

"SOUND WORDS,"

• Tim. i. 13.

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

VOL. VII.

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SOUND WORDS.

1. SAMUEL.

Chapters xvi.-xx.

Chap. xvi. As was remarked in a former paper, chapter xv. closes up the moral history of Saul, man's king. Of Saul the record from God is, "I gave thee a king in my anger" (Hos. xiii. 11); of David, "I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, that shall fulfil all my will." (Acts xiii. 22.) His record becomes to us peculiarly instructive as setting forth to a wonderful degree, in type, Him who was David's Lord and David's Son. "And Jehovah said unto Samuel, how long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him." This was the decisive word, God could not be associated with him in justice to His own name. It is a sorrowful lesson for the heart to learn, that all that promises so fair and shows so well, externally, is really judged, that those that we have known and mingled with, are "vessels of dishonor" from which we must withdraw, that judgment may take its course. In this day of religious stir and profession, the grief deepens as we are forced to this; and the heart feels that it cannot give up the hope that many will see, and come back to the things of God.

But if man fails, God does not. He has all resources in His hands, and He can prepare vessels "fitted to the Master's use." His word here is, "I'll thine horn with oil, I have provided me a king among his (Jesse's) sons." Truly God will not leave His testimony to fail. He has provided. There is our comfort. But we find how far behind God all our thoughts are. Samuel first has objections, difficulties which are at once answered by being told, he could make the occasion of his going to Bethlehem to sacrifice, the time of anointing the chosen of Jehovah.

And then when he comes to Jesse he has to learn the sentence of death that God has passed on all flesh. It is not now the tallest from his shoulders and upward, nor the one upon whom were the eyes of all Israel, but one so obscure that even his father does not think of having

him at the sacrifice. But God is now bringing out His own principle. "Man looketh at the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh at the heart." How all this is overlooked; how high are God's thoughts above our thoughts. Eliab may express the pious thoughts of his parents over their first-born, as having "God for his father," or Abinadab their hopes, as "the father of nobility," or Shamamah as something wonderful and to fill with "astonishment," and these are man's notions indeed.

But that is ended. God does not reject the flesh in Saul, to take it up again in Eliab and Abinadab, let them be what they may in the eyes of the prophet. And how blessed is it that He chooses for us, in our ruin. Poor Israel with Eliab or Abinadab as leader, would have fared but sadly in the day of Goliath, as we see further on. They could little apprehend the power of God alone. And we see the reason, that they had not been trained as David had.

He was taken "from the sheep-cote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over Israel." There is something sweetly instructive in this, as suggesting the Shepherd of Israel, for the king's office was to shepherd the people. And here the type is beautiful indeed, for how does the Holy Ghost delight to set forth Christ as the Shepherd, going out after the lost sheep, keeping them as His own given to him, laying down His life for them, giving them eternal life and holding them in His hand that none shall ever pluck them thence. Under the name of David—the Beloved—He is spoken of, in Ezek. xxxiv. 22, 24, in contrast with the false shepherds, such as Saul, who was seeking asses, unclean animals, when taken to be king, and who ever treated Israel as though unclean, in common with the nations. How vivid the contrast! The shepherd seeks the sheep *until he finds them*, because he cares for them; the seeker of asses is unable to find. And so we find David always caring for Israel according to God's purpose and love for them, treating them as sheep, while Saul had only given them the place of strangers from God. Besides, we learn in Genesis xlv. 34, that every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians. The Egyptians are a type of the world, and the world has ever hated Christ as the Shepherd, giving His life for His sheep, coming according to the grace of

the Father, though they would fain make much of Him⁹ as a mere man. "Therefore will I save *my flock*, and they shall be no more a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle, and I will set up one shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, even my servant David; He shall feed them, and He shall be their Shepherd. And I, Jehovah, will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them." Precious words for Israel, and blessed assurance for us!

In taking up David, Jehovah did not set him on the throne at once, nor did He dethrone and destroy Saul, but led His chosen one through difficulties of the worst and most peculiar character, the path only of faith and communion with God. None but He whom he typified, the matchless One, ever was made to pass through such trials, to the throne. And well might it be so, since in these he was giving the faint outline and rehearsal "of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow." In the beginning of this remarkable history, we learn the *choice* of God of the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and things that are despised, and things that are not, to bring to naught the things that are. In the continuance, we learn His purpose to prepare those whom He has chosen, and train them in His school, passing and sustaining them through deepest trials, that they may be emptied thoroughly of self, and fitted and tuned by His hand for whatever chord He would strike, as surely David was used beyond others to express the deepest sorrows and joys of the saints of God in Israel, and even of Christ. In the path of Saul, when he was anointed, we have seen no being made perfect through suffering, though certain signs were shown him as if to test the flesh. But it was found to be flesh still.

With David it was different. Upon being anointed, "the spirit of Jehovah came upon him from that day forward. But the spirit of Jehovah departed from Saul and an evil spirit from Jehovah troubled him." So will it be in the system of things now going on, the Holy Ghost taken away, and the power of Satan let loose, and the wicked One fully revealed. (2 Thess. ii. 6. 8.) But is it not peculiar that this contrast is given at once upon the anointing of God's king, even as the

manifestation of Satan's power was greatest when the Lord Jesus was revealed, he being specially spoken of as the "prince of the world"? And Jehovah orders it that David should be sent for to minister in the presence of Saul, keeping down the evil spirit that was upon Saul, as we know that even the devils were subject unto Him, who came that He might annul his works.

In the next chapter (xvii.), a deeper need is manifested, engaging all Israel, defied and afraid in the presence of the fierce and boasting champion of the Philistines, Goliath of Gath. How low had he who was at the head of Israel brought them down, and how poorly he acted for their deliverance. He did nothing all through his reign, for them, according to God's own thoughts of them. And he can do nothing now against this defiant enemy. He leaned not upon Jehovah, he knew not the power of God. What better was he in this than Goliath himself, who in his loud challenge left out God. Saul's kingship was but of the *Hebrews*, a nation among nations, and as the potsherds of the earth striking against each other, his turn had come to go down. He looked not to God. If the Lord's children take that place, defeat is sure.

But this was Jehovah's people, and the man after His own heart, is the one He can use. It was when there was no helper that His own arm brought salvation to Israel; and we may well say, in a deeper sense for us, "When we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly, much more then being justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." Now here were the people that had been led through the Red sea, and the great wilderness, and planted in the land of His choice, and though they had sunk so low under the king of their choice, as that all these things might seem like idle legends to themselves, as well as to their enemies; yet they were in God's heart. They were to know the "much more" that follows, having been redeemed by the blood.

But all must be done in utter weakness. Not Saul's armor—what was there in that? How could any thing of Saul be linked with this work? It was he, with all his armor, that had brought in the occasion that made David say, "Is there not a cause?" The five smooth

stones from the brook, the very expression of weakness, out of death, were the weapons for him who went "in the name of Jehovah of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel," who was defied. The lion and the bear had gone down before him, and what was this enemy but an unclean one, just as they were. He saw but an uncircumcised one who was God's enemy.

How blessed for us that we have had a David who by His death has laid low our enemy, and now comes forth as the One who is our strength against the mightiest foe. Oh that we were keeping in mind the victory of that cross and the open tomb, "He that spared not his own Son but gave Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?"

The result was clear, and David has done real kingly work, for the king was to go out before them, and fight their battles (viii. 20); and now the proud giant that made all Israel tremble is beheaded, in the dust, and the army of the Philistines routed. It is the same God who in the beginning, they sung was "a man of war." "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" Faith brings in God and God only, and all is clear. The instrument with which David took off the head of this uncircumcised adversary, was the sword from his own hands, as Christ, by death, destroyed him who had the power of death. This is our resting place. We look back to death with exultation, not forward to it with fear. It is accomplished, and our perfect deliverance is secured.

But Saul recognized him not, though he had ministered unto him. He had really never known David as he was, in truth; there was no communion between them, the one walking with God, and acting in the power of His Spirit, the other altogether away from Him. What fellowship is there between Christ and Belial? "*He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not, He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.*"

Chap. xviii. But there was one whose soul was knit with the soul of David, from that time forth. This was Jonathan, who himself had acted valiantly for Israel according to faith, and now could discern the one who was acting in the power of God. Beyond all fleshly affec-

tion is such love in the Lord, receiving one another for Christ's sake. An apostle has said, in a deeper sense, "He that knoweth God heareth us." And yet Jonathan was the natural heir to the throne, according to the flesh. But with the spirit of him who went before Christ, declaring "He must increase but I decrease," this emptied one, "stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and his bow and his girdle." He sees in him who had met, face to face, the great enemy, the true head of Israel. And we, knowing Him who has conquered all our foes in the cross, may well strip ourselves of every thing belonging to us, practically to take our place with Him in death and resurrection.

Then we learn (*ver.* 5), of the wisdom of David in his new position at court, all unused to such a place, though he had been. It was the spirit of God in him making him act wisely. But the jealousy of the king was aroused to malignity, when the glory of David's victory was sung by the women of Israel, "Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands." Ah! in a day long after this, when the people were crying "Hosanna, blessed is the king of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord," to the *Son* of David, the indignant Pharisees said "behold the world hath gone out after Him. They were sore displeased." It was not David's imprudence that incensed Saul, for he "behaved wisely," and "went out whithersoever Saul sent him." This is a beautiful testimony. So Christ said, "which of you convinceth me of sin? I do always the work of Him that sent me." And yet they hated Him the more, they hated Him "without cause." And blessed is it for us, if, in exercising ourselves with the apostle, to have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man, we are hated only as well-doers. If we be reproached for the real victory, the faith that keeps us out of the things of the world, hap-are we. And this was David's record; the victory caused hatred; the conduct was without reproach. We may, by our very bearing in the midst of that which is right, make ourselves evil-doers, and spoil the testimony to the right. How really safe was the anointed of Jehovah, even though "Saul was wroth," and "eyed David from that day and forward."

And now the music of David ceases to soothe Saul as in other days it had done, and he cast his javelin to smite David to the wall, but he avoided out of his presence twice. "But I say unto you that ye resist not evil." The Lord giving His dear children joy in their own souls, in Him, if their joy becomes an occasion of hatred, if their peace be not received, it will return unto their own heart. And this becomes an evident token of perdition to the adversaries. (Phil. ii. 28, Thess. i. 4, 5.)²¹ "Wherefore, when Saul saw that he behaved himself wisely, he was afraid of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them." Even so the common people heard the Lord gladly, and the publicans and sinners drew near unto Him, while the leaders were moved with envy and sought how could kill Him.

Next Saul proposes (ii. 17) honors to David, only to expose him to death, for he really deceived him, after he had won the victory. David, though he had really won Saul's daughter as his wife, had a higher regard for the dignity of the king than Saul himself, as he always showed. Surely, when one is led of God, he will know that which is due to the powers that be. Hence he speaks simply and humbly of such a thing as an alliance by him with the king's house. And, indeed, it seemed a strange thing, and like light and darkness being linked together, for though Michal loved David, she ever remained in spirit "Saul's daughter," rather than one with David.

But Jehovah kept David simple, and Saul saw and knew that Jehovah was with David. "And he was yet more afraid, and Saul became David's enemy continually." The enmity is real between the flesh and the spirit, between Belial and Christ, whatsoever overtures may be made. It is blessed for us, when we stumble into such alliances, that the Lord will still bring out the truth of this.

Chap. xix. Jonathan is used as the instrument to warn and deliver David. He stands as a picture of the remnant of the Jews cleaving to Christ as the coming king, and yielding all to Him. He for a time holds back his father, by an oath. But David's acting as God's own instrument still, causes him to break his

oath. It is useless; "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," "the flesh lusteth against the spirit," the mind of the flesh is enmity against God. And David escapes afterwards, by Michal's interposition, and goes to Samuel. How patiently we see David taking his place in subjection and escaping, rather than rising up against Saul. Although he was the anointed of God he could abide his time; even as our Leader, and we, in His footsteps, are to endure now, in this time of the sufferings of Christ, through His beloved church, even as they that shall be waiting for the kingdom, are rather to flee than to fight, till He comes whose right it is to reign. Then shall He put down all enemies under His feet.

Chap. xxi. But the Lord has now separated David from Saul, by bringing out fully the utter wilfulness of Saul against God as seen by his going even to Samuel after David. There is no restraint, as in other days, in the presence of the prophet of God, God's one vessel of testimony yet. It was the proper place for David. And Jonathan cannot believe that his father is so thoroughly opposed to God, so blind, so determined. He enters into a covenant with David, fully accepting the mind of God in regard to his exaltation, and links the blessing of his own house with the glory of David. Though he does not follow David in his exile; but in the end, dies with Saul, he does see that all blessing is transferred from the house of Saul, to that of David. It seems a sad word just at the time of this acknowledgment, and the deep expression of his love for David, to find that, while the latter arose and departed, he *went into the city*.

He could vindicate David before his father; refuse to eat on the second day, on his account; could go out into the field to give him information of Saul's enmity, and embrace and kiss him, "for he loved him as he loved his own life;" but he did not go forth outside the camp; he was not one of David's men, bearing his reproach, in the cave, and in the wilderness. He stayed with Saul. What force has the word of Christ, He that hateth not father and mother, yea and his own *life* also, is not worthy of me.

It was not accepting the affliction of Christ, though the heart was deeply exercised; but still abiding in the system of things known as opposed to Him. The lesson and application are clear.

“SHALL WE CONTINUE IN SIN?”

The opposition of the heart to the grace of God is often manifested by such objections as this: “If you teach that a sinner is saved for nothing, then he may go on and sin as he pleases,” as if grace were allowing a license to sin. This objection is in a very open way anticipated in Romans vi. 1. and most triumphantly answered in that and the two succeeding chapters. While there is much more there, a large volume of doctrine, in regard to the whole subject of the sinner’s justification through the righteousness of God, I look at it here, only as meeting this mode of replying against God. The answer to it will be found to be four-fold.

L In Romans vi. 2-14, it is on the ground of *death*. Sin is that in which we did live, but we are counted *dead to sin*, and therefore how can we *live* any longer therein?

Our death is found in the cross of Christ, and we in baptism have declared our connection with Him in death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also *should walk in newness of life*. There has never any change taken place in God’s decree, that the sinner must die, and the cross of Christ is the token of His fully standing by the decree. “If He died for all, then were *all dead*.” There was no reforming, no covering up; no doing on our part of anything, to turn aside this necessary relationship between sin and death. All doing was impossible withal, for the law entered that the offense might abound, that is, sin in nature be manifested in *sins*, conduct; and by the law was the knowledge of sin. It could only confirm and declare righteous the sentence of death! What then? There is no deliverance from sin but through death! “He that is dead is justified from sin.” (v. 7.) Our old man is *crucified with Christ*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, *that henceforth we should not serve sin*. Having, therefore, died with Christ, as criminals deserving the death, we are to count ourselves “dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Could the law have done that for us? It could have put us to death, but that would have been the end of us. But here grace has brought in Christ, and put us in Him, and we are crucified in His cross. Our enemy, sin, could go no farther. We have clean escaped it, and

it has no dominion over us. But grace has done it. The believer is never looked upon in Scripture as alive to sin, or in the flesh. It is when we *were* in the flesh. He is never called upon to die to sin, either, but on the ground of being dead, to mortify, that is treat as dead, his members that are upon the earth. When Israel had passed through the Red Sea, they were completely and forever delivered from their old enemy and task-masters. Death had done this, for they were drowned in the depths of the sea. Even so with us, "Sin shall *not* have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

II. In verses 15-23 a second answer is given, as to whether grace allows us to sin. And here it is very short and prompt, and tells us that we have been dismissed from one master and belong to another, for *service*. It is a simple question of right dealing then. We *were* the servants of sin, but we *have become* the servants of righteousness, by obeying from the heart the form of doctrine given us, which is believing in Him who was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness. It is a lost sinner receiving the knowledge of Christ Jesus as his Saviour. Having, therefore, through His death, obtained our freedom from the old master, we have become bondsmen of the new, and therefore the plea is "as you faithfully served the former in all uncleanness and iniquity, so now serve the latter in all holiness. The fruit of that bondage was that of which you are now ashamed; the fruit of this is holiness, and the end everlasting life." In that service the wages was death; in this it is all gift, eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

III. In chapter vii. the question is very thoroughly settled, under the figure of the *two husbands*. The law is here looked at as that which, holy itself, became the occasion of working death in us, bringing out all the lusts in every form. And this is the first husband to which we were married, binding on us sin and condemnation, and, as we were quickened, all wretchedness and the most galling bondage. The husband was good enough, no unrighteousness in him; but his very presence made the poor wife bound to him, to know the terrible incompatibility of their natures; he holy, she sold under

sin; he good, she unable ever to do the good that she really wished; he just, she the sad opposite of it, never doing right once. This is a little picture of that household, in which of course there could be nothing but misery.

Ye that decry the good news of grace, by saying it encourages sinning, take a look at these three representations of the condition in which sinning was the normal, natural and necessary thing. The old life, the old servitude, the old marital relationship had nothing else than sin and death. Sin reigned unto death.

But now, death has come through the cross, to dissolve forever the bond to the old husband, and the woman is free, and married to another, "even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should *bring forth fruit unto God.*" This is holiness. Does this encourage sins? Does it make room or provision for one sin? "When we were *in the flesh*, the motions of sins, which were by the law, *did* work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death; but now we are delivered from the law, being dead to that wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." None can serve so sweetly and with such an entire delight and absolute abandonment of self, as the wife knowing the depth of love, by which she is held, and drawn into perfect fellowship with the husband, responding to his heart wholly. Is this the place to look for rebellion and quarreling? The very argument, all through is not concerning deliverance from the law only, but from being forced to sin. Sins were found in the old house; righteousness and peace in the new.

IV. But we find a fourth and even stronger answer, in chapter viii. 1-4, *seq.* In the three passages already glanced at, *death* has been the conclusive answer. In this, it is *life*. We were to reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Christ is my life. But what Christ? He who died. I died with Him, and I have been raised in Him. We are *in Christ* and the law of the spirit of *life in Christ* has made us free from the law of sin and death. It was sin and death in the old man; it is life and righteousness in the new as the order of things, the mode of being. If then we sin, we are practic-

ally denying the very law of our new life. You say, "If you teach grace and not works, you give a loose rein to sin." The word answers that we are not in the man that sins, by reason of the cross of Christ, but we are in the man who is holy and separate from sinners, we are out of the scene in which sin is allowed. "If any man be *in Christ*, he is a new creation: old things have passed away, behold all things are become new: and all things are of God." Putting us under the law never secured any obedience or righteousness. The law could not make us better. It was weak through the flesh. Then God sent forth His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, and put sin under judgment, condemned it in the cross, thus freeing us from what was against us; and also putting us away forever as sinners from His sight, and bringing us up as saints and children in resurrection; that the righteous requirements of the law *might* be fulfilled in us. It is as professing a new life, the life of sons, of heirs of God, of joint heirship with Jesus Christ, of being out of the old and in the new, that the conclusion is stated, "Therefore brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live after the flesh."

