradition, nowhere else. Scripture speaks only of a wide-spread ruin of the Church, beginning in the apostles' days, and these commend us to the word of God in their own absence, not to successors, (Acts xx. 32; 2 Pet i. 15.)

Why do I speak of this? I would gladly be spared having

to do so, and have been thus brief, as desiring to call attention to the subject, rather than pretending to make all plain. But the evils resulting from the common view and practice are great and many, and would justify a much longer notice. When I turn from the blessed Word of God, and its teachings—from its free and simple ministry in love to all and anywhere, of whatsoever any one might have for the common good of all,—when, I say, I turn from this to the narrow systems of men, where hired preachers have each their little circle in which their voice is alone entitled to be heard;—when I see the sheep of Christ oft-times clinging to those who cannot feed them, (even if they teach no positive heresy, and are themselves Christian men,) just because they have the commission of men, and refuse other teachers who have not, or are not *their* ministers, as they would say; what can I think, beloved brethren? And this is one grand evil of the system, that by maintaining the need of an external commission from those who are supposed to have authority to give it, the *commission* is as the result made the test of the truth. The truth ceases to have entire authority. Christ is made to commission men who do not preach it, nay, often men who are not His at all. And yet they say, there would be confusion from allowing Christians to act simply upon their own conscience to God, and that men would not know whom to listen to or believe, in that case. Is not that as much as saying that Christ's sheep do *not* hear His voice, and that they *will* hear the voice of strangers?

Brethren, there is still, thank God, a living, acting Head to the Church, His body: one who cares for His own as tenderly as ever, yea, as when He laid down His life for His sheep; One, who, Himself at God's right hand, has sent down in His own absence "*another* Comforter," to abide with us for ever. The Holy Spirit is really present with us in that place of infallible Guide and Director in the Church of God, which is falsely and blasphemously claimed by the Roman Pope. Alas, are Protestants conscious of His presence, and of what the fact of His presence involves? For if He be here, must He not be sovereign? Once He did act, and was acknowledged; set apart men to their several spheres of service, as well as gave capacity to serve; sent men hither and thither at His will; and the whole Church in its coming together could be trusted to

His guidance, without prayer-book, priest or president,—each man left to His own conscience before God ; *all* “ a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” The rule was, as to worship,—“ in spirit and in truth ;” the rule as to ministry, “ all things to edification.” In the public assembly, the women were to be silent (1 Cor. xiv.) The one exception shows how large the liberty for all else.

But I close, though having scantily uttered what was on my mind. I‘ut, oh, for a heart rightly to feel all the deep dishonor we have done to Him in the ruin we have brought in everywhere. Repair it, we never can. But we can judge ourselves about it, “ cease to do evil, learn to do well.” Our resource and hope is, the Lord Himself is coming to end it all, and in the bliss of His own presence for the feeblest and most failing of His own. May we be waiting for Him.

F. W. G.

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE INSPIRED BOOKS.

LEVITICUS—(CONTINUED.)

THE priestly relationship to God being now established, the next section, (chaps. xi.—xv.) deal with the question of defilement, what would unfit for the practical enjoyment of that relationship. Chap. xi. treats of distinction of meats, of which, as another has said, those were clean that were “ thoroughly according to their element,” or typically, the divine order. In chap. xii. what is simply according to nature defiles, because it is fallen nature ; and the birth of a man, which should be simply joy and blessing, renders unclean and in need of purifying. Chaps. xiii. and xiv. give us defilement of another kind, leprosy, the active energy of the flesh. This put away from God wholly. The disease was marked in three ways : by being “ deeper than the skin,” by its spreading abroad, and by “ the quick, raw flesh ” above all. It might appear little outwardly, but wherever there were these marks the spring of life was tainted. The man must be put outside the camp, outside the place of recognized relationship to God. It is not the case of one never in relationship,—of a mere sinner, therefore,—but of one in whom the flesh had broken out, and the whole life was tainted,—the “ wicked person ” of 1 Cor. v. 13.

The priest, the spiritual man, was to discern in this case, with patient deliberation and care. If there was doubt, the suspected man was not to be dismissed, but shut up until it could be settled. And the man in whom the plague was, was to be separated from the people of God, and put on the garments of woe, "and cry unclean, unclean." The reason of all this is plain: not only because of its defiling character as to the individual before God, but *it was infectious also*: "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

When the disease had covered all the skin, however, everywhere, it was really stopped, as sin come all out and confessed before God. The priest must pronounce him clean, (xiii. 12, 13.)

The plague might be also in garments, in circumstances, as well as in people. Here there was to be similarly grave question, whether it were deeply inherent in the thing itself, or an accidental thing only. In the latter case, washing or removal of the affected part would be enough. If the former, the garment must be wholly burnt, the thing judged before God and given up, at whatever cost, (xiii. 37—59.)

In chap. xiv. comes the practical restoration of the one in whom the plague was healed. The two birds represent Christ dead and risen; dead to sin, now free, death having no more dominion over Him. The blood is sprinkled seven times upon the leper for perfect cleansing, and the living bird let loose into the open field. It is the type of true spiritual liberty in Christ, reckoning oneself dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus. The one thus free, washes himself, and is restored to his place among the people of God.

Still there needs a further process for full restoration. On the eighth day, *all* the offerings (save the peace-offering,) are offered. The soul restored to enjoyed relationship is now competent to enter into all the fulness of the work of Christ, as we have already seen it developed in the first chapters of the book. The peace-offering is omitted, as I believe, because it is not any more a question of being brought to God, but of entering into what has glorified Him and brought us nigh. The blood of the trespass-offering is now applied to set apart the man thoroughly to God, according to the character which we have seen in the trespass-offering, which is that connected with

restitution to God. He is to be glorified as before He was dishonored. The ear is to hear only Him, the hand to move for Him, the feet to walk in His blessed ways. And now the oil, the type of the Holy Ghost, is put upon the sanctifying blood, that there may be power for this. Then the other offerings are offered. All this is on the eighth day, the beginning of the new week, begun for us in the resurrection of Christ, the first fruits from the dead. And now the work of cleansing is complete.

Afterwards, the leprosy in the house brings before us the solemn question of the defilement of an assembly. The same principles exactly apply. The same care is to be taken to distinguish between what is inherent in the assembly itself, and what may be only in certain individuals. These being removed, the evil may be stopped; yet even here cleansing is needed for the whole.