Oh, perfect word! The very portion that tells us we are justified freely by grace, gives us the answer to all cavilings, and assures us that grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, that God has looked after His own righteousness in all this, and to bring out righteousness as a result in them who are saved.

I would only add, that this is the concurrent testimony of all the epistles that follow: In *Corinthians*, it is on the ground of our association with the Son of God in glory, that every evil is rebuked; in *Galatians*, "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," and this, as taking the christian out from under the law. In *Ephesians*, it is "the exceeding riches of His grace," and there, the word is, "be ye imitators of God, as dear children!" Religious philosophy in *Colossians*, and ritualism in *Hebrews*, or a legal spirit in *Galatians*, all trying to keep down sinning, and utterly failing, are displaced by pure grace which triumphs over sin. See also *Phil.* iii., and 1 *Thess.* i., *Titus* ii, 11, 12.

MEDITATIONS ON SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

THE SITE.

"Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in Mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David, his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite." (2 Chron. iii.)

In building, we, of course, always commence at the foundation; if that is not right, all else is wrong. If the house is built upon another man's property, or if the ground has not been legally secured, trouble would necessarily follow. And I doubt whether any christian can profit much from the contemplation of the things pertaining to the glory, if he does not see clearly the ground upon which these things are built. Even in Ephesians, where we are introduced into that wonderful scene where all is of God ("even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"); even here, I say, all this is prefaced by the assurance that the blood has atoned for all our sins, and through that, and that only, have we redemption. For, if the question of my own salvation has not been thoroughly settled, the heart has no leisure to enter into the realms of the glory. And this is the reason that we find so many dragging down all God's pictures to their own level, as if the Holy Spirit had been occupied with writing of poor man.

Ah! what I need to see, is, that God has completely set aside self, and brought in an entirely *new* thing, by substitution.

But if my ears have drunk in the sweet message of the gospel, and my heart has found rest in God's grace, and my eye has been turned, with a sickened, loathing disgust, from self to the Lord Jesus Christ, then I have both ear, heart and eye at leisure to listen to, to feed and gaze upon that peerless One, who alone meets all God's requirements and mine. Yes, *and mine*, for rest is a stranger to the bosom of him who does not know, in however feeble a manner, that God has found *all* in His Son.

But having seen that He, and He alone, is God's perfection, I cease praying that I might learn more of my own sinfulness, for, useful and needful as that is, it is a

thing I can learn best by contrast with Him. I have learned enough of self to be disgusted with him, and, therefore, with great relief I turn to that One whom God has glorified. My prayer, therefore, now is, that the Holy Spirit may take of the things of *Christ*, and show them to me, that I might be built up into Him, in all things.

What an immense meaning is conveyed in that expression of Paul's, "When it pleased God, . . . to reveal *His Son* in me." Paul preached no more of legal righteousness, but straightway preached that Jesus is the Son of God. And it is of Him who was revealed to Paul as in the glory, and of His glorified body, we desire now to meditate, as the Holy Spirit may graciously unfold His riches to us.

The immediate reasons for Mount Moriah being the site of the temple, were, that at this spot the sword of the destroying angel had been stayed, and here had been offered those burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, after the sacrifice of which the Lord commanded the angel to put up his sword into its sheath. (1 Chron. xxi.) But we find a prior reason to this. Here, eight hundred years previously, before ever the temple was heard of, was enacted a scene more wondrous still—a father putting his son to death by the command of God. (Gen. xxii. 2.)

O, my soul, meditate upon this wondrous theme. True it is, that the temple, in which thou hast by grace found a place, is built upon the solid basis of redemption; but, antecedent to all that, see, before ever the rearing of that spiritual temple commenced, before even that blood had been shed which washes away all thy sins, God had virtually given up His Son. This wondrous "fellowship of the mystery," which is now unfolded to our adoring gaze, was "from the beginning of the world, hid in God."

Sweet were the words of pardon which were spoken through the Holy Spirit to the very murderers of the Prince of Life, but how wonderful to hear that God had thus but fulfilled what He had before shown, that Christ should suffer.

All the things which we have now learned to value, were determined for us by God before the foundation of the world. What a sacred theme is this! Do we won-

der that Joseph commanded every man to go out from him while he made himself known to his brethren? With what comfort the words of Joseph must have fallen upon their remorse-stricken hearts, as he said, "for *God did send me hither to preserve life.*" How blessed to find that, as one has said, redemption is no after-thought with God. He had provided for the ruin before it happened.

Let us look, now, at that which is recorded in 1 Chron. xxi, as having taken place in the threshing-floor of Ornan, the Jebusite, which caused David, by the Spirit, to say: "This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of the burnt-offering for Israel." (1 Chron. xxii. 1.)

The sin of David was pride. (v. 1-3.) This is the sin of the human race. This is what the first temptation of Satan acted upon: "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods." ~~And~~ he who thus deceived is "king over all the children of pride."

David having been offered the choice of three punishments, took the only place for the sinner to take before God: "I am in a great strait; let me fall now into the hands of the Lord; for very great are His mercies." (v. 13.) Thus the publican, "God be merciful to me, a sinner."

The altar was God's thought, not David's. (v. 18.) He cast himself upon the Lord, the Lord provided the atonement.

All Israel were under judgment; the altar must, then, be erected upon the ground of a stranger. (v. 18.) The bullock of the sin-offering was burnt without the camp, in a clean place. (Lev. iv. 13.) Jesus suffered without the gate. (Heb. xiii. 12.)

We are told, in this chapter, that "David gave to Ornan, for the place, six hundred shekels of gold by weight," whereas we read, in 2 Sam. xxiv. 24, "So David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver." This seeming imperfection is, of course, another proof of the perfection of Scripture. Let us bear in mind that God is not writing history; if He were, accuracy would be of paramount importance. But who ever takes up the Bible as a book of history, fails most entirely to get God's thought. His thought is to bring

out the work of Christ in more fulness, and when we see how the Spirit loves to linger over every detail connected with that blessed One, we would just sit and allow our hearts to be led more and more to feast upon Him, and worship.

The books of Samuel and Kings treat of David and Solomon personally, therefore we have fifty shekels of *silver*, silver being that which was used to redeem. But, in Chronicles, where the typical character of those reigns is more fully brought out, we have *gold* given. Indeed, gold is characteristic of Solomon's reign: we might call it "the golden age," gold being used profusely in all his buildings, and always signifying that which is of God, a symbol of the Divine presence, workmanship, or counsels.

So, in the first account, we have the price paid of atonement-money for sin, *according to man's necessity*; while, in the latter account, we have redemption effected according to *God's foreordained counsels*; and, consequently, the number of shekels is twelve times as much as in the first account, thus showing that God's thought embraced the whole twelve tribes of Israel, and, typically, the "one body" of Christ. Twelve shows the unity of Israel, but is, also, the number of completeness, showing that God's plan of redemption, conceived before time was, reaches forward to when time shall cease to be. So, in the description of the holy city, coming down from God out of heaven, after the first heaven and earth are passed away, we read of *twelve gates, twelve angels*. Seven is the number of perfection, but twelve of completeness, and not till the eternal state is reached, will that have come in, dispensationally.

But I do not know the value of the gold until I have learned that of the silver. Silver was used to atone for souls (Ex. xxx.), and to redeem from bondage (Lev. xxv). Have I learned this? Can I say, "In whom I have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;" and Christ *hath* redeemed me from the curse of the law, being made a curse for me?" If I can, then God can further teach me that, although redemption seems to have been made on purpose for me, it so exactly meets my need, it was, after all, made to meet *His* need. It was, "that, in the

ages to come, *He* might shew the exceeding riches of *His* grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

Just as in Leviticus, when we have the offerings given as springing from God, it is first the burnt-offering, and then the sin-offering (Lev. i.-iv), but when given as meeting the need of the sinner, it is *first* the sin-offering and then the burnt-offering (Lev. ix., xiv).

Accordingly, it is not in Samuel that we are told of the threshing-floor being the site of the temple, but in Chronicles. Thus, it is not in Romans where man's guilt and God's righteousness are treated of, that we have the "one body," the "holy temple in the Lord," but, in Ephesians and Colossians, where all is seen originating from God, "according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The sacrifice having been offered and accepted, "the Lord commanded the angel, and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof." (v. 27.) That sword was never unsheathed again; *the judgment was passed.*

Thus, also, with Israel; the destroyer passed over *once*; redemption being effected, whatever judgments came upon them afterwards were inflicted because they behaved not according to the holiness that became them as *His* people, not to make them *His* people, not to redeem them. The passover was to be observed for ever, not as a means of preserving from the destroying angel, but as a *memorial* that they *were* saved. When instituted, the promise was, "when I see the blood I *will* pass over you," but, judgment *having* passed over, it is always afterwards spoken of simply as a *memorial*; "it is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses."

"There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" Why? Because mercy is exhausted? because the stream has run dry? Because some are beyond the reach of grace? No! But because by *one* offering he *hath* perfected *for ever* them that are sanctified;" because Christ by *His* own blood entered in *once* into the holy place, *having* obtained eternal redemption for us."

Poor, doubting one, what do you need? God cannot do any thing more for your salvation than He has done. The very perfection of the work is that it cannot, need not, be re-

peated. There is but one sacrifice for sins, made eighteen hundred years ago, on Calvary, never to be repeated. You must take that, in all its perfection, *or nothing*. Nothing "but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." One is enough for God, is it not enough for you? "Nor yet that He (Christ) should offer Himself often.....for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now ONCE in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment; so Christ was ONCE offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

"There is, therefore (because Christ has borne the condemnation for the believer), now (not only by and by, but now) no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

Here, then, is the rock on which God's temple can be erected—Redemption, originating from God.

But now, having briefly viewed the blessed results flowing to us, pause a moment, my soul, and consider Him who obtained them for thee by the travail and anguish of His soul.

David's altar was built on a threshing-floor, where Ornan was *threshing wheat*. What a sacred theme is here suggested to us! Blessed, beyond conception, is it to know that there is now "no condemnation," but, if there is no condemnation to thee, *there was to some one!* The boon thou hast obtained was purchased at infinite cost. It cost thee nothing; it cost Jesus that agony that called forth those drops of blood, that bitter cry!

"Death and the curse were in our cup—
O Christ, 'twas full for thee!
But Thou hast drain'd the last dark drop—
'Tis empty, now, for me.
That bitter cup—love drank it up;
Now blessing's draught for me.

"Jehovah bade His sword awake—
O Christ, it woke 'gainst Thee!
Thy blood the flaming blade must slake;
Thy heart its sheath must be—
All for my sake, my peace to make;
Now sleeps that sword for me.

"The Holy One did hide His face—
 O Christ, 'twas hid from Thee!
 Dumb darkness wrapt Thy soul a space—
 The darkness due to me;
 But now, that face of radiant grace,
 Shines forth in light on me."

If we knew that the blood on the lintel, seen only by God, has secured our peace, our everlasting redemption, shall we refuse to eat of our passover with the bitter herbs? O my soul, is not thy heart broken as thou considerest the sorrow that thy sins caused that Blessed One! I never knew how heinous my sins were, *until I saw them all laid on Him*. I never knew the depth of that pit of corruption in which I was, *until I knew that He had, "in love to my soul, redeemed it" therefrom*.

How often we allow these solemn themes to fall trippingly from our lips, as if it was no more than heathen mythology. But it is a reality! Just as real as that awful pit you have been ~~saved~~ saved from, and that wondrous glory you are saved to, was the cross you are saved by, real. Just as real as thy sins are real, was the punishment borne for them by the lover of thy soul. Surely, bitter herbs become the contemplation of such a solemn scene.

He who Himself spoke of the corn of wheat dying, that it might, in resurrection, bear fruit; He who was the "fine flour" of God's meat-offering, was that wheat which endured the threshing-flail of God's righteous judgment of sin, that thou mightest, in a new life, have a place with Him ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high.

We pass on, now, to the consideration of the building itself, but, ere we commence that, let us ask one more question. Are you satisfied with the site on which God has chosen to build His holy temple? Is the ground solid enough to bear the weight of those great and costly stones? Is the title-deed perfect? Yes, all is perfect. The Lord Jesus bore the whole weight of our sin and curse, and justice is fully satisfied; in witness whereof, God hath raised Him from the dead.

Then, my soul, let nothing ever shake the peace which God has given. Let no gloomy doubt ever again mar that blessed rest of heart which the perfect work of the Lord Jesus has given you. Realize your own weakness, the more the better; but never dishonor the Lord Jesus,

by allowing, even for a moment, a doubt of the completeness and eternal validity of that salvation which He, as a free gift, has given you.

“That which can shake the Cross
 May shake the peace it gave,
 Which tells me Christ has never died,
 Or never left the grave!

“Till then, my peace is sure,
 It will not, can not yield;
 Jesus, I know, has died, and lives—
 On this firm rock I build.”

C. H. B.

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

HOW THE UNDERSTANDING IS ENLIGHTENED.

It must be a matter of inquiry to every thoughtful soul, why it is that, whatever be the measure of our faith, we so continually betray ignorance of God's mind, and as much inability to judge as if no light gleamed from our faith to help us.

Faith is the credence which God gives us by the Holy Ghost in any revelation of His mind; and this belief is the acceptance of its positive reality. So that in faith the soul possesses, so to speak, the substantiation of the truth presented and assured of. *Ordinarily*, I might give full credence to a person's assertion of things either present or future; but with God it is different. When I believe His truth, I have in me a conviction of the realities of things in which I myself am to be a sharer. And as I am in the world among uncertainties and shadows, so am I in faith apart from all natural influences here. And more than this, I am imbued and engrossed with the realities of which I have, through faith, the substance in my soul.

When I walk in the power of this faith, I must necessarily introduce the idea of the realities on which it rests, in contrast to the pretensions and oppositions to God here. And this truly supplies the means for judgment, and practically is light; for “light is that which doth make manifest.”

Now, I think I may have faith, and yet I may so little

realize the circumstances into which that faith introduces me, that I may not be able to contrast the divine scenes which are opened to faith with the earthly ones where my nature roams. And if I am more engaged with the latter or inferior scene, I shall not be able to judge between the two, for the difference will be very imperceptible to me; and to be able to distinguish between two things, where there is the smallest apparent difference, is the great proof of judgment.

It is said, "If thy whole body be luminous, having no part dark, the whole shall be luminous, as when the bright shining of a candle gives light;" that is, if you are under the control of the light yourself: if it has mastered every dark part in you, then you will be luminous, as a candle is luminous; you will not only shed light, but you will judge darkness.

Now here lies the entire obstruction to the action of light on us, that light which we derive from our faith, and which would act on us fully, only there is some "dark part;" and just as in a dark, deep dungeon, until a lamp masters the darkness on all sides it cannot be a light therein: so, until I am swayed by the faith which I have received, I do not and cannot bring its ideas to bear on all things around me, and therefore I cannot compare them. Practically, the dark spot comes in to warp my judgment. How easily would Paul have accepted the warning of the Spirit not to go to Jerusalem, had there not been in his heart a natural desire to go there, yet unrebuked by the light of that faith which dwelt in him, and which afterwards so controlled him when writing the Epistle to the Ephesians. The hindrance is always from the natural man; hence the apostle says, "Be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may be able to prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

If there remains conformity to the world, there will be a dark spot which the light has not penetrated, and so far there will be inability to prove what is the will of God. It simplifies our enquiry very much if we see that it is not the fault of the faith, so to speak; that is to say, it is not any lack either as to the order or the amount of our faith, but that there is a dark spot in us

—we do not add “virtue,” (2 Peter i. 5,)—there remains some natural clinging to the world which has not been overcome by our faith, which obstructs the light and leaves us unguided ourselves, and useless for others.

We have a striking illustration of both points of the enquiry which we have been pursuing, in the case of Isaac and Jacob, and the faith which actuated each in the close of their history. That of Isaac is thus commented on by the Spirit in Hebrews xi. 20, “By faith Isaac blessed Esau and Jacob concerning things to come.” Thus we see his *faith* was not at fault; but was his whole body luminous—was there no part dark? Genesis xxvii. gives the answer, and reveals to us the condition of Isaac’s soul at the time when he had this faith, thus acknowledged by the Holy Ghost. We find, that while intent on blessing his son in accordance with it, that he betrayed a lusting for this evil world, which we shall see warped his judgment. In forgetfulness of the word of God at the birth of Esau and Jacob, he had so allowed himself to be attracted by Esau, because of his *present* attentions to him, that he, now at the point of death, instructs Esau to “make some savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it me that I may eat, and my soul may bless thee before I die.” We might think that this was too small a liking to operate so disastrously as to warp the judgment of Isaac, and to induce him to apply the disclosures made to faith, in direct contravention to God’s words! But so it is. If so small a thing can warp one so much, what would not a greater one do? It teaches us that if the soul allows itself enjoyment in a scene outside this faith, in the attempt to apply the truth, we shall always find it directed to a wrong quarter, for the mere fact of possessing faith does *not insure* the right application. *No*; if your soul is occupied with the *present*, which can not be of the faith, for “that which is seen is not faith,” the natural engrossment will pervert your judgment, and lead you to misapply any truth which you hold by faith.* You will see people continually, who believe simply in a truth, quite misapplying it, or unable to reduce it to its proper ap-

* If I believe in the Lord’s coming, and act contrary to this belief, will not the act balk the light? or if I act contrary to my faith, do I not therein baffle and impede the light from faith?

plication, simply for this reason, that some present engrossment, like the dark part in the body, hinders the true luminous expression of the truth. Alas! how much we all suffer from this! But it is well to know *why* we suffer. Now when Isaac is, through mercy, awakened to the mind of God, we see what an earthquake his soul passes through: "he trembled with a great trembling." This describes, I believe, the commotion which takes place in the soul, when the mind and word of God assume their mastery, and when the faith in a truth engages a soul comprehensively with itself. It is when the non-conformity to the world is avouched by the "renewing of the mind," and the consequent proving of the "good and perfect will of God." Hence, *after it*, Isaac exclaims of Jacob, "*he is blessed and shall be blessed.*" God always maintains His truth and graciousness to His servants; but the servant is *greatly* humbled when he tries to connect things of faith with things of sense. May we watch and so seek to have our souls in the REGION of our faith, that we may know ourselves to be under the government of our Lord's mind, of which we shall then be the exponents.