I pass on now to chap. xvi. Here the day of atonement reveals to us how the Lord can maintain His place among a people subject to so many defilements. His justification, the justification of a love that many waters could not quench, love wherewith, having loved His own which were in the world, He loves them to the end—is found, as ever, in the acceptable offering. Upon this all is based, whether for the holy priesthood, the heavenly saints, (6,) or for the people—Israel (15.) In the case of the bullock, which is for Aaron and his house, and of the first goat, which is the Lord's lot, also, atonement is made for the holy place itself, the tabernacle and the altar. It is not the putting away of people's sins, but the ground upon which He whom the work of Christ has glorified in respect of sin, can dwell among the people spite of all their actual transgressions. It is the justification of his own dwelling in the midst. In the case of the second, the scape-goat, alone, all the iniquities of the children of Israel are confessed over it and put upon its head, and the goat bears them away into a land "cut off." These are the two aspects of atonement here. According to the one there is a throne of grace to which we can approach at all times, for sin as a barrier to keep away from God is gone,—“grace reigns through righteousness.” According to the latter, the sins we have committed are no more found: “far as the east from the west, He has removed them from us.” In the one sense, Christ is a propitiation for the

whole world. But in the other, He has borne away none but the sins of believers. The first is the warrant upon which the Gospel can be preached to all. The second is what those who believe the Gospel are to know as true of themselves.

Still, although this be true in result, Lev. xvi. *directly* applies only to the priests, the members of the heavenly family, and to the people, representatives of Israel as a nation. As to ourselves, believers of the present day, we find the ground upon which the holy One can abide amongst us, spite of all that is *in* and *of* us. And then, upon this ground, His grace can abide for Israel, (as the latter day will manifest it,) spite of all they have been and may be. And the mystery of the *other* goat by which their sins are borne away, that coming day shall also make plain to them.

We must not forget what Heb. x. declares as to what the yearly repetition of this day (34) signifies. Like the unrent veil it reminds us that these were only shadows, and not indeed the very image of the things.

"I WILL GUIDE THEE WITH MINE EYE."

Psalm xxxii. 8, 9.

THERE are three special characters of blessing mentioned in the Psalms.

First, that which we get at the very opening of them: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water," &c. (Ps. 1). It is here a contrast between the ungodly and Christ, the righteous man.

In Psalm cxix. we get a little further. This Psalm speaks of having wandered, and of being restored, (v. 67, 71, 176). It is here, "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." It speaks of one who has the word, delights in it, looks to it, and seeks to be guided by it; still it is not so absolute.

In the Psalm before us, (Ps. xxxii.) we get the blessedness of, and God's dealings with the sinner whose transgressions are removed. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,

whose sin is covered (not who has not transgressed, who has not sinned). Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile," (that is, the restored soul).

It is important to notice the work of the Spirit of God, in the process through which the soul is going here, (as it says, *Thy hand was heavy upon me,*) God's dealings with the soul that does not submit itself entirely, in bringing it down into full subjection and confession. "When I kept silence my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin," (v. 2—5). This is always true, if the Lord's hand is upon a man, until he recognizes the evil before God, and then there is forgiveness of the iniquity. It is very important that we should distinguish the government of God towards our souls in forgiveness.

Until there is confession of *sin*, and not merely of *a sin*, there is no forgiveness. We find David (Ps. 51) when he was confessing his sin, saying, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me;" &c. Not merely "I have done this particular evil;" that he does (v. 1—4); but he recognizes the *root and principle of sin*. When our hearts are brought to recognize God's hand, it is not merely then a question of what particular sin, or of what particular iniquity, may need forgiveness; God has brought down the soul, through the working of His Spirit on it, to detect the *principle of sin*, and so there is confession of that, and not merely of a particular sin. There is then positive restoration of soul.

Now, this is a much deeper thing in its practical consequences, and the Lord's dealings thereon, than we are apt to suppose. Freed from the bondage of things which hindered its intercourse with God, the soul learns to lean upon God, instead of upon those things which, so to speak, had taken the place of God. "For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. Thou art my hiding-place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt com-

pass me about with songs of deliverance," (v. 6, 7). There is its confidence.

And then follows what more specially is the object of this paper.—"*I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.* 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," (v. 8, 9).

Now we are often like the horse or the mule, every one of us—and this, because our souls have not been ploughed up. When there is anything in which the *will* of man is at work, the Lord deals with us as with the horse or the mule, holding us in. When every part of the heart is in contact with Himself, He guides us with His "eye." "The light of the body is the eye; therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light that is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, the whole shall be full of light as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light." (Luke xi. 34-36). When there is anything wherein the eye is not single, so long as this the case, there is not free intercourse in heart and affections with God; and the consequence is, our *will* not being subdued, we are not led simply of God. When the heart is in a right state the whole body is "full of light," and there is the quick perception of the will of God. He just teaches us by His "eye" all He wishes, and produces in us quickness of understanding in His fear, (Is. xi. 3). This is our portion, as having the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, "quickness of understanding in the fear of the Lord," hearts without any object, save the will and glory of God.

And this is just what Christ was; "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God, yea, Thy law is within my heart." (Ps. xl. 7, 8; Hob. x. 7.) When there is this, it may be bitter and painful as to the circumstances of the path, but there is in it the joy of obedience, as obedience. There is always joy, and the consequence, God guiding us by His eye.

Before anything can be done, if we have not this certainty before we enter upon any particular service, we should seek to get it, judging our own hearts as to what may be hindering.

Suppose I set about doing a thing, and meet with difficulties, I shall begin to be uncertain as to whether it is God's mind or not; and hence, there will be feebleness and discouragement. But on the other hand, if acting in the intelligence of God's mind in communion, I shall be "more than conqueror," whatever may meet me by the way. (Rom. viii. 37.) And note here, not only does the power of faith, in the path of faith, remove mountains; but the Lord deals *morally*, and will not let me find out His way, unless there be in me the spirit of obedience. (What would it avail—unless indeed, God should provide for His own dishonor?) "If any man will do [wills to do] His will," says our Lord, "he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John vii. 17.) This is precisely the obedience of faith. The heart must be in the condition of obedience, as Christ's was, "Lo, I come," &c. The apostle speaks to the Colossians of being "filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." Here it is quickness of understanding in the fear of the Lord, the condition of a man's own soul, though his spirit of mind will be necessarily shown in outward acts, when that will is set before Him; as Paul goes on to say, "that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

Here, then, is the blessed, joyful state of being guided by God's "eye." "I have meat to eat," says our Lord to the disciples, (John iv,) "that ye know not of." And what was that meat? "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work."

The Lord guides, or rather controls, us in another way, by *providential* circumstances, so that we may not go wrong, even though we are those who have "no understanding." And thankful we ought to be that He does so. But it is only as the horse or the mule. "Your wills being subdued to mine," He says, "I will *guide* you with *mine eye*; but if you are not subject, I must *keep you in* with *bit and bridle*." This is evidently, a very different thing.

May our hearts be led to desire to know and to do God's will. It will not then be so much a question of *what* that will is; but of *knowing* and *doing* God's will. And then we shall

have the certain and blessed knowledge of being guided by His "eye." There is all this government of God with those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile—whose whole dependance is upon Him, and who feel they are sure to go wrong, if not guided by Himself.

There is a guidance with knowledge, and there is also a guidance without knowledge. The former is our blessed privilege; but it may be the latter is needed to humble us. In Christ there was everything exactly according to God. In a certain sense, *He had no character*. When I look at Him, what do I see? A constant, never-failing life-manifestation of obedience. He goes up to Bethany just when He is to go up, regardless of the fears of the disciples; He abides two days still in the same place where He is, after He has heard that Lazarus is sick. He is nothing, but to do all, to accomplish all, for the Glory of God. One man is tender and soft; in another firmness and decision predominate. There is great diversity of *character* amongst men. You do not see that in Christ at all; there is no unevenness; every faculty in His humanity obeyed, and was the instrument of the impulse the divine will gave to it. He was tender, when he ought to be tender; gracious when He ought to be gracious; faithful, silent, decided, as well as gentle, all in place. When indignation became Him, who could stand before His rebuke? See Matt. xxiii. "In a Paul, we find energy and zeal; in a Peter, ardent affection; in a John, tender sensibilities and abstraction of thought, united to a desire to vindicate what He loved, which scarce knew limit. Each had his own individual character." Divine life was in a vessel of fallen nature, and the vessel had to be proved an earthen vessel. Look at St. Paul. Blessed servant though he was, he writes an epistle, which we all believe to be an inspired epistle, to the Corinthians, and afterward says, speaking of this very epistle, "Though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, *though I did repent*," (2 Cor. vii. 8,) his own feelings had been acting. He has no rest when he comes to Troas, and finds not Titus his brother there, but goes off to Macedonia, though a door was opened to him of the Lord to preach Christ's gospel in Troas. (2 Cor. xi. 12, 13.) When he has been up to the third heaven, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to

utter, he is obliged to have a thorn in the flesh, lest he should be exalted above measure, an antagonist power to this principle in himself, to keep him humble. (2 Cor. xii.)

The command not to go into Bithynia, (Acts. xvi. 7,) was not guidance by the Spirit of the highest sort. It was blessed guidance, but not the highest character of guidance an apostle knew. It was more like the government of the horse or the mule, not so much the intelligence of God's mind in communion.

A vast quantity of the guidance of the Spirit is just what we get in Col. i. 9, 11, to those in communion with God. There we find the individual to be "*filled with the knowledge of His will.*" The Holy Ghost guides into the knowledge of the divine will, and there is no occasion even to pray about it. If I have spiritual understanding about a given thing, it may be the result of a great deal of previous prayer, and not, necessarily, of the things having been prayed about at the time. One has often had to pray about a thing because not in communion. I may have my mind exercised about that to-day, honestly, truly, graciously exercised, which, five years hence, it might be, I should not have a doubt about. When God is using us, if we have lost *ourselves*, He may put it into our hearts to go here, or to go there; then God is positively *guiding* us. But this assumes a person to be walking with God, and that diligently; it assumes death to *self*. If we are walking humbly, God will guide us. I may be in a certain place, and there have one say to me, "Will you go to ———, (naming some other place)?" Now, if I *have not* the mind of God, as to my going or otherwise, I shall have to pray for guidance; but this, of course, assumes, that I am not walking in the knowledge of God's mind. I may have motives pulling me one way or the other, and clouding my spiritual judgment. The Lord says, (John xi.) when the disciples speak of the Jews having of late sought to stone Him, and asks "Goest thou thither again?" "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him." This is just an application of the simple fact, that, if walking in the night, I must be on the lookout for stones, lest I stumble over them. So Paul prays for the Philippians that

their love might abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that they might approve things that are excellent, [try things that differ;] that they might be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ, without a single stumble all the way along.

Many speak of providences as a guide. Providence does sometimes control, but it never, properly speaking, guides us. It guides *things*. If I am going to a place to preach, and I find when I get to the terminus, that the train has started, God has ordered things about me, (and I may have to be thankful for the overruling,) but it is not God's *guiding* me; for I should really have gone, had the train not left; *my will was to go*. All that we get of *this* guidance of providence is very blessed; but it is not guidance by the Spirit of God, not guidance by the "eye," but rather by the "bit" of God. Though providence overrules, it does not, properly speaking, guide.

DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH.

GODLINESS is the religion of the *truth*, (I Tim. iii. 15, 16.) Our character is to be formed by it, and our service defined and directed by it. The truth is the instrument and the standard. It is that by which the Spirit works in us and with us; and it is that by which we try everything. It is an instrument in the Spirit's hand, and a standard in ours—and the truth that is this is connected with the dispensations of God.

This is seen at once. Morals and the duties which attach to human relationship get a peculiar character from their connection with such truth—as, among other Scriptures, Eph. iv—vi, would, in many particulars, illustrate for us. We are now in this dispensation to learn Christ, and be taught "as the truth is in Jesus." What was holiness and service under one dispensation ceases to be so under another. Actions change their character with the changing time. In order to *do* right, or to *be* right, according to God, we must "know the time," as the Apostle speaks. The day was when it was holy to call down fire from heaven to consume adversaries. But the day came when the offer to do such a thing had to suffer rebuke—and that too under the same supreme divine authority which had warranted, nay, inspired it, before. "Everything is beautiful in

its season,"—and dispensational truth is the great arbiter of seasons, telling us the times, and what the Israel of God and the Church of God ought severally to do.

At one time the Lord put the sword into the hand of His servant; at another, He took it out of such a hand. Joshua and Peter tell me this. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," was a divine decree in the days of the Evangelists—but, in earlier days, every trace of Gentile rule in the land of the fathers was required to be clean blotted out by the zeal and strength of the children. It was not to be "God" and "Cæsar" then, but Jehovah's name was to be written on the land of the Twelve Tribes, and every stick and stone on it be claimed in the name of Jehovah of Israel, without a rival.

Places and ordinances, in like manner, change their character with dispensations. But this is more easily admitted or apprehended than the other. Mount Sinai, where God came down, and which awful, consecrated spot none were to touch but Himself, is now simply "Sinai in Arabia," and institutions which were once divine, and the dishonoring of which was death, are now but "beggarly elements," "rudiments of the world." Nay, more,—they are even put in company with idols. (Gal. iv.) Thus, what was sacred at one time becomes common at another; while what was unclean once, is afterward given for the communion of Saints. The serpent of brass becomes Nehushtan,—a company of those who had been repudiated as "uncircumcised," becomes "a habitation of God through the Spirit."