Thus was it with Jacob in Genesis xl. 8, 9, and great is the contrast between him and Isaac in the two corresponding epochs in their history. When Joseph brings his two sons to him to bless them, Jacob's eyes were dim for age that he could not see, but instead of being occupied or engrossed with any thing here, his whole soul is a luminous expression of the mind of God; and his words to Joseph imply, whatever might be the prospects of others, that he *now* had none. "As for me, when I came from Padan, Rachael died by me in the land of Canaan," &c. As another has said, "those words, '*as for me,*' unfold a tale of a heart which has emerged from the crucible of suffering; which has been brought in spirit to the tomb, and has left there all most dear to its natural affections and instincts, but which is content to leave them there, and seeks no more for an outlet for them below." How different this state was to that of Isaac! Jacob had no link or attraction to earth, and he was a worshipper, too, because his soul was undistractedly engaged with the truth which his faith grasped; consequently he is in the judgment of God, and therefore

guides his hands "*wittingly*" to correct the arrangements of Joseph. In God's presence, into which faith leads us, when engrossed by the truth which it has seized, we are not only worshippers, but we fall into communion with God's mind, practically proving it, because we are "renewed in the spirit of our mind," being delivered from the pre-occupation which would cloud or hinder it.

In conclusion, I would only remark, that the true and simple way of obtaining or deriving light from any truth which we believe, is by so connecting the truth with the *Lord*, that we are consequently in the region of it, and, therefore, worshippers before him in *connection with it*; the effect then will be, that we shall be divinely influenced by it, our feelings swayed, and our desires formed according to it. We shall know how to compare the pretensions of man with it, and be able to judge when we do compare, because we have light to see wherein they differ. We must always make ourselves the subject of the experiment *first*; the little world in ourselves must be first judged in the principles which we desire or require to judge in the wide world; for we may rest assured, that we shall not be able to judge the *mass* if we have not judged the unit, *self*: which is but a type and miniature of the whole world. We may often seek to judge and pass sentence on the world as a whole, but it will be found by every true disciple, that his power of doing so (divinely) on the whole, is only in proportion to his attainment and subjection to divine judgment in *himself*. The Lord so lead us to live in the realization of the truth which we believe, that we may prove its power to guide us in the circumstances, and to preserve us from the influences of this evil world. Amen. I

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

I.

"If we take the whole thing (the late religious stir) into the sanctuary, it is easily judged. That God, in mercy, uses it, I fully believe; as He does every act of devotedness to Christ, and energy to save souls. What we have to see, is that it is based on, and helps to uphold, the fabric of Christianity, *as it is*; hence refusing the light and truth which God has given to the church in these closing

days. Hence it goes on and gives its strength to Luodicea, building that state of things up.

We are to be overcomers in it—no enviable place, truly, so far as *this* world is concerned, but wondrous, if we can see the honor our Lord puts on us. May the Lord sustain you, and not allow you to be tempted to use carnal weapons at any time. Even in a hot fight, there is danger of thinking of our *own* prowess, and forgetting that God will not give His glory to another."

II.

"We may, sometimes, get into the way of thinking of Him as a servant, always at our hand, to pay our expenses, instead of our LORD, having His own mind in all He does, and doing every thing in a *divine* way. Money is not the only thing to meet our wants. With the world it is; but we need Him to do the thing Himself, and so He does not simply give us money when we want it, even according to engagements.

I find there is always a step forward when we are kept waiting on Him, and then, in the time that we thought extreme, helped. There can be no extremity with God, and we get to learn that, and to be quieted by Himself alone. We need to be cast on Him for *peace* about His not supplying. Is He the living Lord? Is it all true, that we have been saying, or all false? We may need to re-examine and re-establish this all, on a foundation that is deeper than hitherto. Do we need that He should scrupulously **pay**, as He may have done at times, or do something vastly more? The disturbed state of soul, at His delay, shows that we *needed* that *delay*. He is God. Let this be worth a thousand-fold more to us, moment by moment. My heart is with you, and the path is not altogether unfamiliar, but God is God.

These tried ones of the Lord will have some treasure in Him, of which some may be ignorant, and they will have much to tell Him, of a faithfulness that was, and is, all His own."

III.

"I see you recognize the fundamental principle when you say, 'the Lord, in grace and power, bring us out of this ruin into the unity of the Spirit in the bond of

peace.' The unity is a real thing, you know, apart from the endeavor to keep it. The first is God's grace, and God's part; the second is our responsibility, and our part. The endeavor (Eph. iv. 3) is, indeed, that whereunto we are called, and there is, through grace, a manifested endeavor and a very real manifested unity of the spirit of a great number of gatherings, the world over. The gathering at ———, remains, I understand, in this unity. Those who have come out of it, have broken the unity, and are schismatics. You are not, I trust, one of these. Therefore, you are in the place and on the ground of the unity, and in the endeavor to keep it. For thus are those who remain—they are the remnant, and are in the unity with all the many gatherings elsewhere—which are undisturbed by the difficulty which has arisen at ———. There may have been a deal of evil in spirit and in action on the part of those who remain, but they have remained, and are, therefore, the true remnant, while the others, being separated, are really the schismatics. It would be my place and yours, to recognize this, and to wait for the Lord's rectification of all the wrong that is in the midst of the remnant—deploring and owning evil, for they alone remain, since the others have gone out from them, in the place of endeavor to keep the unity; and there is the place for the action of grace in rectifying the evil and putting it away, and the place, ultimately, of real power and blessing, and the place, also, if the Spirit of God and the power of the word shall work on both sides, where, sooner or later, those who have gone out, becoming subject, will be brought back. But we are to remain steadfast in the place of the endeavor, though, for the time being, in the midst of failure, and, indeed, painful and abounding evil of spirit and ways, as responsible, obedient, waiting ones, with the remnant—those in the general fellowship—be it of larger or smaller number, for it alone of the two parties is really on the ground of Eph. iv. 3."

FRAGMENT.

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the

branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

If we are not abiding in Christ, though *really* in the narrow road, we are *seemingly* in the broad one, inasmuch as we are *practically* pursuing a middle path between God and the world, between Satan and Christ—a path, which, be it remembered, as regards *our eternal state before God*, has no actual existence, seeing that there are but "two roads that never will meet, on one or other of which we all are assuredly going." All this makes the Christian, the one who is washed in the blood of Christ, who is born of God, who is the temple of the Holy Ghost, very responsible.

BEHOLD THE GLORY.

With eyes of faith beholding,
Thy glory, Lord, we see ;
The more we gaze, the stronger,
Becomes our faith in thee.

If kept upon the glory,
Brighter our eyes would be,
Brighter our thoughts while looking,
Heavenward, Lord, to Thee.

Oh, weak our hearts if trusting,
In aught around we see ;
But waxing strong and stronger,
The more we trust in Thee.

Too oft our souls will slumber,
When they should wakeful be ;
When we forget the glory,
We cease to lean on Thee.

Alas! we are so wilful,
Like roving sheep are we ;
Some by-path ever seeking,
That leads away from Thee.

Oh, be with us, Thy children,
Make us thy beauty see,
Until that day of glory,
We go to live with Thee !

THE GLORIES OF CHRIST.

- He is an eternal Christ, Prov. viii. 23.
 He is a wonderful Christ, Isaiah ix. 6.
 He is a divine Christ, Rom. ix. 5.
 He is an incarnate Christ, John i. 14.
 He is a perfect Christ, 1 John iii. 5.
 He is a blessed Christ, Mark xiv. 61.
 He is a spotless Christ, Heb. ix. 14.
 He is a worthy Christ, Rev. v. 9.
 He is a rejected Christ, John xix. 15.
 He was a forsaken Christ, Matt. xxvii. 46.
 He was a suffering Christ, Ps. xxii.
 He was a dead Christ, John xix. 33.
 He was a pierced Christ, John xix. 34.
 He is a living Christ, Rev. i. 18.
 He is a victorious Christ, Eph. iv. 8.
 He is an ascended Christ, Acts i. 9.
 He is a glorified Christ, Heb. i. 2, ii. 9.
 He is a coming Christ, Rev. xxii. 20.
 He will be a judging Christ, Rev. xix. 11-21.
 He will be a reigning Christ, Ps. lxxii.

E

THE CHRISTIAN'S BLESSEDNESS.

- Pardoned through Christ, Acts x. 43.
 Crucified with Christ, Gal. ii. 1-6.
 Risen with Christ, Eph. ii. 20.
 Accepted in Christ, Eph. i. 6, 7.
 Blessed in Christ, Eph. i. 3.
 Complete in Christ, Col. ii. 9, 10.
 One with Christ, 1 Cor. vi. 17.
 Preserved in Christ, Jude 1.
 Devoted to Christ, Phil. i. 21.
 Working for Christ, Phil. ii. 16.
 Worshiping Christ, Rev. v. 7, 8.
 Separated to Christ, John xvii. 16.
 Fellowship with Christ, 1 John i. 3.
 Loved by Christ, Eph. v. 25.
 Witness for Christ, John xvii. 18.
 Waiting for Christ, 1 Thes. i. 9, 10.
 Glorified with Christ, John xvii. 22-24.
 Eternally with Christ, 1 Thes. iv. 17.

E

THE ACTS.

Chapter 1.

The book of Acts is not designed to give us the history of man's work for God, by the agency of the Holy Spirit; but rather the Lord's manner of working on earth, by the Holy Spirit after His ascension, for and with, man. As Luke told, in the former narrative; what *Jesus began* to do and teach, on the earth: in this, he tells what He *went on* doing while in heaven. It presents only the great features of this work, and then stops. This will be seen as we go over it, in what is, as well as what is not, recorded. If we were to take it as a church history, or a history of the actions of the apostles, it would surely be defective, leaving the two principal ones, Peter and Paul, to vanish from sight in the middle of their labors or at the end, without informing us of that end, and ~~om~~ mentioning others here and there, without giving them any prominence. Hence the book is not at all "the Acts of the Apostles." Had man set about to give us these, he would not have left us such fragmentary notices, of only a few, at most.

And yet it is not defective nor incomplete, if looked at in the light of God. We must remember who wrote the word of God, and His design in writing each portion. If man could have written it, holy men would not have needed to be moved by the Spirit of God for that purpose. It relieves the heart and gives incessant joy to know that *all scripture is given by inspiration of God.*

As the four gospels gave, in its various aspects, the life of the Lord Jesus upon the earth, the moral glories which the Father beheld in Him who perfectly fulfilled His will here; this book that follows, shows Him as the exalted Man at the right hand of God, in heaven; and as a consequence upon the world being left in condemnation under its prince, the cross having closed its whole history, we find Him there, the starting-point of the new creation, beginning with those who are called out from the world by the Holy Spirit sent down. His action is set forth in three ways: as working in *power*, by signs and miracles, chiefly in Jerusalem and among the Jews; then as working by His *word*, outside, among the nations; and third, in infinite *grace* in the presence of failure, as set forth in His dealings with the apostle Paul.

In the first chapter, the start is taken from Christ risen, but still on the earth, Himself stating, ere He ascends to the Father, the change of ground that God has taken in acting in man. Here it is through the Holy Spirit that He acts and speaks, giving commandments unto His disciples until the day in which He is taken up.

He had promised to send the Holy Spirit to be in them, forever, and now nothing is to be done but to wait for this, for all henceforth must be in the full power of the Spirit, as prepared vessels, risen with Christ. But how little they knew the rich purpose of His love. Re-assured by His resurrection, their own thoughts were still on the kingdom and its restoration. How could they reach to the heavenly, when He who is the earnest of the inheritance had not yet been given?

Divinely true as it is, that as the risen One, He shall restore all things to Israel, as Peter proposes to the Jews in chap. iii, yet the counsels of God involve the "better thing." This restoration must now await its own order of time—"the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own authority." In due season all shall be accomplished. It is not denying their hope for Israel, for He had expounded unto them all the scriptures concerning Himself, written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms; and they told of the earthly kingdom. They were right in their expectation, but ignorant of the *times*, and the deeper things of God, the present things connected with His rejection.

The contrast is here given. "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." It is not the time of the kingdom in its power; but of testimony, and that concerning One who is invisible—who is our life, and with whom we are associated.

And then He ascends, and a cloud—the special token of the Divine presence—receives Him out of their sight. Heaven becomes the new centre, the point of departure for all truth: Heaven and the New Man. Their gaze follows Him, though not to the throne where Paul afterwards saw Him. They can not follow Him, but *He is coming again!*

It is deeply interesting to notice the character of this

announcement. According to the promises spoken by the mouth of the prophets, He had come to be the Saviour and King of Israel, and they had despised the offer, and slain Him, thus seeking to be done with Him, and take the inheritance as theirs, without Him. This is the way that Israel, from of old, wanted to hold their land, independent of Jehovah, who had taken them into it. But God will vindicate His Anointed, and bring Him again to accomplish all He had determined beforehand, concerning Him. Meanwhile He is told to sit on His right hand, until He has made His enemies His footstool. Then will He come forth again, in like manner as He was seen going up. It will be the epiphany—His “appearing.” This was the extent of the angelic testimony, whose ministration is connected with Israel, the remnant especially representing them. And so they give the word of comfort, that the purpose of God cannot fail, simply announcing it, and leaving indefinite the time, for it was in the mind of God to bring out His counsels, in regard to the church, during the interim.

And they, by witnessing for Him in His absence, might gather a people to whom He should come in like manner as they had seen Him go into heaven, or who, upon the rejection of Him by the nation, in the renewed offer by the Holy Spirit, might be gathered into the church, joined to the Lord in heaven, as was afterwards done. The coming to receive them *unto Himself*, awaits the offer and rejection of this testimony, and the bringing out more definitely of the heavenly truth through a new apostle—Paul: though, in a general sense, these statements comprehend the present dispensation, and so introduce the subject of the Acts.

The Holy Spirit for whom they were to wait, would lead them into all truth, and teach them all things, according to the need and the occasion. Left by the Lord, who alone had the words of eternal life, with every thing yet to be done for which He came, saving His death and resurrection which really laid the foundation for all God's purposes: and they themselves associated with all this, and the special depositories of truth which they had not yet fully received nor understood; yet really separated from the world and their nation, as it was; they had to be still looking for the fulfilment of their

Lord's promise. He always orders it that His people shall have room and occasion for faith in Him alone.

And thus a new scene is introduced. They return to Jerusalem from the mount. They are to tarry there until endowed with power by the descent of the Holy Spirit. It is the word of their departed Lord. Their place is yet connected with Israel, and in the intelligence of the purpose of grace toward that people, they abide together in an upper room in supplication and prayer. It is the condition befitting a waiting people; the spirit of liberty and sonship and praise not yet having come. As to ministry their number is incomplete, twelve having been called out by the Lord for that work. And Peter as the one who is to have the "sheep" in charge, the remnant chosen out of Israel, calls attention to the scriptures, not only as to the end of Judas, but that another is to take his office and have part in "this ministry." Doubtless he spoke according to God in this, for the ministry of the twelve being to the Jews, the principles of it must be found in the Jewish scriptures, and their minds had been opened to understand these. The apostleship of Paul was altogether unique, and apart from the twelve, connected with Christ in the glory, where it is neither Jew nor Gentile, but all are one in Christ. Peter founds all on Ps. lxxix., cix., and it is owned of God.

But the one in the place of Judas must have the mark that Christ Himself gave, in Jno. xv. 27, that he had been with Him from the beginning, until the same day that He was taken up from among them. Such an one must be (not "ordained to be," which is not found in the original) a witness with them, of His resurrection. There were two such; and so, not by their appointment, but by the Lord's lot, the usual Jewish method when they were His people, in nearness to Him, in answer to prayer, Matthias was indicated; "and he was numbered with the eleven apostles." The Holy Spirit does not here, as He does not in the days of the church, which followed, allow the will, or choice, or appointment of man, to have any thing to do with ministry. He distributes severally as He will, and there can be no sanction for that which is the prevalent thing now—electing teachers and preachers, the expression of the rebellion of man's will, and his heedlessness to what God says.

MEDITATIONS ON SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

PREPARATION OF THE MATERIALS.

"Then David said, 'This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of the burnt-offering for Israel. And David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel; and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God. And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the joinings; and brass in abundance without weight; also cedar trees in abundance' (1 Chron. xxii. 1-4).

"And Solomon determined to build an house for the name of the Lord, and an house for His kingdom. And Solomon told out threescore and ten thousand to bear burdens, and fourscore thousand to hew in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred to oversee them" (2 Chron. ii. 1, 2).

In David and Solomon we get two types of the Lord Jesus Christ. In David a type of a suffering and rejected Christ; in Solomon a type of Him as the risen and glorified One.

We see Solomon a type of a risen Christ from the very first. In 2 Samuel xii. we see that Bathsheba's first child must needs die, for "the wages of sin is death," but God gives her a second child. Thus David's prayer was answered, not by raising up the child that was sick unto death, but by giving him a new child against whom the Lord had nothing, whom He named "Beloved of the Lord." So, Christ, on the cross, by substitution, took the place of the first Adam, but, risen from the dead, He became the second man, in whom "all shall be made alive." (This—Solomon's birth—is in Samuel, not Chronicles; there we have nothing of his birth. We are one with Christ, not by incarnation, but by His resurrection.)

The distinction of the two types is seen in many things. There is quite a contrast in the way each ascended the throne. David passed through much sorrow and trouble: He, though anointed king, was rejected. Yet he would not once lift up his hand against Saul, but bore it all in meekness. Having ascended the throne he reigned till he had put all enemies under his feet. (This will have a dispensational fulfillment.) But Solomon, ascended to the throne of David, says, "There is neither adversary nor evil occurrent." And thus it was Jesus who, by dying, won the place for us.

But it was as Christ "ascended up on high," that

"He led a multitude of captives." Christ is the name He gets in resurrection. We get this plainly brought out in Peter's address, which also shows the typical character of both David and Solomon. He says, "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to Him (David), that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up *Christ* to sit on his throne; he seeing this before, spake of the *resurrection of Christ*, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and *Christ*" (Acts ii. 30-36). Thus we are told that what David said of himself, "thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," was a prophecy of Jesus in the grave, whom they crucified: and *not* left in hell, but raised up by God. He was made Lord and Christ, and that the promise that God made to David of a successor (2 Sam. vii. 12, 13), who was Solomon, really referred to Christ, Solomon being only a type.

The signification of their names, too, has its bearing. Solomon means "peaceable," and it is very blessed to see how all the epistles addressed to the church as such, commence with "Grace be unto you and *peace*." The work being fully done, and we being sanctified in Christ (we are never said to be sanctified in Jesus), grace and peace flow freely out to us.

The meaning of David is "beloved." This is very sweet, for why should I love the Lord Jesus Christ? Because He rose with me? Because He died *for me*? Because He loved me and gave Himself for me! There is only one David in the Bible, and only one Beloved for us. I should love each saint in Him.

Let me meditate also on that which characterized each personally. With David it was faith; with Solomon, wisdom. Can we say that Christ has faith *now*? But when on earth, *as a man*, He is the exemplar of faith (Heb. x. 2). He is "the beginner" and "the ender" of faith, the One who ran the whole course without a single failure. And unto that perfect exemplar of faith we are directed to look, looking away from the great cloud of witnesses to faith which are detailed in the previous chapter, and, fixing our eyes on Him, run the race set

before us with like patience. As a man, there is nothing in common with us and Jesus. He is the perfect One whom we are directed to follow as an example, but with whom I am not and can not be one. (In view of this, all boasting of sinlessness is blasphemy, because He, and He alone, "knew no sin.") *He* came down to us and shared in the sickness and trials common to us, "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death, &c.," but this is very different from my being made one with *Him*. I am that in resurrection only.

But in Him, as Christ risen, "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." And one of the wonders of the place into which I am brought by His resurrection, is, that God can now open His mind to me about that Blessed One, and abound to me "in all wisdom and intelligence," making known unto me "the secret of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He hath purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, He might gather together in one, *all things in Christ*." Oh, my soul, art thou not humbled at the very blessedness of the place? A faultless Daniel might fast three full weeks, and then only be told what He did not understand, but thou, apart from any doings of thine own, canst have all the secrets told to thee, past, present and future. "But art thou not egotistical in thus saying?" Ah no! it is the very depth of humility to let God have His way, and, taking the place He gives one, let the heart drink in all that He has said. It is not that *I know* any thing (the more emptied, the better fitted for filling), but, that *He tells*. And surely, my soul, thou wilt remember that all He has to say to thee is *of Him*, His Son, "the Son of His love." Thou art nothing but what thou art in Him, and that is every thing, for in Him, "accepted in the Beloved" thou sharest the Father's bosom, the Son's throne, and the Son's privilege of knowing all things that the Father doeth. There is nothing of self in this knowledge, and therefore no ground of pride. Is it pride to receive?

But, although so contrasted in many things, the reigns of David and Solomon blend, and thus are one. Solomon was made king before David's death (1 Kings i). Even so, the risen One is also the One who suffered.

In the fact that both David and Solomon *prepared* for the temple, I see (typically) that the church is the work of a suffering and risen Christ. In that Solomon *built* it, I see that the church is connected with a risen and glorified Christ. We are members of His body, and one spirit with the Lord by resurrection.

If we had only a Christ in heaven, the temple would never have been built. If we had only a crucified Christ, although that would atone for our guilt, it would not give us a place in glory. We are united to a risen Christ who died for us. We are dead with Him, crucified with Him, as to "our old man;" we suffered with Him in a penal sense; we are "one spirit" with Him, now that He has been raised from the dead in an actual sense. His death is *imputed* to us, His life *is* ours, we are sharers in the same spirit, "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." If I had Christ in heaven only, what would it avail for me? Supposing that, instead of coming down here and dying, He had remained there: the word might tell me of His glories, but the brighter they were, the more I should feel my distance from Him; each step forward in learning of those glories, would be, for me, a step backward, as to my soul. The brighter the glory, the more I should feel how little place I had there.

The majesty revealed from Mount Sinai, provoked only terror: the people said, "For who is there of all flesh that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the fire as we have, and lived?" Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face." Manouh said, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God." Job said, "Mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself." Isaiah saw "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple," and said, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." And although a coal from off the altar took away his iniquity and purged his sin, *it did not make him a sharer in the glory.*

Let it be truly embraced by my soul, that I *am partaker* in a Risen, *Glorified* Christ. We were looking in the previous article, at a suffering Christ, crucified for me, blessed indeed it is, but let me not stop there.

The only road to the glory is by the cross, but my place is the glory, not the cross. I am saved not simply to be saved, but to fill my place in that temple associated with the glory. Therefore I cannot always be singing, "Jesus keep me near Thy cross;" for, although, in one sense, I never get beyond the need of the blood (for it is the ground of our fellowship with the Father in the light), yet, all fear and doubt being removed by that cross, I am enabled to enter into the joy belonging to my place, associated with a Christ who is not *now* on the cross, but raised to the right hand of the Majesty on high. (*To be continued, if the Lord will.*) C. H. B.

SOME REMARKS ON FREE-WILL.

We use words so inexactly, that it is necessary to explain, not to have endless discussion. Thus: when we speak of "free," and "obey," the absence of compulsion, and the presence of power, are confounded. I say, "any one can come to the meeting," meaning, it is open to any one. I am told it is not true, for such an one has broken his leg and can not come (I take a plain case to show what I mean). Thus, when the Lord says, "No one can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him," it is not that God prohibits or hinders, but man is so wicked in will, and corrupt, that unless a power outside himself acts on him, he cannot come: he is never, naturally, so disposed.

Man is perfectly free to come now, as far as God is concerned, and invited, yea, besought, and the precious blood of Christ is there on the mercy-seat, so that *moral difficulty* is removed by God's own grace. As regards the Holy One receiving a sinner, in *this sense* he is *perfectly free* to come. But then, there is the *other side*, man's own will and state; there is *no will* to come, but the opposite. Life was there in Christ, but "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life;" "All things are ready, come to the marriage," and "*they all, with one consent, began to make excuse.*" Man does not *wish* to be with God. "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh;" "Wherefore, when I came, there was no man, when I called, there was none to answer;" "The carnal mind is *enmity* against God."

The crucifixion of the Lord, is the proof of this, that man would not love God, even when come in mercy, and even relieving every present misery. "For my love I had hatred." "They hated me without a cause." "Now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father." And the Lord gives the reason. Whatever the love, and it was infinite, and perfect, God is light, as well as love, and they ever "loved darkness rather than light." They repel the love that humbles their pride, as they detest the light which awakens conscience.

Henceforth, we find "as many as received Him, to them gave He right to be sons of God, who were born, not of the will of man, but of God. It is simple nonsense to talk of *freedom*, when applied to man's actual condition, if he is already inclined to evil—admitting him more than free to come, invited and besought by every motive, all made ready, but which proves that he *will not*, and that no motive induces him.

To say man is not inclined to evil, is to deny all scripture, and all fact. To make man *free to choose*, he must be as yet indifferent, having no preference for good or evil; which is not true, for evil lusts, and self will are there, the two great elements of sin, and if it were true, would be perfectly horrible. But there is none (no freedom), "for when he does *will* good, evil is present with him"—"how to perform that which is good he finds not," "there is a law in his members bringing him into captivity to the *law* of sin, which is in his members." No doubt, thank God, there is deliverance, but deliverance in another. But deliverance is not freedom, but what is granted and effected by another; because I have learned by experience under Divine teaching, that I am *not free*, and cannot free myself. Hence, in Rom. vi., where this question is treated in its roots, we are set free by being *dead*, the Adam nature crucified with Christ. Then he can say, but not before, "Yield ye yourselves," a blessed and true privilege, when I reckon myself dead to sin, and alive to God, not in Adam, but in Jesus Christ our Lord. This is resumed in chap. viii. 2, 3, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." So that I was not free before I had Christ. And he adds, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in

the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Freedom is the fruit of deliverance by Christ, first with death (the old man, sin, in the flesh, is dead to faith, we are crucified with Him). I have life in the power of the Spirit in Christ, and then I am free. But the facts of man's state, and the scriptural history of his responsibility, put this matter on another ground altogether.

And first, that history which will bring out more clearly the facts of his state. The purpose of God was always in the last Adam, not in the first. The first promise was to the seed of the woman, not to Adam, who was not that. The seed of the woman was to destroy Satan's power, as Adam had succumbed to it. All promises are to Christ—none are to man as such. But God began with responsibility, first, in the first Adam, not with purpose or promise, and this responsibility was fully dealt with in every way—I mean now, after the fall—without law, under law, and after prophets, by Christ coming in grace according to the word: "I have yet one Son." Thus man's responsibility was fully dealt with, and the Lord says, "Now is the judgment of this world;" and Stephen sums this up by saying. (Acts vii.) "you received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it; which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted and slain, who testified beforehand of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have now been the betrayers and murderers." "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye"—and one, full of the Holy Ghost, thereon goes up into heaven, and *earth's tale is told!*

But it will be said, "Yes, but the death of Christ has laid a new ground of responsibility." So it has; but by placing man on the ground that man is *already lost*, and that when we were yet without strength, Christ died for the ungodly. There is none to will, none to understand, none to answer. We cannot give divine life to ourselves (eternal life), nor beget ourselves to God. I am not questioning the door being freely open, and the blood on the mercy-seat, but this is the final proof that *man will not come*, when he can, as regards God. And God has proved that no motives suffice to induce him. He *must be born again*, entirely afresh. The history of scripture, is of God's using all means and motives, the result being the repetition of this sin and judgment.

The case of Adam was somewhat different, because lust and self-will were not yet there. Man was not captive to a law of sin in his members. Sin was not there, nor was deliverance required; he was with God in innocence. Clearly, God put no restraint on him, to leave Him, and disobey; his *obedience was tested*. It was not a question of coming to God when already evil. The prohibition was a pure test of obedience, and the act innocent, if it had not been forbidden. There was as yet no conscience, in the sense of knowing the difference of good and evil for one's self; he had only to stay where he was and not disobey. There was nothing in him, nor peculiar in God, to hinder him, but this—*he was free*. His fall proved that: not that the creature was bad, but if left to himself he could not stand firm, but in this state, so far from desire and freedom of choice being what he had to do, to go right, that the moment there was choice and will, there was sin. Obedience, simply, was his place: if a *question arose whether he should obey*, SIN WAS THERE. Choice is not obedience: the moment he felt free to choose, he had left the place of simple obedience. Think of a child, who takes the ground of being *free to choose*, whether he will obey!

I deny that morality depends on freedom of choice. Man was created in a given relationship with God. Morality consisted in walking in that relationship. But that relationship was obedience. Then he should have continued, simple and happy, and not set himself *free* from God. This is what Christ did, He came to do God's will, taking the form of a servant. Satan, in the temptation in the wilderness, sought to get Him to leave this, *to be free*, and do His own will, and His answer is, "Man shall live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." There was no movement in His heart or will, but *from* or *by* the will of God, and that is perfection, not a rule directing self-will which we, alas, often need, but God's will, the motive of our action, *of the action of our will*. That is what is called in scripture, the obedience of faith, to which we are sanctified.

Man has, in one sense, made himself free, but it is free from God, and thus moral apostacy, and the slave of sin. From this, Christ wholly delivers and sanctifies us to obedience, having borne the penalty of the fruits of our

self-will. How come I to have to choose? If I have, I have no *good* yet, and *what* is to *make* me choose it.

They confound, too, conscience to good and evil, with will. Man acquired this by the fall: it is thus exercised in a state of alienation from God in the unconverted: and will is a distinct thing. In the flesh, it is enmity against God: lust and lawlessness, and, if the law comes, transgression. If now I have the Spirit of God, it lusts against it. It is expressed by the heathen in saying, "I see better things and approve them; I follow the worse." There is conscience and lust governing the will. If all this be so, man was perfectly at liberty as to what he ought to do, as put to the test, but the exercise of will or choosing was just *sin*, obedience being his place with God. He was created in *good*, and had *it not to choose*: now he loves sin and his own will, and has to be delivered from it.

J. N. D.

GOD'S UNITY—MAN'S UNION—WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

In these days of demand for what is called christian union, one may profitably, if the Lord will bless, bring under view three several presentations of God's unity, and three several presentations of man's union, by way of contrast, that the difference in principle between them may be the better brought into light. And should any honest seekers be led to see that what they are seeking, as christian union, can be found, in truth and power, only in God's unity, and they be led on to God's ground of unity, one's desire will, through grace **have** been obtained.

One thing at the outset may be noted, namely, that union is man's word, not God's, for it is not to be found in the Word, in the sense now used, where, however, we do read, anticipatively, of "brethren dwelling together in unity," of "unity of the faith," and of "unity of the Spirit," so that unity is a substantial and real thing in God's word. "Union" well enough expresses man's purpose and attempt, but that is short of God's purpose, and "unity" better expresses God's fuller purpose and real accomplishment. God's word man does not use, because the truth represented by God's word, man refuses. But if there be one sentence of the word more to be pressed upon christians than any other, it is that beseeching

of Eph. iv. 3: "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;" so that if christians attach importance to their union, God attaches importance to His unity, as expressed in Eph. iv. 4: "ONE BODY AND ONE SPIRIT."

Briefly then, first, there was really a unity before God, of the two occupants of Eden, on God's ground in innocence. God there communed with them both together, and they with Him. But Satan and sin came in, they fell, and that communion was cut off, and they both were put out of Eden. They were still together, but not in, nor upon, the ground of God's recognized unity. It was not that one sinned and had to be put off God's ground, and one remained to represent the unity, but both sinned, so the unity was broken up, they were put out of the garden, and the Edenic dispensation closed.

There was, second, a unity before God on God's ground, of the congregation of Israel. Innocence of the Eden character was no more, but grace had come in, and there was an imputed and acknowledged standing in holiness before the Lord God. As the congregation of God, fenced in, so to speak, as one people, all other peoples fenced out—the wall of partition up, and non-intercourse the rule—there was substantial and real unity of all within, so that cutting off from the congregation of Israel, was cutting off from among His people, cutting off from the presence of the Lord. This was the Old Testament disciplinary equivalent of putting out of the assembly of God, in the New Testament (1 Cor. v.); for God in grace now has His one assembly as truly, though not so comprehensively, of all His people, as He had His congregation then, and now as then upon the ground and order of His own appointment.

So also, distinctively, it was God's unity in separation from evil, and on the ground of holiness, for the tabernacle of God was its centre. It was therefore essentially a gathering or congregating to, or around, God, for God dwelt there and met with them there (Exod. xxv. 8, and xxix). Evil must needs therefore, be put away out of it, for separation of evil or from evil is God's principle of unity (as Josh. vii. 12), or if the case be worse and the evil more general, the tabernacle of the Lord must move out and be pitched without the camp (as in Exod.

xxiii. 7), whither those who are for God, and obedient to Him follow, for *there* was now the gathering or congregating place of His true people—those who sought the Lord. And most suggestive is this to us who would be obedient, and would be upon God's ground in these evil days, for He who really *seeks the Lord* now, must needs go outside the camp, as in that day.

The Temple afterwards was on the same ground, and God was its centre, and it the place of His unity. But there was abundant failure, and the captivity. There was a remnant down to Anna's time (Luke ii. 36). But there had been, and there was still, failure, and after God's long patience, and distinct manifestation of man's utter failure, there came foreclosure of the dispensation—of that order of things—and beyond that foreclosure our present purpose does not carry us.

There is now, third, a unity on God's ground, upon the same principle of separation from evil to God. The cross of Christ brought in redemption and broke down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile. Thence results the church of God—the divine unity. This was the mystery, hidden from ages and generations, but now revealed. And if revealed, surely a divine principle is afforded as guide to this divine unity. Read Eph. i. 17–23. Here we see the Father of glory has raised Christ and set Him at His own right hand to be “Head to the church which is His body”—“One body, having access by one Spirit to the Father”—in Christ “builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. ii). “We being many members are one body in Christ.” “There is one body and one Spirit,” “for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body”—the one Spirit being, therefore, the introducer into the one body. Surely we thus see the body formed, and God's unity set up—the church the habitation of God. The church of God as thus corporate and “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” as enjoined upon all its members, expresses the corporate responsibility of each.

Where, then, is the place or scene of the manifestation of this endeavor? 1 Cor. x. 16, 17, shows that the Lord's Supper is the expression or manifestation of the communion of the body of Christ. The Lord's Table is therefore the place or scene of assembly, in corporate character and res-

possibility. To it, consequently, should all His members be gathered, and "where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst," and there, too, is the Holy Ghost, the gathering and controlling power.

So the "church of God which is at Corinth," "the churches of Galatia," "all that be in Rome called saints," the saints at Ephesus, at Phillipi, at Colosse, and the Hebrews, "are holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling;" were each, severally, in principle and ground, as the forty gatherings in London, the one at New York, and the one in Montreal, are now, severally, in each of the three cities, the local expression of the body of Christ, and each and all had, and have, an acknowledged relation, the one to the other, as of the body. AND AS KEEPING THE UNITY, and all these assemblies, now existing, being in ground and principle, in distinct and declared acknowledgment of the unity as constituted by the Holy Ghost.

And the Holy Ghost, having thus constituted and expressed His own corporate unity, and signified where and how it is to be kept, all members of the body in these several places are under responsibility to keep it as bidden. They who are thus upon God's ground, though a feeble few, a very small remnant, do represent God's unity. Multitudes of members of the body of Christ, dear children of God, being off the ground of the unity of the Spirit, are in sects and systems, but the remnant, without any claim to be the church of God, only a part of it, represents not the unity of the body, but the unity of the Spirit, and the principle of the church of God, as keeping a unity of the Spirit remains intact, and remains with them, and they alone, as associated, the one with the other, in the keeping of the unity, the world over, are entitled to reckon on God for all that He has specially promised to His church while down here—gathered on the ground of the one body of Christ, by one Spirit at the Lord's supper—THE ONE LOAF.

And, if so, the principle of Paul's rebuke of the Corinthians is plain, for theirs was an early attempt to break this unity—contentions and divisions (1 Cor. i). But the Corinthians had not broken away from the Lord's Table, the expression of the unity. They were not really schismatics nor sectarians.