Thus it is indeed so, that the character, the value with God, of actions, places, ordinances and the like, will change with changing dispensations. We are to decide on their godliness, their sacredness, their holiness, by "the truth." And not only is it thus with changing dispensations, but with the changing phases and conditions of the same dispensation.

The harps of Israel, for instance, were struck in the days of Solomon, and songs were sung when Heman, Asaph, and Jeduthun were in the land. But in the days of Babylon the harps were to be hung on the willows, and the songs of Zion to be silent.

So David, according to the mind of God, when his hunger and wandering bespoke a ruined condition of things among the

people, would ask for the shew bread of the Temple for himself and his followers, though in the day of the integrity of Israel and their dispensation, it was lawful only for the priests to eat of it.

So again, this same David could not go on with a purpose that was right in his heart, as the Lord Himself said of it, because it was not right, or in season, *dispensationally considered*. (2 Chr. vi. 8, 9.)

And thus we see, from a few samples out of many, that different stages or eras, or conditions of things have their several and peculiar truth, on which to ground their own peculiar claims, just as surely and simply as if they were different dispensations. The children of Israel under Joshua and under the Judges, the Jews at home, the Jews in Babylon, the Jews returned, though all of them alike under the same covenant, had very differently to answer Jehovah's claims and do His service. "Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the Bridegroom is with them," I may call to mind in connection with this. When He is taken away, then indeed they may and ought to fast. (Luke v.)

Surely everything helps to show us, that dispensational truth is the great, I say not the *only*, rule and manner of holiness according to God. We must "know the time," for nothing is right out of season. "The children of Issachar were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." (1 Chr. xii. 32.) Scripture is full of instruction upon this principle, and leaves us at no liberty to judge the holy and the unholy, independently of "the truth." Our godliness, our piety, in order to have a divine character, depends on our knowledge of the truth, of times and seasons as they are with God, or according to His mind, in His perfect and beautiful, though changing dispensations.

However, let me say, lest I should be misunderstood, that I surely know there are rules of right and wrong, which are essentially and by moral necessity so; and we are not to question their authority. Conscience is ever to be *respected*, though it must consent to be *instructed*. Nature itself has a voice at times, which we are to listen to. Surely I grant all this, though I speak of dispensational truth as I do. For I again say, it is not the *only* rule and measure of holiness.

"HOW MANY LOAVES HAVE YE?"

MARK vi. 38.

THE Lord uses what the disciples had. It was but little—nothing for such a multitude; but when blessed and broken by Jesus, it goes a great way. The God who gave life could sustain it independent of means, or multiply the means to make them adequate to the need. So now, it is "what we have" Christ uses. Use what we have in faith, and He will make it meet the need of all present. It is the power of God giving efficacy to His word that makes much or little a blessing, and without that, plenty is vain. In the ministry of the word, the grand end is getting the soul, through the presentation of Christ, brought into living connection with God. True ministry does this for the poor; the *rich* go empty away.

"LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED."

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."—John xiv. 27.

A goodly portion Thou hast left us, Lord,
 Nought less than Thine own peace, to stay the heart
 Amid the stormy waves, which roughly beat
 O'er the frail barque of life! Wondrous grace in Thee,
 So richly to provide for all Thine own!
 Their need, how'er diverse or great, is met
 By this bless'd word, "My peace I leave with you,
 "My peace I give to you; not like the world
 "Give I, so let no heart be filled with fear
 "Or troubled be, *my* peace is all your own."
 We bless Thee, gracious Lord, for this bequest
 Of thine! We praise Thee for the faithful love
 Which does make good Thy word. Our hearts are kept
 In perfect peace through the wild storms that burst
 Around us here. We know we're homeward bound,—
 We know Thou hast the helm; and power is Thine
 To make the port, and bring the vessel there,
 How shattered e'er it be! Thine arm, Thy love
 Are equal to the task Thou hast imposed
 Upon Thyself. The haven reached, gladly
 (How gladly!) shall we own the hand divine
 That brought us there! Sweet will it be, O Lord,
 To know no storm again; to fear no wave;
 Nor surging billows more. But sweeter far,
 To take the calm from Thee, and Thee alone

"SOUND WORDS."

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SIMEON ; OR, THE RECEPTION OF CHRIST.

LUKE ii. 25-38.

THERE are two things which are very distinct in connection with the reception of Christ. In the Gospel a Person is set before us. Paul says, "It pleased God to reveal His Son *in me*." And there are two distinct things connected with this : one is, a renunciation of the state you are in ; the other, an unfolding of that to which you have come. Simeon (Luke ii.) is an instance of this. He turns his back on everything in connection with the hopes of man. When he has the Saviour in his arms, he says, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." It is an immense thing for the soul to understand what the reception of Christ means. Paul's word to the jailor is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." A *Person* is brought in. The more truly I have received Christ, the more I must abandon that which is antagonistic to Christ. It is not merely to say, "I believe," and to go on as usual : that is impossible. What I really receive must characterize me. It so characterized Simeon that he can completely surrender everything of man's hopes and fears, and say, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

What a wondrous thing it is that God has sent His Son to bear the judgment that rested upon us ! Instead of holding to that man on whom the judgment lay, I receive the One who bore the judgment, and delivered me out of it.

When the Israelites were coming out of Egypt the blood of the lamb was put outside the door. That tells what the history of grace is. But are they to go on as usual in Egypt ? No ; they are brought clean out of Egypt. They first put the blood of the lamb outside, to meet the eyes of the Judge, and with it came the death of the Egyptian firstborn. Death was destroy-

ing the grasp of thralldom ! But the people of God at the same time are eating the lamb, and in the strength of it they are *driven out* of Egypt ; but they never are out of fear until they cross the Red Sea, and they see the Egyptians dead on the shore. In Christ I am clean away from the thing from which He has saved me, and the more I realize this, the more I shall value it. A person who never had bad health does not value health as does the one who has recovered. He who has got new and good health is delivered from the bad health, and he is careful of his health, he knows what it is to lose it. A person who believes in Christ must break with the first-born of Egypt, *i.e.*, the sinful man who is under judgment. The Israelites knew what Egypt was, and never were happy until they were all clean out of reach of the Egyptians. The further they got away the better, for they do not reach up to the purpose of God for them until they are across Jordan. When they come to Jordan (Josh. iii.) they see the ark in it, and they pass clean over. Do you shrink from death ? If you do, it is because you are looking at it instead of at the ark. Death was nothing to Simeon. He takes the child (really crossing Jordan) in his arms, and says, " Mine eyes have seen thy salvation." I have the Saviour in my arms. I am clean done with everything.