Breaking away from the table of the unity came later. When it came there was disobedience, insubjection, sectarianism, and they constitute themselves a SECT who are thus insubordinated and disobedient to the word. So then, so now, the so-called churches of various names are each and all off the God-ordained ground of "the churches of Corinth" and "at Galatia," and are sects, and this being evil, members of the body of Christ are called to come out from them and be separate, God's principle of unity all along being separation from evil, and *now*, not by any judicial power, but by the power of the word and Spirit, and to come back upon the ground of the unity, as at its first setting up, which is not sectarianism now any more than on the day that Paul by the Spirit besought the Corinthians—"that there be no divisions among you."

Such are the disobedient ones, and such is the demand upon Christians at this present time, when these great truths of the one body, and the one Spirit, and the endeavor to keep the unity, have been distinctively set forth, and the Lord has gathered many of His people to Himself in the acknowledgment thereof.

We have thus seen, first, innocence in Eden—unity—communion: second, separation from the nations and from evil, the unity of the congregation of Israel gathered to God as His congregation—communion:—third, separation from the world, whether Jew or Gentile, separation from evil, formed by the Holy Ghost into one body, and, since ecclesiastical evil has come in, separation therefrom, in the endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the acknowledgment of the name of Jesus, and of the presence of the Holy Ghost—as made the temple of God by the Spirit—communion.

There is thus identity of principle in what we have denominated three several presentations of God's unity. The last of these is that which is now extant down here in the world, and is that whereunto they who would walk in simple obedience, and who, naming the name of Christ, would depart from iniquity, with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart, must be gathered.

Subsequently, three several presentations of an opposite character will be noticed.

STANDING, STATE AND SERVICE.

It is very important for the child of God to apprehend the difference between these three things. The want of this knowledge is a cause of the doubts that so many, alas, have, as to their eternal salvation and present acceptance and position before God.

These three things are entirely distinct, yet absolutely dependent, one upon another. My standing, is my present and eternal position before God as regards my justification, sanctification, and acceptance in the Beloved—the platform upon which I stand. My state, is the healthy or unhealthy condition of my soul. My service, is that which acts for God towards others. *Nothing* can touch my standing; it is eternally valid, because it is Christ. The least thing, a foolish thought, can upset my state in a moment. And as to service, many christians seem to get along without any. Yet, distinct as these are, the second is entirely dependent on the first, and the third on the second. In other words, my state is the result of my standing (and my apprehension of it), and my service must flow out from my state, or it is worth nothing.

As to the first, a few verses of scripture will soon make clear what I mean. “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. vi. 11). Here we have the believer's standing very clearly defined. He *is* washed, sanctified, and justified. It is noticeable that sanctification is placed before justification here: the reason is, that, what is spoken of here is our position in the Lord Jesus, not our apprehension of it; and consequent separation from evil, which must necessarily be progressive. “Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” Here again it is our standing that is spoken of, the position of *every* believer, “Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus.” We are in Him, and being in Him, He is every thing to us. He, Himself, is my wisdom, &c., not His work, but *Himself*. He did something *for* me, on the cross, which entirely put away my guilt before God, but my standing is *Himself*, not His righteousness, but *Himself*; and having *Himself* I have all that He is; He is all. My standing, my perpetual place before God is Christ; I am in Him.

I must now leave that and say a word as to the believer's state of soul. Remember, the first can never be touched; it is as safe as Christ; but the second, Satan may succeed in upsetting any moment.

"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here, of course, it is state. As to my standing, I *am* sanctified; as to my state, there is need for me to make continual prayer for it. This passage is almost always quoted wrongly, nearly every one says "body, soul and spirit," thus exactly reversing God's order, and the difference is very important, for practical setting apart to God is not reached by first laying my body, my wife, my property, &c., on the altar, then my heart, and then attain to sanctification of my spirit, but just the reverse. My spirit lay hold of the truth of my sanctification in Christ, my soul (the seat of the affections) is won to Christ, and then my body is given up a living sacrifice. So in Romans, the exhortation in xii. 1, is founded upon the truth taught in vi.-viii (ix.-xi. being parenthetical). And in Ephesians; first the spirit (ii. 5, 6), then the heart (iii. 17), then the body (v. 3, 4).

We have standing given as a motive for state also in Col. iii. 1. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." My place being with Christ, I am urged to let my mind be there too, to make my standing my standard. And if we ever get miserable in our souls, is it not because we are failing to realize our standing? "Risen with Christ!" and go along with a drooping head! Let my mind be set on things above and nothing can trouble me. But whether a person is gloomy or rejoicing, this does not affect the position he (if he is a believer) has in Christ; that does not depend upon his feelings.

"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanseth us from all sin," refers to state also. As to my standing, the blood *has* cleansed me. That is a work that never has to be repeated. But as to my state I, having sin *in* me (not *on* me), need continually to apprehend the value of that blood in order to have fellowship with the Father in the light. For instance, suppose that yesterday I

was saved, I heard the gospel preached and I believed in the finished work of Christ, His offering of Himself made once for all, never needing to be repeated. I at once, have fellowship with the Father in the light, I apprehend what the work of Christ has done for me, and, by his blood. I have boldness to enter the holiest. But to-day I get my mind off of Christ and fall into sin; I have not lost my salvation thereby (that is in God's hands and can never be lost, it does not rest on my doings but on the complete work of Christ), but I have lost the joy of it. I have lost fellowship, oneness of mind and heart with God, I am not walking in the light. What then? Must I continue in darkness the rest of my days? Not at all; the same blood that brought me into the light can keep me there. I confess my sin and am forgiven. It is no use saying we have no sin: we *have* sin, but notwithstanding that. God has made a way by which we can have fellowship in the light—the blood: this keeps me in fellowship.

And while realizing in my soul the blessedness of my position before God, what is more natural (natural to the new man, I mean) than to act for God in service, in whatever way He may direct? Service of this kind will not be "dead works" done with the idea of helping on my salvation, but will just be the happy overflow of a heart full of Christ.

Now, as an illustration of the whole three, let me refer to the history of Daniel (Dan. i., ii). Daniel was a Jew (a king's son too, by the by). That was his *standing*. His faithfulness to Jehovah made him none the more a Jew, nor, had he been unfaithful would he have been any the less a Jew. "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine he drank." That shewed his *state*. He testified for the Lord in interpreting the king's dream, &c., that was his *service*. Had Daniel eaten of the king's meat and drank of the king's wine (offered up to idols), he would have been untrue to his standing as a Jew. As one who called upon Jehovah, he could have no fellowship with idolatry in the slightest way. What a lesson of faithfulness to our calling, this teaches us! It seemed but a little thing, this eating of the king's portion; but just this little thing was a proof that he was fit to be

used by the Lord. How apt we are to say, "is it not a little one?" But the *allowance* of the *slightest* evil, breaks my communion with God at once. How easy it would seem, just to eat and drink what was given him and make no fuss about it. How crotchety it must have seemed to some. How often the fear of being thought peculiar will keep one from disowning evil, and thus having fellowship with it, partaking of other men's sins. Had Daniel eaten, he would have been out of fellowship with the Lord at once, his conscience would have been defiled, and therefore unfit to receive the revelations that the Lord afterwards gave him, and too weak to take the bold stand that, at the risk of his life, he took.

For a very powerful illustration as to how the power for service is affected by one's state, look at the history of Samson. His strength depended *entirely* upon his Nazariteship. When that was broken by his head being shorn, his strength left him and he became like other men. Now the servant of God must be *un* like other men. He needs a large measure of *reality*: he needs to be able to grasp the unseen things as being the only real things. Life and death; the immense distance between man and God: the bridge over that gulf; the "one body" the church, the reality of that blessed thing, and the reality of the ruin that is seen by contrast with it, &c. All these things must be something more than theology to him, else, where is his strength?

How can I be strong? What is the secret of a servant's strength? *Nazariteship*—a broken will, every thing given up to the Lord. There were three things which marked the Nazarite (see Num. vi). First, he must drink nothing of the wine, neither wine nor vinegar: second, no razor must come upon his head: third, he must not make himself unclean by contact with the dead, even for his father, mother, &c. Thus with the servant of Christ. There must be, first, faithfulness to the Lord (as in Daniel), living in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. I can find no joy (wine is the type of joy) where He found sorrow. As He wept over a disobedient Jerusalem, so I weep over a rebellious church. So far from joining in the hollow joy of the world, even of the religious world with its festivals, I see nothing in it but cause for weeping. All my joy must be drawn from above,

where He is, and where my heart must be. But neither can I share in earthly sorrow (typified by vinegar), just as He said, "Weep not for me." Worldly sorrow is as hollow as its joy. When I see the sorrow of a repentant sinner, I joy in fellowship with heaven. I *do* find both joy and sorrow, but it is in fellowship with the Lord Jesus.

Then the second mark—no razor. I am to wear that which is man's shame (1 Cor. xi. 14). Be called feminine, no doubt, without energy, &c. Not having energy of the flesh, knowing that it is not by might, nor by power, but by the Lord's Spirit. "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men." I am to be marked by a broken will. "Let your moderation (really, gentleness, forbearance, not contesting for one's rights) be known unto all men."

Thirdly—no defilement, no contact with that dead thing, flesh. My standing is "risen with Christ," therefore I am not to let the ties of nature (though such *are* owned of God), cause me to defile the vow of my consecration. These three characteristics are strongly marked in that book, which, like a sign-post at a complexity of cross-roads, points out the right path for the faithful in these "difficult times" (2 Tim. ii. 11, 12, 21, 24).

Thus, as I said in commencing, service *must* be the outflow of state. Eloquence is nothing; knowledge is nothing; state is everything. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." In conclusion, mark: Standing—*in* Christ. State—*fellowship with* Christ. Service—*ministry for* Christ.

C. H. B.

Paul closes 1 Thess. iv. with these words, "So shall we be ever with the Lord." And is that all? Yes, that is all; for to the heart that has learned to love Him He can say no more. Then he adds, "Of the times and seasons ye have no need that I write unto you." Ye are the children of the day, you wait for that. No explanation of this, *as a doctrine*, can ever reach *the heart*. You cannot make a person understand a *relationship*; to understand it he must *himself* be *in it*.

1 SAMUEL.

Chapters **xxi.**—**xxx.**

Chap. **xxi.** The anointed of Jehovah is now an outcast, and like Him of whom he is so peculiarly a type, he is, before he takes his throne, to be made perfect through suffering. From the hands of the priest of God, he receives the shew-bread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, but only for the priests: both himself and the priest entering into the mind of Jehovah, that in a day of the rejection of God, all things are "in a manner common," or profaned. And this is used by our Lord to the Pharisees in John **v.**, in regard to the Sabbath, which they charged Him with profaning, by healing. It was a strange time to talk of profaning the Sabbath, when the whole condition of the people was a profanation of all that God regarded, and His own Son was rejected, and sought after to be killed. Did God ever bind Himself down to the ceremonial restrictions of the law? Did not every act of grace and blessing come through a breach of all the ordered system of things?

Thus refreshed, the sword with which he had beheaded Goliath is given him, for "there is none like that," taken out of death, in the power of the Spirit.

Chap. **xxii.** David escapes to the cave Adullam, and becomes the centre of gathering for those who were most intelligent in regard to the mind of God, and the times—his father's house: as well as those who were in distress and in debt, and discontented, who gather themselves unto him. Thus, there are two classes—those attracted positively to his person, and those exercised in a negative way, seeing the evil of the kingdom under Saul, and brought into distress by it. But he receives both, and becomes their captain. They get to the right person, God's own anointed leader, and gathered to him, they are on God's ground of unity. It is the first mention we have made of David's men, and here there is a complete number, with reference to building up, and testimony. These men, joined to him in his rejection, are brought to notice and their work recounted, when David is crowned king of all Israel, afterwards. "If we suffer with Christ we shall also reign with Him." The application of all this, to this day, of Christ's place in relation to the world, and the fellowship of a remnant with Him, is most

apparent, and very precious. These are found with David, also the prophet Gad, and afterwards the priest, Abiathar. Thus the prophet, priest, and king, all the channels of communication and blessing, are together, and hidden in a cave while Saul uses the enemy of God and Israel, the Edomite to slay the priests of God. Sweetly and solemnly instructive is all this.

Chap. xxiii. David becomes the one sought unto for rescue, and in receiving instruction from Jehovah, smites the Philistines, and delivers the inhabitants of Keilah. But his time for coming forth from the wilderness has not yet arrived, the men of Keilah being afraid of Saul, and ready to deliver David up to him. So he finds safety in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood. And here God interposes to keep him from Saul, who was pursuing him through the treachery of the Ziphites.

Chap. xxiv. But God not only protects him, but brings out the determined hatred of Saul, all the more, now bringing to notice the mind that is in each, by a special incident. The faith and forbearance alike of David, are to be tested. Thus shielded by Jehovah, what will he do if Saul, unguarded for a little time, be put in his way? For it is not always the time to smite, and never, according to *our* wisdom or judgment of times. The Perfect One, who walked here amidst the most constant hatred, seeking all means of putting Him to death, said to those who asked, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword", or spoke of calling down fire from heaven, "Put up thy sword into its sheath," and "Ye know not what spirit ye are of." It was the time of suffering, though judgment upon the enemy shall fall in due time. He committed all that to Him, whose will He was doing here.

So David is led in the path of suffering, and not judgment, and knows that it is not his work to set aside Saul from reigning, but that He who anointed him, will establish him, in His own time. "Jehovah forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, Jehovah's anointed." Can we, in our patience, possess our souls, not attempting to reign now, as the Corinthians did, well knowing that the time shall surely come when Christ shall reign, and we with Him? It is to be noticed that David is not fighting for, or against Saul, being entirely aloof from that which God has rejected. He rises, too, above those that are

with him, staying his servants, so that Saul goes his way. It is by being *subject* to the powers that be, not turning sovereigns, and attempting to set things right, or using the sword of judgment, that the christian is to walk, and he that is in communion with God, heeds not the words of men on this matter. What an opportunity this might seem, this one, hunted as a flea, as some thing hateful to all, the object of fear on the part of Abimelech, and of treachery by the Ziphites, and of suspicion by those comfortable under Saul. How soon he could, by slaying Saul, have won all, for success is the great argument. Is it not so to-day? Is not the word, "you can do most good in this way," the potent one for leading us to deny our outcast condition? And what have we to answer? Only, that we are not of this world, and then leave it all with Him, who has given us this place.

"JEHOVAH, judge between me and thee, and Jehovah, avenge me of thee, but *mine* hand shall not be upon thee," was David's word to Saul, which brought him to lift up his voice and weep, confessing that David was more righteous than he. Really perceiving the token of his own defeat, he causes David to swear that he will not cut off his seed, and destroy his name out of his father's house. But David still keeps himself in separation, a conqueror, though he gets him up unto the hold again, and the defeated one goes to his home and throne. To those who walk by faith, what is "Satan's seat," when he shall be presently under their feet?

Chap. xiv. Samuel dies; the chosen of God, David, is cast out, and the prophet, the medium of communication with the people on the part of God is removed. It is as when Christ was rejected, and all the mighty works cease among the Jews, and God gives them up. He, Himself, is the only One spoken to on the earth, abiding in the love of His Father, and receiving His commandment. Then Abigail comes in, showing her faith as to David's exaltation, and henceforth knowing Saul only as a "man," who is risen up against him, and her husband as a "son of Belial." And she, upon the death of her first husband, is married to David; as they who, having been under the law, now being dead to that by which they were held, are married to another, even Christ. Taking the lowest place, and having been richly molded

by grace, giving David his full place according to the counsels of God, she is joined to him, while he is yet an outcast, and joined for ever, even in his kingdom. A beautiful picture is this, of the church, those who are really Christ's.

Chap. xxvi. Saul is incorrigible, still pursuing David, and again falling into his hands. But David refuses to allow others to smite him, though he walks even more thoroughly separated from Saul, appealing to the righteous judgment of God. It is of God that he should thus stand. The world will not have Christ: where should we be, therefore? Refusing to judge, acting in grace, but totally separated.

Chaps. xxvii-xxxi. And now, at the very time when so much seems to be won, when there was such a precious exercise of grace according to the elevation that God had given him, David must needs show that he is but man. His faith fails. "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul." And then he devises for himself. "There is *nothing better* for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines." And what a position, to appear to be fighting against the people of God. For the time, he has his eye off of God, and off of the people as His. Faith in Christ precedes, and produces love to all saints. Getting off of God's ground, and going among the enemies of God, how has he to act falsely, pretending to Achish that he has fought against Israel, while really driving out the Amalekites and others. A christian, who goes back into the world, necessarily puts himself into a place of shame and deception. And what a strange result of this is it for the anointed king of Israel to be made the keeper of the head of the king of the Philistines for ever. Could any thing be more suggestive for us? But God comes in, in this lowest time, for Israel and his servant, too, and by the jealousy of the lords of the Philistines, drives David out. And then disciplines his child, too, taking away the Ziklag that had been given him by the enemy. It is true that it pertained unto David afterwards, but as burned thoroughly judged, and destroyed. It must be a new city, not the old gift of the world. And now, utterly helpless, and brought to the ultimate results of his action, even his men talking of stoning him, he is cast upon God, for he is a man of

faith. He sees his own way a ruin, and "*encouraged himself in Jehovah his God.*" And Jehovah meets him, his soul is restored, and he receives his wives and the spoil, going on again in his former dignity and grace as a conqueror.

Meanwhile, Saul, forsaken of God, and all communication with Him closed, seeks a woman that hath a familiar spirit, to inquire of her, and is told by Samuel, brought back by God, his end, which befalls him in the mountain of Gilboa, with all his sons. Man, and his best expression of power and authority—his king, that he *would* have in place of God, has been proved a failure and an enemy to God; henceforth there is room for God to act.

What grave lessons **have** we learned in this book! We have seen Israel's ruin under the priesthood, and the ark of God taken from them; then their own efforts to recover their place among the nations, at least, seeking a king though afar from God, and when made to know their own rebellion in this, still having their king anointed for them, the expression of the flesh; when it is known as such, allowed to take its full course in a reign of forty years sinking lower and lower morally and politically, till at the end the king and his sons are dead, and their heads hung up as trophies of the power of heathen gods, which are nothing; and poor Israel defeated by the Philistines, just where they were, when their king was given. Then we have seen God, in pity and grace, raising up a man that just suits their wants, and is, according to His own heart, but this one failing in many a sad way, though on the whole, a man of faith, and this making his entire character and fitness for use by Jehovah; driven out as an outlaw and rebel, until every thing has been judged in Israel and brought to ruin openly. We have seen, also, that he, in this interval, was led through scenes of trial and stress of persecution, that made him the most peculiar and expressive type of the Lord Jesus, failing himself, yet the type in his movements in which Jehovah led him, of One who was unfailing; when acting in his own thoughts, rebuked and broken before God; when in the mind of God, walking by faith; and faith is the utter negation of self and the old man, and taking God for all—setting to our seal that God is true.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Will you in SOUND WORDS give me the explanation of Matt. xxiv. 14? It is not clear to me as to time. Does this whole chapter come *after* the church is taken up, or before? (J. M. O.)