God gave His Son. He was a man here on earth, and in death He bore the judgment that lay on man, to remove it from the believer, and to transfer him from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of the Son of His love, " to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Are you blind, or have you been blind ? If a blind man were assured that he could recover his sight, he would submit to any sacrifice to secure it, and, after he had recovered it, surely he would shrink from everything that would injure his sight again ? The glory of that light made Paul blind. The light of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, shone into his soul ; and could Saul receive this light and continue as he was before ? Surely not ! As light is distinct and separate from darkness, so is a soul that receives Christ, morally separate from all that is not of Christ.

Do you think it melancholy—was it melancholy for Simeon to close his eyes on this scene when Jesus was in his arms ? Was it melancholy for Paul to turn from this scene when he saw

the glory of that light? Or for Stephen when he saw the glory of God and Jesus? You may say that is an advanced state; but Saul of Tarsus was not advanced, when he *began* his course thus.

How differently the heart would be affected by the Lord's grace towards us, if the soul had the consciousness that not only is there a work done *for me*, but the person who did the work occupies my heart. As the apostle puts it, "It pleased God to reveal His Son *in me*." It was not melancholy to Paul. On the contrary, he says, "I live Christ." It is not merely the effect of a thing done, but, "Christ liveth in me," and that in the very scene where I am. It was not that Saul was improved, but a new plant, a Plant of Renown was in him, and he has this One, and no other, before him. Oh! does not your heart tell you, if you had this One—if like Simeon you so possessed Christ—what a place and what a portion it would be! It is *impossible* to receive Christ and to go on in the world. In receiving Him the whole thing is changed—there is a new plant, a new Person in you. Christ is formed in you. It may be small at first. The largest oak was once very small. But if you accept Christ you cannot go on as you were before. He diverts you from every thing that you are as a natural man. The thief on the cross gave up himself when he turned to the man who had done nothing amiss. Self is the great thing to give up, the sum of everything. He dropped himself and took up Christ. Christ was the One absolutely before his soul. You cannot enjoy the thing from which you have been delivered, and hold to the One who has delivered you. Impossible! Simeon is told that he shall not see death until he has seen the Lord's Christ; and the effect of death in his soul leads him to say, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." He is done with all connected with this scene, and his eyes are filled with the glory of the Saviour. "Christ in him the hope of glory." "As many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.

It is not a sad thing. The light of the glory of Christ is above the brightness of the sun. Had you the light shining into your heart, you would find that the brightness of the sun in nature was surpassed and eclipsed! If you have received the light which is above the brightness of the sun, you are not to be

pitied because other lights are gone out. He only is to be pitied who has *not* got it, and has only the sparks of his own kindling.

OUR LORD'S PICTURE IN THE GOSPELS.

The Gospels give us a four-fold view of the Lord's person and work, in connection with which many other truths present also characteristic differences.

In Matthew He is set before us in the opening verse in the double aspect of "Son of David, Son of Abraham." As the former, heir to the throne of Israel, there is given the story of His rejection at the hands of the people to whom He came. Yet though rejected, and turning from them for the time to the Gentiles, His own prophetic words assure us how He will come again from the heavens which till then receive Him, and gather together Israel, "His elect," from their long dispersion—"from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Ch. xxiv).

But He is also, "Son of Abraham," and this brings in His connection with faith, wherever found, according to the principle of Gal. iii., "Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." Thus the Lord's words find place (xii. 49, 50) in which He disclaims connection with the mere natural seed, to affirm His relationship with whoever did the will of His Father in heaven. A principle upon which, when Jews reject, He can take up Gentiles, and as it were out of the stones, raise up children to Abraham. But the kingdom character prevails throughout the book, and the parables of the 13th chapter give us still (as do the first twelve chapters) the "kingdom of heaven," though in a very different form to that it will take among Jews in the latter day. In the first twelve chapters it is presented to the Jews; in the 13th the "mysteries" of it are introduced to us, its Gentile form, with the king away, and the seed of the Word left to spring up in the hearts of men. But everywhere it is thus the throne of God, a throne to which Christ has right, and upon which He sits, after he has met and made good its claims in His own obedience unto death, even the death of the cross.

This introduces us to that aspect of Christ's sacrificial work

which Matthew presents. The fourfold view of the cross which the first chapters of Leviticus give is just that which we find in the four Gospels. The meat-offering, of course, is not the sacrificial work at all, nor do I speak of it now. The others are presented thus: in Luke and John, the two "sweet-savour" offerings; in Luke, the peace-offering, God and man at one through the work of atonement; in John, the burnt-offering, the perfectness and preciousness of the work itself before God. The other two Gospels give us the offerings wherein the judgment of sin is the side dwelt upon, as in the trespass-offering sin as *injury* which has to be repaired—in the sin-offering, sin rather *as* sin, which has to be *expiated*. Matthew and Mark alone thus give us the cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me." Of these, Matthew, I judge, gives the sin-offering aspect. The claims of the throne of God upon man the sinner necessitate the full and perfect judgment of sin. The agony which in Luke is in the *garden*—not the actual atoning suffering, but the human soul wrung with the anticipation of the cup which He has to drink, is in Matthew at the cross itself, the actual drinking of the cup, without which even the blood of the spotless victim could not satisfy. (Heb. xiii. 11, 12.)

In complete and beautiful harmony with this is seen just here the jealousy of God in guarding from suspicion of uncleanness the character of the sacrifice. He who in 2 Cor. v., is careful to say of Him who was "made sin for us," that He "knew no sin,"—He who in Leviticus takes special pains to mark the sin-offering as "most holy," gives in this gospel three-fold witness to the spotlessness of the victim burned without the camp. The traitor who gives Him up and the Judge who condemns Him, alike bear witness to it, while heaven adds its testimony in the dream of Pilate's wife.

But the shadow of the cross darkens the whole book. Even for disciples salvation has not yet come. God, though a Father doubtless, is afar off upon the unseen throne of heaven, and although He cares for us, and we walk under His eye, there is much more the thought of the responsibility attaching to the place, than of the intimacy and enjoyment flowing from it. "My Father in heaven," "your Father in heaven," "your heavenly Father," are characteristic; as is that which alone is found here, "the kingdom of heaven," where the heavens are pointed out as the seat of authority and rule over the earth.

Indeed this "kingdom of heaven" may be looked at as one of the keys to the whole book of Matthew, as a glance at it may shew.