Ans. "This gospel of the kingdom" is not the message that God is sending out now, which is of Christ in the glory, and is called "the gospel of the glory," and "the gospel of the grace of God," because it is the richest expression of grace to sinners, as such, leading to God, and heaven, making the believer "partaker of the heavenly calling."

The question of the disciples (Matt. xxiv. 3) had nothing to do with the church, nor its hope, but of Christ coming in judgment, and the end of the age. And He answers as to the signs of that. We look for no signs; but to be caught up. It is, in reality, looking at the matter of His appearing, to take the kingdom on the earth, and these signs precede it, by which its coming can be foretold, by the faithful remnant of the Jews. After the present saints are taken up, the Holy Spirit being absent as a person, the testimony will be of the coming King and kingdom, of which Jerusalem will be the centre. Thus the reference to the temple and to Judea (verse 15), shows the Jewish character of all that is given here, as does the mention of the Sabbath (verse 20). And the warning in regard to false Christs, could not be to those who are looking to be caught up to the Son of God in *heaven*.

Now, looking at this chapter without any thought of the present time, and the church, it will be easily understood. Meanwhile the church has come in, and is going on; so this all awaits our being taken out of the way. *Then*, all these things will come in their order, and be instructive to those awaiting a kingdom.

I. T., Cordova, Ill.—Thanks for the quotations sent, bringing out so sweetly the perfection of Christ as God. They can never be dwelt upon too much. But He was down here as the obedient *Man*, and is spoken of in Luke ii. 52, as "increasing in wisdom," and in Heb. ii. 10, as having been "made perfect through suffering"—a perfect Captain or Leader, not only a Saviour by the cross, but by having passed through all that we pass through, whom He is leading, being tempted in all things as we are, without sin, and thus able to succor us who are tempted. *Though He was a Son*, yet learned He obedience from the things which He suffered, and having been made perfect—the same word that is used in ii. 11—He became the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him. This is speaking of His priesthood, and His fitness to save to the end, "the uttermost," all those who come to God by Him. His priesthood is on high, but that He is *suit*ed to be our Priest, is declared by what He passed through here, *learning and suffering*.

He is a perfect Saviour of the sinner by the sufferings of the cross, and nothing else is needed, or we deny that perfection. He is a perfect Leader and Succorer through the wilderness, by the things that He suffered before coming to the cross and to go to any other help would be to deny this. We are *cast* utterly upon Him from the cross to the glory, and He is *able* all through.

THE ACTS.

Chapter ii.

Now all things are duly prepared. Christ having gone into heaven, the disciples on earth being complete in number, ready and waiting according to the word of the Lord, are found in one place, for one purpose, and the day of Pentecost is being accomplished. This was the feast of weeks, coming fifty days after the waving of the sheaf of first-fruits before Jehovah, which was, in type, Christ in resurrection. The feast of Pentecost was thus a type of the church, the fruit borne by Him who was the corn of wheat that fell into the ground and died.

And it is during this time, that the Holy Spirit is sent down to gather the church, as it is He alone baptizes into the one body. And now, consequent upon Christ taking His seat in heaven, at the right hand of the Father, that most momentous event in connection with the world, next to the crucifixion, is to take place. For this it was needful that Christ should go away, "For if I go not away the Comforter will not come." Every purpose of God now waits for, and depends upon, that event for its consummation. The world has lost the One who was here, reconciling it unto God; the disciples called out from it, are as sheep without a shepherd, are without an aim or meaning in their separation, and have surely nothing; for He who had the words of eternal life has parted from them. How must the truth and import of His death be made good to their souls, and to ours? How are they to be kept apart from the Jewish system, which has been proved a failure, having no fruit for God? How are they to be maintained as "His own" that are not of the world, in fellowship, and peace, and nearness to Himself? How shall there be any power for testimony to the world concerning Him with whom they journeyed—for what they saw and heard, if remembered and told out of their own minds, would not be the truth of God—and how shall any better things be known? The answer of all these is, by the Holy Spirit present and abiding here. All the forming of the "man in Christ," the unfolding of the mystery kept secret from the foundation of the world, the conforming to the image of the Son, standing, worship, service, work, fruit, testimony, and the glory; in

short, all that is definitely christian, is contingent upon the coming of Him who shall lead into all truth, taking of the things of Christ, and showing *them* unto them. He is the only person capable of measuring and defining and applying with power, the work and the character of the person of Christ.

Blessed fact, the Lord hastens to fulfil His own promise, and that in such a way as was due the wonderful matter. "Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." This was in a manner that set forth the specific character of His action and testimony during His stay here. It was with *tongues*, not in the form of a *dove*, as upon Him who was not to strive nor cry, neither to have His voice heard in the streets. Though of course He spoke, and spoke by the Spirit too, yet His work was other than simply to speak. But now, upon the accomplishment of His work, God has a ground upon which He can gladly come down to man, and a message to *tell*. It is the dispensation of the word, by *preaching*. It is for "the obedience of *faith*" that the revelation is now made known, according to the commandment of God; and faith comes by *hearing*, and hearing by the *word* of God.

He upon whom the Spirit came as a dove, was the *doer*, accomplishing in perfect grace the will of God; we are the *receivers*. The tongues were parted, for it was no longer to one people, but to all nations, God meeting man where he had by his pride placed himself, amidst the confusion of Babel. Grace can go any where to meet man in his need. They were "as of fire," for grace was founded upon the righteous judgment of evil. The words of God are pure, and holiness is maintained in the gospel that comes "from heaven." "And they began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." How clearly God has vindicated His own nature as light and love, in the advent of the Holy Spirit; and how thorough is our warrant for believing!

There were, at this time, dwelling at Jerusalem devout Jews, out of every nation under heaven, whom God had doubtless prepared for this occasion. Drawn together

by the report of this, the multitude were confounded, because every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed. "Devout men," as they were, they were not prepared for the ways of God's grace and power. None can anticipate, none can keep up with, God. A ruler of the Jews asked, "how can these things be?" in relation to the "earthly things" of which Christ was telling him, and these religious ones ask, "how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" It is the part of wisdom to confess ignorance, while the mockers could flippantly explain, exposing their profanity and senselessness, by saying, "These men are full of new wine." It was worthy of those who had said that Christ cast out devils by the prince of devils.

But Peter explained to those who have ears, addressing himself to them as *Jews* first, and declaring that this was in accordance with the prophecy of Joel, which itself was made with reference to Jerusalem and the Jews. They needed to have their own promises rehearsed to them. But what a day of wonders, if all the things pertaining to that great and notable DAY OF THE LORD may righteously take place. And what was to hinder, what element was wanting? The prophets spake before of the sufferings of Christ, and the following glories, (Pet. i., 11). He has to but to show that the sufferings in Himself personally, have taken place, and they had a hand deeply in these. These glories are awaiting their readiness; would they make ready!

But, while this is true, God has His own secret thing yet to bring out, as a parenthesis, occupying the "little while" that Jesus is away, in gathering those who are to have part in reigning with Him, and for the present to share and fill up the sufferings. Peter, accordingly is not instructed to say, "this is the *fulfilment* of the prophecy;" but, "this is that which was spoken by the prophet," who had before told of God acting in grace, giving the good word of God, and in power, in the miracles of the age to come, and the demonstration of the Spirit, preparing a people for the kingdom, by saving all who should call upon the name of the Lord.

Heb. vi. 4, 5 gives a statement of the new things which had been brought to them as Jews, at this time, in contrast with what they had, which is given in the first

and second verses. The signs and miracles—"powers of the world (age) to come"—are referred to especially in connection with that nation in Heb. ii. 3, 4. It was the same God who had, with power, led them forth from Egypt and shown His mighty acts all through their history, now acting, and this according to His own promise. This was "the rain" coming out of Heb. vi. 7, 8. Would it produce "herbs," or thorns and briars?

And then (v. 22), he widens out to their hopes as a nation, calling them *Israelites*, and presenting the Man in whom all the promises centered. "Jesus of Nazareth, pointed out from God unto them by mighty works, and wonders and signs which God did through Him among them, as they knew. Him they had taken, and by wicked hands, crucified and slain." But the counsel and foreknowledge of God were accomplished in this. What a word was this! The One who was sent according to God's own purpose of grace to be their King, and to recover the nation, they had slain! It looked as though all were lost. But "God raised Him up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." This was the matchless answer in grace to their blindness and hatred.

And then he cites Ps. xvi., showing Him who said, "I foresaw the Lord *always* before my face" in the whole of life, in death and on to resurrection, to be certainly not David, but David's LORD. This psalm was well understood as referring to the Messiah. And here was the living commentary on the whole of it, and David foreseeing Him, spoke concerning the resurrection of Christ, to whom God had sworn that He should sit upon His throne. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." But the psalm went on to the right hand of God, and thither was Jesus raised and there seated, until His enemies are made His footstool. And then the infinite resources of the Father's heart are made known, that the promise of the Holy Spirit was given, who is now sent forth. All the blessings promised more richly and fully than they had read their own prophets, are now brought unto them. "Let *all* the house of Israel know that, both LORD and CHRIST, God made Him, this Jesus, whom ye crucified!" Resurrection brings Him back not now in merited judgment, but in abounding grace.

The word reaches their hearts, and with alarm they cry out, "Brethren what shall we do!" But alarm, though very proper, and doubtless the work of the Spirit, is not repentance, and to this he calls them, a real taking home to the conscience a sense of their condition and desert before God as having sinned. For what an awful condition was theirs. As a nation they had driven God away from them, going after strange gods; and when He had sent his Son, they had put Him to death. And He was "last of all." (Matt. xiv. 37). What horrible iniquity and determined hatred against God had they ever shown. It was to judge themselves in the light of God worthy of death, and in the death of Jesus Christ to find remission of sins, as set forth in baptism, which always means the death and burial of the old condition.

They separated by this burial, in water, from the old ground to take a new one, unto the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. They were separated unto Christ. He "was delivered for their offences and raised again for their justification," and in the abandoning of all that they were, they were justifying God in His judgment of them, and also in His sending Jesus, and delivering Him to death for them.

Afterwards (Rom. vi. 3-4) we learn that baptism was "unto His death;"—setting forth the death of the old man; here it was with reference to offences—sins, which were brought to their conscience, and to be purged by the resurrection of Christ. It was in the name of JESUS CHRIST, not *Jesus* alone which he had used before; but looking to Him as the risen One; for the title CHRIST is made good to Him, as raised up, as well as LORD, being at the right hand of authority, and having authority in Himself.

It was a wonderful confession for the Jew who had crucified Him as a felon, to take the felon's place, and in that very Man raised up, to find remission of sins, and then to receive the Holy Spirit who dwelt in Him, and was given forth by Him. Grace begins its new wonders, in its own free and boundless way, according as it had mapped out its course, in the promise to them and their children, and to all that are afar off, to as many as the Lord our God shall call.

We see, therefore, that their repentance was accompanied by faith; the one taking the judgment of God concerning themselves, the other concerning Christ. And then upon believing, the Holy Spirit comes to be in them. He quickens the sinner; He dwells in the believer. And God is now announcing His own order, going out even to those beyond the Jews, which followed in due time, after the remnant is taken out, "saved from this perverse generation."

And then follows the result of this clear testimony of grace and truth. They who welcomed the word, were baptized, and the same day there were added about three thousand souls. What they were, as added, comes out afterwards. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and prayers." Sweet and simple employment, altogether for and of God, flowing out from the Head in heaven. Worship, service and dependence, established upon the word that was given, and then testimony without, the Lord taking care of this. "And fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles."

And then as the peculiar result of the presence of the Holy Spirit, "all that believed were together, and had all things common." It was keeping the unity of the Spirit practically, because He was the power of the gathering, unhindered and ungrieved. "They sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, as every man had need." This would seem to be peculiar to Jerusalem, as was the continuing daily in the temple. As yet the Lord was recognizing the earthly, waiting for the Jews as such, for a season, and the total separation to the heavenly was not entered into. There was a separation however, as they were together apart from the unbelieving, though the bringing of it out, awaited a further rejection by the Jews. They broke bread daily, *at home*, (not "from house to house,") and gladness and simplicity characterized all. It was yet an open matter for the people of Israel, and the Lord gave these favor with men, as had Christ in the beginning, adding such as should be saved—the remnant—those that were to be delivered from the destruction that was coming upon the nation.

GOD'S UNITY—MAN'S UNION—THEIR DIFFERENCE.

(Continued.)

Now as to three several presentations of man's union which we proposed to notice. Take (first) Babel. There was union compact and comprehensive—man's great confederacy for his own aggrandizement, consolidation and glory. God called this, confusion, man united with man apart from God: it was manward not Godward. This was disorder. It was the beginning of Babylon; it was the germ of ecclesiastical organization. It was political also. The ecclesiastical Babylon was in principle there, and its name (Babylon) is God's name for the corrupt ecclesiastical systems of these days. Hence Babylon and Israel are seen as always antagonistic to the very end.

Disobedience characterized this Babel confederacy, for the command to replenish the earth called for dispersion over it; but men congregated—"lest we be scattered." Man thus acted according to his own views upon his own ground and for his own purposes, with entire exclusion of God's mind from his thoughts.

So men now arrange or array themselves into systems and organizations in disregard of God's ordering to Himself as centre upon the ground of the unity which He has established; for God, as we have seen, has His own distinctly ordered ecclesiastical establishment. Just so far as man moves manward, so far he moves from God's centre, which independence of God is just the principle of ecclesiastical evil. It is wilfulness, and when man congregates on the wrong principle—to himself merely, God—as at Babel—scatters. This will have illustration as we go on.

We may take (second), the more distinctly ecclesiastical Babylon—viewing the church of Rome in its claim to unity as seen in its external history from the first till now, and its history in the word from first to last; notably as to the former in its recently developed attempt to secure the reunion of christendom by means of its "association for the promotion of the unity of christendom"—taking this as an exemplification of its character—seeking by agencies working within each to accomplish a corporate union of the Greek and Anglican churches with itself. This, if secured, would of course be followed by a forced

conformity of all orders within the unity which Rome would then present, as the mother and mistress of all churches in restoration as she would claim of the visible unity of christendom. But this would still be confederacy. It would be manward not Godward. For though Rome sees the fact of God's unity in His word, she knows nothing either of its principle or of its power. Her establishment would be a totally different thing from God's establishment. It would be confusion; and, if successful, she would have only consummated a union out of which all who are the Lord's would need to come to the place of His unity as truly as they who sought the Lord had to go out of the camp of Israel when it was utterly defiled (Ex. xxxiii. 7), and upon the principle of the call of the day, "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (2 Cor. vi. 17).

The movement under Dollinger embracing ecclesiastics of the Greek and Anglican churches as well as that of Rome, though the movement of better and truer men, is really the same in principle, and to be classed as ecclesiasticism of the same character. It is all mere confederacy, beginning and ending with man. Union it may be, but unity on God's ground it is not. Confusion is its name still, and all that is of this Babylon of the Revelation—the mystery, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. Mother and offspring together are to be destroyed with the terrible destruction of Rev. xvii. 18.

Within this, sad and painful as it to say, will be found much of the so called evangelicalism of this day, based upon Romish theology, of the true old Babylon character of mixture and confusion, out of which God's children astray there, or asleep there, are called to come, and, in His grace will sooner or later be brought out before His terrible judgment be executed thereupon. Blessed it is to be *now* brought out of the confusion of this political and ecclesiastical system, not only of its grosser forms, but also of its more specious and subtle forms.

Take now (third) the Evangelical Alliance. Not any unkind word about this would be uttered, nor about the dear children of God who take part therein. But in principle it is the old character or thing—confederacy of

God's ground and in God's sense according to His word, of the Babylon character of confusion. Its basis is agreement in certain doctrines which are held to express evangelical truth. It assembles periodically upon one platform, christians of all churches and denominations, claiming no compromise of particular views, but claiming, nevertheless, orthodox union and claiming to exhibit the unity of God's people on the highest and best possible ground. Their coming together to the Lord's table, recognizes the oneness of the body of Christ, but does not recognize the unity of the Spirit, nor the special presence and rule of the Holy Ghost in the assembly, corporately, of God's people.

They meet rather individual christians coming out, for the once, from their ecclesiastical enclosures and tables, to manifest an essential union which they are happy to acknowledge, and to foster a love to the brethren, which they own to be a characteristic of those who are Christ's: but, those divisional and distinct enclosures and tables, they not only tolerate, but sanction and applaud, and straightway return to them to be as they were. But the very principle of the Corinthian sectaries is paramount (1 Cor. iii. 3, 4). One says, I am Lutheran—I am Wesleyan—I of the church of England—I of the church of Scotland. Moreover while at Corinth there was yet only the spirit of division—no breaking off and going out into separated assemblies; here is now the out and out separation, the distinct churches formed, established, recognized and proclaimed as distinct, the bounds and fences high up and erect.

But if, for tendency to this, Corinth was condemned, what of these? If they of Corinth in this thing were carnal, what of these? Disobedience, flagrant and distinct! Does such manifestation of love, one to the other as brethren, palliate disobedience of God's plain word? Doing the very thing they are forbidden to do! Can any considerations of expediency justify this? Very loving brethren, but very naughty children, not seeing that if gathered on the ground of God's unity—Godward first, brethrenward second, reaching brethren from God's centre, there would flow out from its true source and through its widest channels in fullest measure, embracing all God's children, that love to one another which they

—these very ones we are writing of—desire to exercise.

Brethren bear with us. You are thus on the ground of mere confederacy. The Babylonian principle is amongst you, very subtle but if looked up, very distinct. A better thing you seek than the forced union Rome would impose, but God's real unity rejected, and allowance and vindication of the sects and churches differing in doctrine, discipline, order and organization—declaratively maintained.