Thus chaps. 1 and 2 give us as introductory who this king is—king of such a kingdom. We find He is Emmanuel, "God with us," who to be that must be Jesus, Jehovah the Saviour, and must save His people from their sins. Then Jews at once reject, while Gentiles come and worship. The Lord begins in Egypt once again, as Israel's true representative, the people's history, yet takes His place for the present in Nazareth of Galilee, despised and forsaken, among the poor of the flock.

In chap. iii. iv. John calls the people to prepare His way by repentance, confessing their sins, and giving up all title to blessing through a fleshly link with Abraham. Jordan is "*death*." The Lord comes and confesses it to be their due, going into it as their substitute, and is sealed by the Spirit of God *as it were* in resurrection, a significant sign of how all righteousness was to be fulfilled. Pointed out as the Divine King of Israel, He goes into the wilderness to meet the devil, and having bound the strong man, begins to announce in Galilee His kingdom as at hand.

Chaps. v.-vii. give us the character of this kingdom and those who should inherit it. Chaps. viii.-xii., the gradual display of His glory among them met by more and more decided rejection, until in ch. xii., He declares their rejection as a nation, and His relationship only with those who did His Father's will.

Ch. xiii. following, gives us in parables the history of this kingdom as introduced by the sowing of the Gospel-seed among the Gentiles, Himself being away in Heaven, and a mingled state of good and evil the result, tares and wheat growing together till the harvest, when He comes again to judgment.

Ch. xiv. gives us in actual facts of the Lord's life, a symbolical picture relating to the same time, but more to the position of disciples during His absence and His care for them.

Ch. xvi.-xx. 28, give us the characteristic *principles* of the kingdom, of which ch. xiii.-xv. have given us the *history*. The cross to be borne on the one hand, and the exhibition of *grace* on the other, are the chief moral features.

Ch. xx. 29—xxv., give us the Lord's final presentation to Israel, His rejection, His judgment of them, but still from a heart yearning over them, the prophecy of His reception by them

at the last as glorified in the heavens and the judgment of Christendom, (xxiv. 43., xxv. 30) and of the nations (xxv. 31-46) at that coming again.

Finally, ch. xxvi.-xxviii. give us atonement by the cross, and the Lord in resurrection having all authority in heaven and on earth.

In Mark we have the Lord in a very distinct aspect. The "kingdom of *God*" we have still, but now never "of Christ" nor "of the Son of man." Save as accusation at the cross, He is never even King of the Jews. His title of Lord is very seldom taken. But He is the Son of God in service, the patient, unwearying minister to man's necessities, the one gift for service with divine power and riches, sufficient to meet all the consequences of sin, and sin itself, and make up to man where man would receive Him, all the injury that sin had done him. This service of restitution manifestly connects itself with the trespass offering aspect of the sacrificial work. *There also* He restores that which He took not away, and, as in "the fifth part more" of the offering, *more* than restores. The cross becomes the very declaration of the righteousness, even as of the love of God: all that upon which the entrance of sin might have cast suspicion is glorified in it. But for this the cry of forsaken sorrow must be heard, as again in Mark we hear it: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

In this Gospel God is spoken of as the Father but five times altogether, and in three of these instances as Father of our Lord. The earnestness of His service is marked by the frequency of the word "immediately." Half of all the occurrences of the Greek word which this translates throughout the New Testament are in this Gospel. The singleness of His service is seen in His knowing nothing of His Master's business save what is given Him to communicate. (xiii. 32). The tenderness of it is seen in the detail of all the smaller features of His ministry, how He was "moved with compassion;" how the hardness of their hearts grieved Him; how He touched one, lifted up another; how He marvelled because of their unbelief. Here, too, (as in Luke) the ascension is given as the fitting close of the path of humiliation, "the right hand of God" being especially noticed as where He sits; even then, His service unceasing as His love, so that we read, "And they went forth and preached everywhere, *the*

Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following."

In Luke it is as distinctly the manhood of the Lord that is presented to us, as it is His Deity in John. Thus His genealogy is traced from Adam, not merely Abraham. Not only His birth is dwelt on, but His childhood also. His growth in wisdom and stature. His prayers, too, are noticed, where in the other Gospels they are omitted, as in His baptism, and at His transfiguration. So also His being "full of the Holy Ghost." Seldom is He the Son of David here, and Mary has the prominence in the early history which in Matthew belongs to Joseph.

Taking thus a place among men as man, it is no wonder that angels tell, not simply of God's "good will towards," but "good pleasure in men"—for so it should be read. And, accordingly, the peace-offering aspect of the work of Christ is what Luke's Gospel gives. God and man meet together and are at one, as in that characteristic 15th chapter, in which all the mind of heaven displays itself in joy at the recovery of what was lost—joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth,—joy which reflects itself in the heart of that repentant sinner, and fills the mouth of the dumb with song.

Thus Luke opens with a burst of melody. Elizabeth, Mary, Zacharias, the angels, the shepherds, Simeon and Anna are all praising; and the burden of their song is what the former Gospels have nothing of—a Saviour-God, and a *present* salvation. So, in the synagogue at Nazareth, the opening of the Lord's ministry is the declaration of present grace to heal and save—the acceptable year of the Lord proclaimed as *come*. Again, in the 7th chapter, the forgiveness of a sinner of the city,—in the 10th the parable of the Samaritan—in the 18th of the Pharisee and Publican,—in the 19th the story of Zaccheus—all speak the same language. But the cross, as we might expect, has pre-eminently this peace-offering character. There is no cry of one forsaken any more. It is not even "My God," but "Father." The shadow may be upon the cross, but no more on the soul of Him who in peace is interceding for His murderers, and opening Paradise to a poor sinner at His side.

Thus peace, grace, remission, salvation, are all (as compared with the former Gospels) characteristic of the present one. The blessing is there for man, made over to him, and filling his heart

with joy and praise. Compare in Matthew, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," with Luke's "Blessed are ye poor;" or the words at the institution of the supper in Matthew and Mark, "This is my blood shed for *many*," with Luke's "This cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for *you*."

So praise and joy unite with repentance in the heart opening to the wondrous grace of God, and love received awakens response in him who has received it—love for love.

All this is characteristic of Luke as compared with the Gospels which precede it; and we have, therefore, in perfect moral order,—first, the actual atonement as in Matthew; then, in Mark, the making up of the *injury* caused by sin; then, lastly, God and man at one, but sin as a barrier gone, and triumphed over in the soul by abounding grace.

And now John's Gospel comes to complete the picture, and fill the whole scene with the glory of the Only-begotten—God manifest in the flesh. Man is seen to be dead utterly. The light come into the world fully manifests its condition. Hence law, given by Moses, useless here, is only contrasted with the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ. Judaism, whose principle was law, is over also—its privileges and its responsibilities. The very language of the Jew is treated as a foreign tongue, and translated into Gentile language, the common speech of men. For we start in this Gospel with the fact of that rejection of Christ which the former ones had proved. The world, made by Him, was ignorant of Him, its Maker, (this Luke has shewn). His own, moreover, to whom He had come, received Him not (this is Matthew). All this made it a scene in which God could work indeed, but He alone. Thus the fact and meaning of new birth are what we find in John, and alone of all the Gospels. Here it meets us at the threshold. Men must be born of God. The Life must not only shine in the world, but quicken souls, that they may see it and rejoice in it. But so quickened, there ensues another thing: born of God, they are given the place of sons, and the Spirit of His Son becomes the Spirit of sonship in their hearts. Hence intelligence of the revelation made to them by One who declares to them Him whom none at any time had seen, and who speaks of Him as in His bosom, an Only-Begotten with the Father.

Hence Christ is here the Word, God and with God, Eternal

Life, and who, if made flesh, becomes in the world the Light of it. He is Quickener of the dead, Baptiser with the Holy Ghost, the True Witness, that we may have fellowship with Him.

Then, as to the aspect of the work, it is the Burnt-offering that presents it, the type of the perfectness for the eye and heart of God, of that in which we are accepted. His own witness of His work is given, that "it is finished." The blood and the water prove it, and the Spirit also testifies, because the Spirit is truth.

In John there is no transfiguration, and no veil rent at the cross. The reason is apparent that the glory is shining out all through, and that in no strange or distant way.

I add a short synopsis of this Gospel, which may help some to more appreciation of it.

Chaps. i.-ii. 22 is a threefold introduction. Ch. i. 1-18 give us the doctrinal statement of what Christ is as we have seen in John. Then follows the witness of the Baptist to Him, the witness of a heart filled with the glory of the Son. (19-36). Then the Spirit of God *gathers* to this glorious person: first, what is a little picture of the gathering of a heavenly people who see where He dwells and abide with Him. (37-42.) Next, a new action in Galilee (the place of hope for Israel) gathers a people of whom Nathanael is the type. The testimony borne to him is of One of whom Moses wrote, and his own is that He is the Son of God and King of *Israel*. These will see "heaven opened," and the angels waiting on the Son of Man, but the place of the former gathering is with *Himself*.

Chap. ii. gives us thereupon another picture of what will take place at the Lord's return: Israel's marriage (1-11) and the cleansing of the temple (12-22).

The main body of the book now begins with the beginning of all for fallen man; new life from God. Ch. iv. rather the gift of the living water, the Holy Ghost. This produces worship from a heart filled up by God. These two things are at the foundation of Christianity.

Chap. v. gives us the character of this life, as quickening out of a scene of judgment. The law (typified by Bethesda) could not even *heal* where there was impotence, much less do this.

Chap. vi. The effect of having *life*, as in the world; this life as a life of *faith* down here, feeding on a dead Christ and waiting for resurrection.

Chap. vii., the effect of having the *Holy Ghost* as in the world, the flowing *out* of the living waters of ch. iv.

Chap. viii. begins another line of things: the soul in the presence of the *light* of God's presence, and uncondemned: truth setting free the *heart*.

Ch. ix., the *communication* of light, the light in *you*,—occupation with Christ; who leads his flock out of the fold of Judaism (ch. x.) to the green pastures upon resurrection ground (ch. xi).

But for all this the corn of wheat must fall to the ground and die, that in resurrection it may have this fruit. (Ch. xii).

Chaps. xiii.-xvii. give us rather the fruit of *ascension*. Chap. xiii. the Lord above occupied, with us as down here, cleansing us from all defilement that we may have fellowship with Him.

Chap. xiv., the Father's house, and Christ the revelation of the Father; the Spirit of truth making good in us below our relationship to Him. Ch. xv. the fruitfulness proceeding from this. Ch. xvi., the opposition, condemnation and overcoming of the world.

Ch. xvii., the intercession of Christ for His own.

Now follows, as in each of the other gospels, the work itself upon which all other blessing is founded: here, the voluntary *Burnt-offering*. In ch. xx. the *actual* gathering around the risen Lord. Peace inside, and the world's enmity outside; with the peculiar blessedness of those who have "*not seen but believed.*"

F. W. G.

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE] INSPIRED BOOKS.

LEVITICUS (*Continued.*)

We have had then in the first sixteen chapters of the book: *first*, the perfection of Christ as in life and death a perfect offering to God, in the full value of which it is (accepted in the Beloved) we draw near to God in the sanctuary (chaps. i-vii.); and *secondly*, at the very same time, we get in this a picture of what true sanctification to God is—what *we* are therefore to be, as offering our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service (Rom. xii. 1.) *Thirdly*, (in chap. viii-x) we have the consecration of the holy priesthood, who are

to serve in the sanctuary, the character in which we are looked at in this book—purged and holy worshippers. The next section gives us the flesh as still in its outbreaks bringing in defilement and rendering practically unfit for fellowship with a holy God, and the remedy for these (chap. xi-xv.) And lastly, in the day of atonement we learn how God can still dwell in the midst of a people such as this has proved us to be, the blood of Christ being before Him on the mercy-seat and the actual sins of His people borne away on the head of the scapegoat into a land of forgetfulness (ch. xvi).

The chapters which follow (from xvii-xxii.) still pursue this theme of what the Lord in their midst required from those set apart or sanctified to Him, whether people (xvii-xx.) or priests (xxi-xxii.) The first give us more **what** is due from *men*; the second as *worshippers*. It would be impossible here to enter at all into detail. In ch. xvii. God asserts His claim upon *life* universally. It belonged to Him. To take it without respecting His claim, even to the beast, was murder, and treated as such. And because the blood was the vehicle of the life, it was in no wise to be eaten, but poured out upon the ground at least, where not sprinkled before the Lord; and they are reminded that blood it was which He had given to make atonement for the soul. Thus if death had come in through man's sin, and it had, in the Lord's own grace—His to whom the forfeited life was due—death, through the appointed sacrifice, had been made to sustain the life of the redeemed people. "Out of the eater came forth meat." Under the law the blood however is kept back; for us under the gospel it is a necessity that we spiritually drink it: "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and *drink His blood*, ye have no life in you." This is one of the cases in which, as applied to us, the types of the law fail. They are "the shadow, and *not* the very image." We are called to enter in now by faith, into what faith even, in Israel, could not.

In chap. xviii. we have distinctly warning against sins against nature itself. The Gentiles giving up God, even as made known in nature, had been left to dishonour their own bodies by things contrary to nature. But it is solemn to find that the people who know God need such warnings, and that both Abraham's and Jacob's marriages are now named as forbidden things.