Those platforms testify to two things, love to brethren and disobedience to God! Are not the writings, 1 Cor. iii. 3-5; 1 Cor. i. 10-13; Rev. iii. 15-18, set over against them? Is not all this characteristically the Evangelical Alliance? But it is ecclesiastical expediency—allowance of evil instead of separation from evil—the former, man's principle, the latter, God's separation from evil, being the first principle of true gathering to the name of Jesus and of the recognized presence and fellowship of the Holy Ghost upon His own presented ground for the assembly of His people. And if otherwise, if God's principle were seen and acknowledged, these sects—full of God's dear children, but off God's provided ground for His children—of which this alliance is composed, would break up to-day, and God's children would find themselves associated on ground which they were born unto as God's children, if they would only see and own this, on God's ground, round God's centre, on God's principle, in God's unity—the church of the living God.

This alliance may indeed be allowed to be the most pronounced attempt at the manifestation of christian union, and is so put forward, though one considers the Young Men's Christian Association, which is above and beyond theological distinction, and without any recognition of such distinctions as really upon higher ground. But the alliance as the best exhibition, ecclesiastically, of man's union, affords no true testimony to the oneness of believers which, as that which ought to be manifested, has been practically lost—but wilfully gives it up and accepts declared division in its stead, and is confusion worse confounded. And as we have once seen God's unity and man's union somewhat in contrast, we may perhaps afterwards consider more distinctively the dif

ference in principle which they present, and the practical responsibility and duty which are thereby imposed.

J. M. T.

MEDITATIONS ON SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

ITS DIMENSIONS.

"Now these are the things wherein Solomon was instructed for the building of the house of God. The length of cubits after the first measure was threescore cubits, and the breadth twenty cubits." (2 Chron. iii. 3.)

The dimensions of the temple were just twice that of the tabernacle. (See Ex. xxvi. 15-25.)

This gives us a key to the signification of the *contrast* between the tent and the house. They were the same in most respects, both having holy, and most holy places, veils, candlesticks, altars, &c. The contrast was in the difference of size and workmanship. Both were used for the same purposes, the temple superseding the tabernacle.

We find that a thing being doubled was a token of its stability. Thus, Joseph in interpreting Pharaoh's dream says, "The dream of Pharaoh is one and for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice: it is because the thing is established by God." We read also, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." Thus God gave "the two tables of the testimony;" the law was a perfect witness against Israel. God will also have two witnesses during the great tribulation. (Rev. xi. 3).

We see then that while the tabernacle was but *temporary*, the temple was to be *permanent*. (Though now destroyed it will surely be raised again.) The tent was for the *wilderness*; the house was for the *land*.

And thus with the blessed realities of which these things are the types. The tabernacle is a type of things needed for the wilderness; the temple, of things in the place to which we belong, the land, heavenly places. And we are not to be forever in the wilderness, blessed be God. He has another place for us; there we will be forever.

Here is a fruitful theme for meditation, Oh, my soul! Let me survey the blessed provision that God has made for thee, whilst thou art on thy pilgrimage: and then,

contrast that with thy being, even now, united with the glory, through Him who is the Head of His body, the church.

First, then, what have I for the wilderness?

Let me turn to the book given for my journey through it—Hebrews. First, I have a *promise* of rest (iv. 1). If it were not so I should not be a pilgrim; it is the fact of my being on a journey *to* a place, that makes me a pilgrim. But what a sweet hope it is! How wearisome my journey would be without it!

“ My spirit is faint and weary,
I sigh for the land I love,
I pant for that blessed country,
Where all is peace and love.”

But the knowledge that these trials and pains are but the pathway to that blessed perpetual sabbath (iv. 9), re-energizes my weary limbs, and encourages my saddened heart.

“ Onward! upward! homeward!
Here I find no rest;
Treading o'er the desert
Which my Saviour pressed,
Onward to the glory, upward to the prize;
Homeward to the mansions far above the skies.”

Poor pilgrim? thou hadst no rest here; for having seen Jesus in the glory (ii. 9), thou art on thy journey to Him. But the way is dark, and rough, and many perils and trials await thee. What dost thou need to sustain thee on thy way. Ah! *I* knew not, but *He* knew! He knew all that awaited thee, both the trials and thine own weakness; and He has provided for those needs. See them in the order that God has put them.

Poor pilgrim! would it not encourage thee if thou knewest that thou hadst One in that place to which thou art traveling, to intercede for thee, to obtain supplies of grace for thee, to represent thee there; and One, too, who had traveled the very same path Himself, and knew all the ins and outs of the road, its roughness, its weariness, the wily and fierce enemies too? Well, *thou hast!* He is Jesus, the Son of God. (iv. 14.)

“ I journey through a desert drear and wild,
Yet is my heart by such sweet thoughts beguiled,
Of Him on whom I lean—my strength and stay—
I can forget the sorrows of the way.”

Thoughts of His sojourn in this vale of tears!
 The tale of love unfolded in those years
 Of sinners suffering and patient grace,
 I love, again, and yet again, to trace."

And another provision thou hast, too—a throne of grace (iv. 16), unto which thou art invited to come boldly to obtain; mark that, my soul, He does not invite thee to come for a hope and, perchance, get disappointed, but to "obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." What a gracious provision is this! Thou canst thyself go to that throne, in all thy utter weakness, yet strengthened by the thought of the intercession of the Son of God, and there pour out all thy wants into the ears of the Father Himself, knowing that thou wilt meet with a gracious reception (it is the throne of *grace*), for there is One on His right hand, who is the measure of His sympathy for thee—Jesus.

Moreover, thou hast also a place of worship, for thou art a worshipper; thy conscience being purged by the blood of Jesus (ix. 14), thou hast boldness to enter into that foreshadowed in the tabernacle—"the holiest" (x. 19). For though thou art in the wilderness, thy place of worship is not. Though thou art walking through the same dreary scene that He walked through, thy hope, the anchor of the soul, is cast whither He thy Forerunner has entered—"within the veil" (vi. 19). And then, realizing what that one perfect sacrifice has done for thee, perfected thee forever (x. 14), canst worship. Oh! what a pilgrimage is this! Methinks, this is the sweetest of all the wilderness provisions. Oh, what a blessed thing it is, forgetting all the cares of the desert, to lift up the heart into the presence of God, and, knowing that all sin, all that hindered fellowship with Him, has been removed, to worship!

"Lamb of God, through Thee we enter
 Inside the veil.
 Cleansed by Thee, we boldly venture
 Inside the veil.
 Not a stain; a new creation;
 Our's is such a full salvation;
 Low we bow in adoration

Inside the veil."

And then the assembly. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." Here is another wonderfully

blessed provision for the poor pilgrim. I worship in union with fellow pilgrims. Gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus, at His table, remembering Him, keeping His word, and not denying His Name, as saints, we worship. What the ark of the testimony was to the Israelites while journeying through the wilderness, the testimony of the Lord is to us. Round it they encamped, before and behind it they marched; it was always their centre (Num. iii. 17). Service is sweet, but sweeter, sweeter still is it, to gather round the Person of the Lord and give Him the heart's adoration for all that He has done, and for all He is!

And—still further grace—finally, the blessed hope of soon seeing HIMSELF! “For yet a very, very little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” I may not have to run the whole race-course of faith, as He and others have done, going right to death, I may meet Him. Any moment He may come. “Surely I come quickly,” are His last words to His church; and thus He makes that the Hope of the poor wayfarer. Think not of a long, long, weary journey. Thy journey may end to-night! To-morrow may see thee and Him in glory!

“Thoughts of His coming! For that joyful day
In patient hope I watch, and wait, and pray;
The dawn draws nigh, the midnight shadows flee,
And what a sunrise will that advent be!

“Thus while I journey on, my Lord to meet,
My thoughts and meditations are so sweet
Of Him on whom I lean—my strength, my stay—
I can forget the sorrows of the way.”

But now let me turn my eyes to that which is not temporary as all these wilderness things, however blessed they may be, are; and by contrast with them I may learn the distinction between being a pilgrim in the wilderness, and a resident in the land.

Turning to the book of “the land”—Ephesians, I see, not a *promise* of rest, as in Hebrews, coupled with the exhortation, “let us labor therefore to enter into that rest;” but a statement of full present blessing and present entrance into “heavenly places.” “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who *hath* blessed us with *all* spiritual blessings in heavenly places [rather, the *heavenlies*] in Christ;” and again, “and *hath*

raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." So here, instead of looking forward to that which shall be the end of my journey, I look back to the resurrection of Christ and see that, in Him, I am even now in heaven.

Also, in Hebrews, whether I ever enter into rest, is dependent on my faith, (which is sustained by the Lord, of course, "He is able also to save them to the end that come unto God by Him,") still, it depends upon my holding out; therefore it is "unto them that look for Him will He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." i. e., actual, bodily salvation. But in Ephesians it is all settled from the first: "according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."

There is one thing that I have in Hebrews, have already in present possession, and that is (it may sound paradoxical)—perfection. I have perfection as to my conscience (ix. 9, 14); perfection as to my sanctification (x. 10), and this a perpetual perfection (x. 14), all resting on the perfect atonement of Christ. The great *past* thing in Hebrews is, purgation of sins (i. 3): in Ephesians, resurrection (i. 1:)-21).

Again, in Hebrews, Jesus is my *Forerunner* (vi. 20), whom I follow in the same path of faith, keeping my eye on Him (xii. 1, 2.) But in Ephesians, I have entered *with* Him, "raised us up together, and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (ii. 6).

Again, instead of having, as in Hebrews, One there for me (ix. 24), in Ephesians I am *in* the One that is there. (i. 3, 5, &c).

Again, we have nothing of blood-purged worshippers, nor of the Lord's coming, in Ephesians. To speak of such things there, would be inconsistent with the truth of being His body. And one thing that causes the heart to bow in reverence to the word is, its wonderful harmony. The sceptic says that there are so many contradictions in the Bible that he cannot understand it; the believer wonders, each day, as he discovers some new mark of its wonderful consistency.

How blessed all this is! How wonderful to think that I, poor thing as I am, even now, am one with Christ in heaven. And what is it that forms the connecting link between me and Him, how is all this made true of me, down here, what is the *vitality* that joins me to Him? The Spirit. "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."

And He is the intelligence by which alone we can know these things. The mind of man cannot understand *these* things. A man can understand what I mean if I tell him that I am on my road to heaven, but to tell him that I am in heaven now, is quite beyond that of which he can form any conception.

C. H. B.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

"THE EVERLASTING ARMS."

Deut. xxxiii. 27.

Oh, strong the arms that take me up!
How wonderful the plan!
My Father's heart is all outpoured,
In Jesus, "Son of Man."

He, in the very "form of God,"
Yet standing by my side,
Has told out all my Father's heart,
And for my sin has died.

He, from the highest glory stoop'd—
"A man of sorrows" came:
And in the very "dust of death,"
My substitute became.

He, veiled in human flesh once stood
At Pilate's judgment seat;
And on the cross, condemned, He hung;
My sacrifice complete.

He, was the very "life" from God,
Took death, in love to me;
And from death's dark domain, He brought
Up life's full liberty.

He, thus to do his Father's will,
Laid all His glory by;
And then, "the Son of Man" became,
That I might reign on high.

He, to the lowest depths went down,
 My thankless heart to fill ;
 And from those depths has borne me up
 " To joys unspeakable."

He meets my need while here below ;
 He keeps my place up there ;
 In peace and righteousness complete,
 My mansion to prepare.

He is my Advocate, to call
 Me back whene'er I miss ;
 And to my Father's arms I'm brought,
 My wand'rings to confess.

I nestle like a little child,
 My love I cannot find ;
 But His ~~His~~ matchless love untold,
 His ~~arms~~ have proved it mine.

I rest in His own love, and wait
 His glory full to see ;
 And find, like Mary at His feet,
 The place of joy for me.

I have no fears of future ill,
 My path *so short* may be ;
 I wait a change, not death, when I
 My coming Lord, shall see.

My expectation hence shall be
 " In twinkling of an eye,"
 To leave my tent on earth, and see
 My Father's house on high !

O. E. H.

A FEW WORDS ON REV. I.-V.

There is the watch tower, and there is the sanctuary. Security (under God) is to be had in each. If we be watchful, as those who trim the lamps by night and have the eye out by day, marking the approaches of the enemy from all quarters, and keep ourselves girded and wakeful, lest we should be surprised, we shall be safe; as the Lord says, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

If we be within, in the joy and liberty of His presence, assured of His love, happy in communion with Him, hopeful of His coming glory, and abide in the temper and confidence of dear children, we are in a sanctuary,

and we are safe—of course, under God, or by His blessing. There is then, the safety of the watch tower, and the safety of the sanctuary. And do we not see different saints, characteristically, in these different positions? Are not some fearful of evil, fearful of involving their consciences and bringing trouble on their souls, careful lest they offend? Such are on the watch tower outside. But there are others, more simple, more happy, more like children, who rather deal with God in relationship, and love His presence. Such are in the sanctuary within; and *taste* security, as well as have it. These last are the *proper type* of saints in this age. They walk in the power of that "faith" which towards God "worketh by love"—for they have apprehended God's love, the great and blessed secret. Let us consider it for a little.

There are several lights in which we can read God's love.

It is the *divine nature*, "God is love."

But this divine nature, God Himself, has come forth into this world to "commend" itself. A world of sinners was suited to such display or commendation, for it called for unmeasured sacrifice or surrender on the part of love or of God. And this sacrifice was rendered. He died for us. In His own person, having been made flesh to that end, He took the penalty of the sin we had committed. This great commendation of Himself, or of love, by God in a world of sinners, is set out in Rev. v.

And I ask, could any thing exceed this? Would it be possible for God to display His nature, which is love, beyond this, that He sustained in Himself the penalty which our rebellion against Him had incurred? Let such a fact answer. Does it not vindicate the declaration, "God is love?"

But, again. The same love has made another show or commendation of itself in the cause of the elect, as well as in the behalf of sinners. This we read in Eph. ii. 4-6. For His great love wherewith He loved them, having quickened them, He has seated them with the Beloved Himself in heavenly places.

Could He have taken counsel in the cause of the saints higher and richer than this? What more could be done? So that, if I inquire what God Himself is, the answer I get is that He is love; and if I inquire what this love

has done for sinners, the answer I get is, that it has gone through to the extremest point that was possible, in serving them; and if I inquire again, what this love has done for the saints, the answer I get is, that it has gone through to the extremest point that was possible, in making them blessed.

Thus, the declaration "God is love" stands attested. God has indeed shown Himself to be such. Paul rejoiced in this love—it formed the character of his life (Gal. ii. 20. 21). He triumphed in it, challenging all enemies because of it (Rom. viii. 34-39). The church celebrates it (Rev. i. 5, 6), and this chapter I would look at more particularly, I mean Rev. i.

The saints show how deeply they had treasured up their first lesson. New discoveries are made of Christ to them. He is brought before them in characters of glory that were, at least, not so familiar—"The faithful witness," and the "Prince of the Kings of the Earth." They do not gainsay or hesitate, but still they bring forth what was the more intimate inmate of their spirit, and celebrate Him as the One "who had loved them, and washed them from their sins in His own blood."

And in the progress of the chapter, we may say the same of *Him*. As the saints show, that they held deeply in their hearts, the earliest lesson which they had learned of Him, and (learn they what further they may) that this was uppermost, and should be their subject; so He (let Him come forth in what characters of glory He may) will let them know that He was to them still what He had ever been; the first place which He took in relation to them, He was still holding and filling as fresh and full for their blessing and salvation as ever.

He appears to John in judicial glory, as Judge, not of the world but of the churches. This was new and overwhelming. Had it been as Judge of the world, John might have borne it, for he had already learned and taught that "we have boldness in the day of judgment." But the Son of Man standing among the candlesticks in judicial glory as One who was challenging the churches, this was *new*, this was a fresh "revelation of Jesus Christ," and John is unprepared for it.

He falls down as one dead at the feet of this Judge. He could no more stand this, than Isaiah could stand the

same glory in the days of Israel, when Christ was about to judge His people then, as He is about to judge the churches now (Isaiah vi).

John falls at His feet as dead; and then it is, that his Lord lets him know that there was no fear or danger to His saint personally: however He might have to remove candlesticks, or challenge the churches, yet to the poor sinner who believed in Him and made Him all His salvation, as John did, He was the unchanged, unchangeable Jesus, the dead and risen One, who had only words of comfort, and grace, and deliverance, for such as John.

Simple and precious this is. If the saints let us know in this chapter that they held fast their first, best lesson about their Jesus, He now lets us know that He equally holds fast His first and most blessed, most gracious relationship to them. They have learned His love and redemption, and mean never to forget it; He has revealed His self-sacrificing salvation of poor sinners, and He means never to forego it.

Chapters ii., iii. result from this. They are the fruits of the Lord having come down to stand in judicial glory among the candlesticks on the earth. They are His messages to these candlesticks, or churches, in that character. I say no more of them here.

In chapter iv. 1, heaven is opened. "A door was opened in heaven." This is significant—for heaven is about to be displayed in a new character.

The sight which faith gets of heaven *now* is of a sanctuary of peace, where the High Priest of our profession having accomplished the purging of our sins, is ever living to make intercession for us. It is thus a sanctuary of peace, witnessing peace already made, and peace perpetually maintained.

And with peace, there is grace there, help ready to be ministered in every time of need (Heb. iv. 14–16). This is the heaven, which faith now looks up to, and enjoys—the type of which was the tabernacle which Aaron entered.

But the heaven of the ascended Lord, which the tabernacle of Aaron typified, and which the Epistle to the Hebrews opens to us, is not the heaven which is now about to be seen in the Book of the Apocalypse.

Therefore we read how at the outset, in Rev. iv. 1, "a

door was opened in heaven." Those, in whose behalf heaven had been a sanctuary of peace, are now in this apocalyptic heaven seen as glorified. They are not ministered to by the provisions of that sanctuary of peace, the heaven of Heb. iv., but they are seated on thrones in the heaven of judicial glory. In some unnoticed moment between the times of chapter iii. and chapter iv., they have been translated, in readiness to be the companions of their Lord who is now about to execute judgment on the corrupters of the earth, and then to take the Kingdom.

They had already received promises to such effect—promises that they should be with the Lord in each of these actions, judging and reigning (see Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 29; Rev. ii. 26, 27). Here, therefore, they are witnesses of the faithfulness of the Lord to these promises, as in chapter i., we saw the faithfulness of the Lord in another character—faithful *there*, to what He had already done for John as a sinner, to what He already was to John: faithful *here* to what He had already promised His saints they should be with Him and in Him.

Then in chapter v. the Lamb takes the Book and opens its seals. This is also very significant.