In chap. xix. the great principle of holiness is given as the

knowledge of the holiness of the God with whom we are in relationship: "Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." And duties of the various relationships of life become thus duties to Him. Moreover it is still nature that is permitted to be a teacher in its own sphere, although the Divine word can alone give back its own teachings to a fallen creature who has forgotten them. Chap. xx. still pursues this theme, adding divine judgments also to Divine prohibitions.

For the priests—type, as we have seen, of what we all are as spiritual worshippers—a stricter sanctity was needed than nature can teach. Nay, its teachings might be and are to be set aside in certain cases. The fall is the reason of this, the old creation giving place to the new. Chap. xxi. gives the law of sanctification as to the priests themselves; chap. xxii. for the hallowing of all their services. I must leave it all to the spiritual application of the reader.

The yearly feasts follow, (chap. xxiii.) the "set times" when the Lord would gather His people round Himself. Each feast was connected with some mighty act of the Lord Himself; and the gathering of His people, the "holy convocation," is that they may see and enjoy and celebrate what He has done. They are seven in number, for in them is filled up His counsel as touching man. Foremost among them all—continually recurring, as the great end, ever present to Himself, to which all was working, and to which He would have His redeemed looking continually on—comes the weekly "sabbath of rest." It is the type of the consummation of all His purposes, the rest He Himself shall enjoy, when He can "rest in His love," joying in what that love has completely accomplished. This, the last thing, is with Him necessarily first, marked off as it were by itself, as it is in the chapter, on account of its peculiar significance.

These feasts are not then a picture of the dispensations, but of His own accomplishments. They commence, therefore, not with Noah, nor Abraham, nor the law. All the trial of man merely is quite passed over, and the passover, God's grand interference on man's behalf in the sacrifice of Christ, the foundation of everything else, worthily begins the year. This is the very first page of the story of grace, which He gathers His people to listen to, and to rejoice in. Then follows, in close moral connection, as 1 Cor. v. 7, 8 shews, the feast of un-

leavened bread. "For even Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us; *therefore* let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." This feast lasts seven days—the whole time of man's life down here. (v. 5-8.)

The next feast gives us the offering of the first-fruits, Christ Himself alone as risen from the dead, in the solitary sheaf waved before the Lord, sure pledge of the coming harvest. Then at Pentecost, two wave loaves, type of the Church, the company of those "risen with Christ." Still, as in the body yet down here, they are represented by *leavened* bread, and a sin-offering is offered with them, as well as peace-offerings. (v. 9-21.)

Thus we have had the ground of all joy and gladness in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and the result of His work in the Pentecostal ingathering of the Church. A lapse of time now follows, during which no feast occurs. There is however brought in significantly here an ordinance concerning the harvest, which has yet to find its application at what Scripture calls "the end of the age." They are bidden when they read the harvest of the land, not to make clean riddance of the corners of the field, nor to gather the gleanings, but to leave them for the poor and the stranger. That is to say, those who are themselves enjoying the riches of God's goodness, are to allow others to whom the field does not properly belong, to participate with them in what God has given. This is Israel's position towards the Gentiles in the latter days. (v. 22.)

But Israel themselves are for the present strangers, and have to be gathered out of their dispersion, as well as brought back in heart to God. For this the trumpet sounds in the following feast (v. 24, 25.) It is emphatically put: "In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation." Such it will be when Israel is really gathered of God. But for this they must know their sin, and upon what ground alone their blessing can come. The day of atonement, the meaning of which has been already looked at, furnishes the explanation of this. They must needs enter into the sin for which atonement had to be made, or else however great the grace, they would not profit by it: "For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in

that same day, shall be cut off from among his people." With this too, another thing was joined: "And whatsoever soul it be that doeth *any work* in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people." With the acknowledgment of sin there was to be the acknowledgment, equally important, that man's hand could not remedy it, but that the true "sabbath of rest" must be God-given, through the work of atonement alone.

Lastly, still in this seventh month—a great month for Israel—the feast of tabernacles completes the number of Jehovah's feasts. Seven days it was to be kept in joy and rest, remembering the time of pilgrimage in the wilderness, and the Lord's deliverance and continuous care. With this seven-days feast an *eighth* day is moreover connected, pointing to the beginning of a new week, which only is begun (I may say) and never ends. An eternity of joy, begun for faith when the Lord rose the eighth day from the dead.

These are the mighty acts of the Lord celebrated by His people in holy convocations. They shall ever proclaim His praise. And thus a people sanctified to God are taught the worship of the sanctuary. Chap. xxiv. gives us a different thing, and yet closely connected: "Aaron the high-priest maintaining the light of testimony for God during the night-time of Israel's history; and Israel herself also having her memorial before Him according to an everlasting covenant, through the fragrance of Christ put upon them. (1-9.)

The last part of the chapter, in solemn contrast with this, gives the judgment of the blasphemer. Thus God's witness to Himself is maintained in His own unchangeable grace, and yet no indifference as to evil: two things which the cross of Christ has taught us how well He knows how to reconcile, and which Israel will also learn bye-and-bye in their own national history.

Chap. xxv. gives us another type of God's ways with Israel. Their land is Jehovah's; if any one had lost his possession in it through his own fault, a day was coming, *is* coming, in which it will revert to him again as the Lord's tenant, by His grace, alone. If also himself should through poverty be sold unto service, that day should also set him free. Israel has known both these conditions already, and will yet in a day that hastens fast, find also his deliverance. Of this chap. xxvii. gives no

longer in figure but in plain words, assurance on the one hand and on the other.

The book closes with the subject of vows, of devoted things. All was to be judged of by the priest, even as the Lord Jesus will be the Judge of all devotedness to Him in the day of His coming.

F. W. G.

I AM MY BELOVED'S AND MY BELOVED IS MINE.

Can. vi. 3.

Long did I toil, and know no earthly rest ;
 Far did I rove, and found no certain home ;
 At last I sought them in His sheltering breast,
 Who opes His arms and bids the weary come.
 With Him I found a home, a rest divine ;
 And I *since then* am His, and He is mine.

Yes, *He* is MINE ! and nought of earthly things,
 Not all the charms of pleasure, wealth or power,
 The fame of heroes, or the pomp of kings,
 Could tempt *me* to forgo *His* love an hour.
 Go, worthless world, I cry, with all that's thine ;
 Go ! I my Saviour's am, and He is mine.

The good I have is from His store supplied ;
The ill is only what *He* deems *the best* :
 He for my Friend, I'm rich with nought beside ;
 And poor without Him, though of all possess'd,
 Changes may come,—I take, or I resign,—
 Content to know I'm His, and He is mine.

END OF VOLUME THREE.