The Book itself is the Title-deed of the Inheritance, of which Jesus is about to possess Himself. The seals of it enclose those judgments which are to be poured out on the scene of corruption here on earth, or to be executed on those who have been guilty of those corruptions—the things which offend, and the people who do iniquity (Matt. xiii. 41), and whose presence hinders the manifestation of the Inheritance or kingdom.

This is a great sight to see to—the Lamb taking the Book, and opening the seals of it. As the *atoning* One, the One who had by His blood made reconciliation, the Lord has gained title to the Inheritance. It is in that character, therefore, He takes the Book.

As the *rejected* One, cast out by the confederate elements of the world, high and low, civil and ecclesiastical, Jew and Gentile, He judges. It is in that character, therefore He opens the seals.

Consequently, the name which He commonly bears in the course of this Book, that of "the Lamb," ex

presses Him both as the *atoning* One and as the *rejected* One.

And further—

The Inheritance is both a *purchased* and a *delivered* thing. A price has been paid for it, and power will be exercised for it. Jesus is both the Purchaser and the Deliverer of it. He paid the price of His precious blood for it to God—and in due time He will deliver it, by power, out of the hand of the Usurpers and Corrupters of it.

And that day will be the day of the *redemption* of the *purchased* possession (Eph. i. 14). J. G. B.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF SERVICE.

“We then as co-workers with Him.”

These words open up to us a field in which I am but a learner myself; but with the assurance that there is a blessed sweetness in them, I offer a few suggestions to my brethren.

The intimate connection between the state of the soul and service, I have before spoken of (*page 49*), and here, therefore, I do not speak of the *power* of service, but, of the nature of it.

Let us seek to enter into God's thoughts about service, let us serve as He desires us to, *i. e.*, let us serve in fellowship with Him.

You may say, “Oh, the servant is nothing, it is the word He gives, *he* is only an instrument for God to use or not, as He chooses.” That is true, but it is not going very far, for, in that sense, Balaam's ass was a servant, and surely, my brother, you covet a more intelligent service than that. So, also, *as a tool* in God's hands, the kings of Babylon, Egypt, &c., were servants. But surely the servant of God in this time is called to a higher plane of service than that! Higher, too, far higher, than that on which the Old Testament prophets served, for they spoke not knowing “what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify,” but *we*, as those to whom the Lord has shown His dealings, both in the past, and the things that are now, and the things that shall be after these! And though so many,

alas, fail of this, it is yet the place, and the only place, for a real servant to take.

As far as fellowship with man is concerned, the path of true service is a lonely one; but, in another sense, the moment it becomes lonely it is not service. To be alone is nothing, if I am not alone *with God*. But being in fellowship with God regarding my service (or, rather, *He* being in fellowship with me regarding *His* service), I expect, and am expected to know His mind regarding those to whom I minister.

Thus, if it be to the saints, I look that the Lord will lay upon my heart, and give me to discern the needs of saints; that each conscience may be reached, and every word given in its due season; reproof when reproof is needed, comfort when that is needed, instruction, &c. when and where each is needed. If I fail in this (fellowship) my ministry will probably be, either building up self in me, or in them. How beautifully we find doctrine and exhortation connected in the Epistles! And while I do not believe in scolding, I neither believe in sewing pillows to arm holes. Knowledge is nothing if it does not produce love. Love is the test as to whether the heart has been opened to receive the knowledge given. Who ever spoke with such grace to the saints as Paul? and yet how his heart *yearned* over them, being jealous for them lest they should be beguiled and fail as to their walk. "Now *we live if ye stand fast in the Lord.*" And mark how the Lord, while unfolding the activity of His own love to His disciples (John xiv., xv.) says, "If ye love me keep my commandments" (six times).

And if my ministry is to sinners, how important it is to have the mind of God regarding them, their state and destination; the reality of the love of God in giving up His Son; the completeness of the atonement; the freeness of the offer; the simplicity of faith, &c., or that one can say in truth "as though *God* did beseech you *by us.*"

As to the spirit in which service is to be conducted see Ps. cxxvi. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Oh, for the tears! Am I saying too

much, when I say, that service, whether to the church or to the world, is no service, if not done in the spirit of weeping? Did not He, the Perfect One, sow in tears, when He took the bitter cup in the garden? Will He not reap in joy? He has already in anticipation. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." And was not Paul's ministry especially one of tears?

But why weep? I weep in fellowship with the Lord, to see the ruin around; because the unity of the Spirit, is not kept in the uniting bond of peace; because He is dishonored and the souls of the saints therefore impoverished; because Laodicea is rapidly becoming more Laodicean; and I weep because He is forgotten. They can fast for the world, but they fast not because *He* is not here; some thing has compensated for His absence, His coming is not their hope; they are not waiting for Him.

But surely, a sense of the ruin stirs up to activity. I am in fellowship with His love to the saints, as well as in His sorrow over them. So, "he that *goeth forth* and weepeth." The love of Christ constrains to this, and, conscious that I bear "precious seed," I seek to sow it in the plowed heart; conscious that there is a balm in Gilcad, I seek to heal the broken-hearted; conscious that I bear wine that can indeed make glad the heart of man, in unison with the heart of God, I seek to give it; conscious, in short, of the exceeding riches of Christ, to meet and develop every need, to give wisdom in the midst of folly, strength in the midst of weakness, joy in the midst of sorrow, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear, I must "go forth."

If we labor thus, will it be in vain? Oh, no! the sower shall "doubtless"—precious word—the seed without doubt will find some good ground and bear fruit—"shall doubtless come *again*." If He is *sent forth* by the Master, he shall, without doubt, appear again in His presence "with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." And thus the heart will be exercised in the "coming again," as well as in the sowing. One is as unselfish as the other. I weep over saints, in fellowship with the Lord, and in like manner I rejoice over them. I bring back the sheaves to the One who sent me forth with the precious seed. The seed was His; the fruit is His. Just

as the tears were His, and the power of service His ("yet not I but the grace of God which was with me"). "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?"

I will close these few rambling remarks by referring to the expression in Ps. cxxiii., "as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their master." The eye betokens the intelligence, "the light of the body is the eye." I should have spiritual intelligence to catch the signal of the hand of the Divine Master, and the hand being the symbol of work. I close with the thought with which I commenced, "co-workers with God." Let me watch what He is doing, and thus *labor with Him*. If my eye is thus watching *His* hand, what do I care for what man is doing? Man is doing the great things (apparently), building up the "great house," but *His* hand is stretched forth over the "little flock," and I follow that signal.

Finally, if we labor with Him, He *will* labor with us. The disciples went forth to work at His command (Mark xvi.) and He did not fail to work with them. "The Lord working with them."

C. H. B.

THE GLORIES OF THE CROSS.

There is a glory in the cross of Christ which eternity only will express to us. In fact, the cross is a constellation of glories. It connects itself with God, his throne, character and glory; and at the same time reaches down to the guiltiest sinner, in all its saving power. The cross is that which enables God, in righteousness, to carry out all His purposes of grace and love. It is the grand centre of all His ways and operations. God can never forget the cross. The sinner who slights it, slights the glory of God, and judgment must consequently follow.

Behold His estimate of it, in that He has raised the One who died there to the pinnacle of glory, and set Him as man at the right hand of His majesty on high! Once the blessed Son of God expired in ignominy on the accursed tree. He could step no further down; "death, even the death of the cross" was as far as He could go. But God has raised Him up therefrom by His power and glory. He now occupies the highest place in heaven.

As man He is there, God's supreme delight, the mighty accomplisher of redemption, the glorious Head of the church. Who can span, can measure the distance from the depths of the cross, to that pinnacle of glory where He now is? God alone can. Therein is God's estimate of the cross told out. Measure that distance and you know the estimate of God, and His appreciation of His Son.

If the flaming sword which turned every way kept man from the "tree of life," the cross could open the way of life to poor outcast man. But how? By the sword being bathed in the very person of Him who hung there! If the fiery law given on Mount Sinai could only make the sinner's sin, transgression, and prove to be the ministration of death and condemnation to them to whom it was given; the cross could meet the difficulty, could bear its curse, establish its authority, and, at the same time, deliver the sinner from its iron grasp. Did infinite justice grasp the sword of judgment? Did dark frowns gather about its mighty brow? Did the throne of heaven raise its voice to enforce its righteous claims? Did the nature, character and glory of God, who sat upon it, demand a vindication with respect to man's sin and guilt? Then the cross in all its infinite ability could sheathe the sword of infinite justice, dissipate the frowns from its brow; meet the claims of the throne of heaven; and vindicate the nature, character and glory of the eternal God who sat thereon. But how? By the atoning for, and the eternal putting away of sin, by the offering up of the infinite sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ! Blessed, wondrous fact! Oh, who can tell out the glories of the cross, the worthiness of the One who died there? The infinite love, wisdom, justice and glory of God himself, all find an expression there. Every attribute of His eternal being is seen in perfect harmony with all the others there.

It was the grand solution of the question of good and evil. It was the glorifying of God in every possible way with respect to sin, and its dreadful results. But what shall we say of its results? Infinite, immeasurable, eternal are they! The infinite mind of God alone can comprehend the results of that wondrous cross. Individually, we are but an atom in the infinite results of the

same. They are as a mighty ocean without a bottom and without a shore. Glory upon glory is found there, undying, fadeless, changeless, eternal glories shine out there from.

Shall we speak of Old Testament saints, or the church of the living God? Shall we with the eye of faith, behold the happy tribes of Israel gathered and blessed in their own land in the bright millennial days that are coming, and the surrounding nations all owning the blessedness of the swaying of the righteous sceptre of Him whose right it is thus to reign? Yea, shall we behold the passing away of the first heaven and the first earth, and the establishment of the new heaven and the new earth, and the introduction of that state of eternal peace and glory, wherein dwells righteousness, and wherein God is all in all? Shall we think with adoring hearts of all this? It is our privilege thus to contemplate. But it is all the wondrous, infinite and eternal results of the cross of Christ. It has secured God's glory in thus being the ground of the blessed fulfillment of all His plans and counsels.

May we learn to prize the cross, to rise up in some feeble measure, unto God's thoughts about it, and exult in the thought of the glory that surrounds the One who died there. God sees us in Him there. Wondrous, stupendous thought! Are our own hearts alive to this, that we are enwrapped in Him, hid in Him, accepted in Him, and destined to shine in the glory of God with Him, to the eternal glory of God and His grace? May the wondrous thought quicken our steps to do His will, while we wait for Him, whom having not seen we love; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

E. A.

FRAGMENTS.

He who takes up Christ's cross with courage, shall find it such a burden as are wings to a bird, or sails to a ship.

This is a sure rule; God never takes any thing from his people, but He gives them something better in the stead of it.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

3. "W. R. B., Lowell, Mich."—The word of comfort and encouragement in Rev. ii. 10, is given to the angel of the church, and to the church itself, in Smyrna, as meeting their peculiar circumstances. They were to have persecution ten days—the ten pagan persecutions of the early christian days, in Rome—wherein martyrs were multiplied. In view of death they were told to be faithful, holding fast the truth, and the "crown of life" was held out before them as a reward. This is not the same as the life which is given through faith in Jesus Christ. We are not looking for death, but for the coming of the Lord, and to be caught up unto Him; but if such circumstances should be ours, that we should be brought to the alternative of denying Him, or of death by violence, this would apply to us. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life"—the victor's crown. How vivid the contrast—man gives death, He a crown of life. Notice, too, though in Ephesus they had been unfaithful to Him, leaving first love, He cannot be unfaithful to them, and when persecution comes, He utters no word of blame, but sweet encouragement.

4. "E. G. T., Providence, R. I.," suggests the following: "In the lesson concerning David's anointing, is there not special force in God telling Samuel to take a heifer for the sacrifice? I see no reference to this in the Notes in SOUND WORDS. But, in Deut. xxi., the heifer is presented as a sacrifice, which signifies that the offerers are guiltless of the murder, or blood of the man found dead, and throw the judgment back on God. Samuel's act of anointing David was high treason, while Saul lived. Did not the heifer say, 'I am innocent, God takes the responsibility.' And was not that animal named for that specific purpose?" The question is left for the present, from lack of room, so that any who have light on the matter may give it. Only this may be said, that as Saul's reign had polluted the whole people and the land, a sacrifice of blood shedding was necessary before anointing a new king. Saul was man's, and David God's, king. In fact, and in type, he must be introduced by blood. The heifer was distinctly used as the offering for cleansing from defilement, the ashes of the red heifer being kept for that purpose. Num. xix.

5. "G. P. B., Jacksonville, Fla."—"Does faith of Jesus Christ mean the same as faith in Him, as Rom. iii. 22, and Gal. ii. 16, iii. 22?" There is the difference that there is between the place you are in, and the getting into the place. "The faith of Christ" is the new ground or place, instead of the old one, which in Rom. iii. 20, is "the deeds of the law." They are contrasted again in ver. 27. When the action in our own heart is spoken of, as to how we get this, it is faith in (v. 25). It is the same in Gal. iii. 16. In iii. 22 the contrast is with "the law" (vv. 12, 19, 21, &c.). In v. 28, "before faith came" does not mean our believing, but that ground of God's dealing. The law was "added for the sake of transgression," then it was superseded by "faith," not the subjective exercise in the heart, but the new ground. In v. 26, we get the subjective exercise and become children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

THE ACTS.

Chapters iii.-iv. 31.

Chapter iii. In this chapter three is a most precious offer of grace to poor, lost Israel, illustrated practically, at first by the healing of a lame man, and then proposed through the apostle Peter, to the whole nation.

The lame man was a testimony of their failure, and the judgment of God, who had said (Ex. xv. 26), "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of Jehovah thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians, for I am Jehovah that healeth thee." Under this title—Jehovah-Rophi—the Healer, He was to abide with them. But if they disobeyed, then all these diseases were to come upon them (Deut. xxviii). Lying there at the gate of the temple, the Beautiful gate, as it was called, he betokened their religiousness and their misery. What was all their worship worth, when a man lame from his birth, told out their moral condition? This word "beautiful" was the very one that Christ used when describing their leaders, as like unto whited sepulchres that appear beautiful outwardly, but are full of all uncleanness. And it is the same word "beautiful" that describes the feet of them that bring good tidings to Israel in this low condition as well.

It was a day of abounding grace to Jerusalem. In the full and rich tenderness of His heart, God was returning to them, taking up with joy the work of healing, coming according to Himself. It is wonderful to notice this in His dealings with this people. As soon as Christ came, He went about giving health and joy, meeting the whole case of sorrow and sin, till He was rejected. And now, in the same way, the Holy Spirit entered with alacrity, as if glad to return to them. Where God is, He must act as God, and before Him the lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing (Isa. xxxv).

As the blind man of John ix., this one sat in his confessed helplessness. They were both fully accepting their condition, for it was from their birth. They had not been injured by disease or accident. They could be cured; and instead of efforts to get cured, they simply sat

and begged, as blind and as lame. They had never had the sense of sight, on the one hand; or the ability to walk, on the other. This one was carried daily, for he was without strength. As the man at the pool, in John v., who was equally helpless, proved so by thirty eight years hoping without result. In the latter there was rather the expression of Israel's and man's condition. tested by the law, for by it was the knowledge of sins; in the former (Acts iii.) it was the utterly abandoned condition. He had never had the use of his limbs. It was "from his mother's womb." In John v., Christ was come unto His own. Was there anything for Him? In Acts iii., the cross demonstrated that there was not, and had put them on the ground of utter condemnation. "Now is the judgment of the world." It was not that the man had been lame for so many years, having once walked; but he never knew what it was to walk.

And it was not "silver and gold" that were proposed now, for these but kept him along, on the old ground. He had never thought of anything else than remaining without the power to walk, and being supported in that condition. But "such as I have" meets the case richly and thoroughly. "The name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene," had become everything now. And he who had never learned the first lesson in walking, at the mention of that name, through faith in it, at once walks and leaps, and enters with Peter and John into the temple, praising God; and all the people saw him. It is all a beautiful pledge and rehearsal of that day of visitation for Israel, when the ransomed of Jehovah shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads (Isa. xxxv. 10).

This miracle became at once a subject of intense interest to all who knew him; and, upon their assembling, gave the apostle the opportunity of proclaiming Christ to them (v. 12). Why should they marvel at this, or think that it was by their own personal power or godliness that the apostles had made this man walk? It was God, in grace, the God of their own scriptures, of their fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who had now "glorified His Servant Jesus." (It is not "Son;" the declaration of Jesus Christ as "the Son of God," was not given until Paul preached (ix. 20), and was brought out as the gospel to

the world, both Jew and Gentile. The more thoroughly man rejected Christ, the more fully God maintained and revealed His glory; but this is distinctively a Jewish sermon, God acting in His Servant, according to His promise of blessing to Israel that had destroyed herself.) They had even delivered Him up and denied Him—the Holy One and Just—and desired a murderer to be granted, and had killed the Prince of Life. What then? God had raised Him from the dead, and His name, through faith, had made this man “strong,” had given him “perfect soundness.” What grace! He was willing to return, instead of miserably destroying them. Indeed he *had* returned, and now that He may show mercy, puts them on the ground of ignorance, in slaying Jesus, and introduces His own counsels in the sufferings of Christ.

In Joshua xx. the cities of refuge were provided for the one who, though he had slain a man, had done it unwittingly, and his life was passed away from his home, for he had defiled the land by the blood; but when the high-priest died he was to return. And this prefigured God's way of dealing with those who had slain Jesus. Was it done unwittingly or of malice? He offers them the place of ignorance, even according to the intercession of Christ, “Father forgive them, for they *know not what they do.*” To reject it, is to crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put **Him** to an open shame, to become wilful murderers, to whom judgment must be meted out. It is a day of mercy, the opening anew of offers and pleadings according to His own heart, for it had apparently closed in John xii. 37, while Christ was upon the earth as it does again in Acts xxviii. 25–29. in the day of the Holy Spirit. For Jerusalem it closed with Stephen's address, where the verdict was, that they *always resisted* the Holy Spirit. And all the way through “The Acts” we find the word going to the Jew first with the dread alternative, as in xiii. 40, 41, of despising and *perishing*. What a plea, He who is determined to bless, makes, when the One found slain in their land, is not laid to their charge, but is the fulfillment of His own promise, and that He is now prepared to fulfill still others connected with their glory.

“Repent ye *therefore*, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that the times of refreshing

may come from the presence of the Lord, and He may send Jesus Christ, who was foreordained for you, whom heaven must indeed receive, until the times of the restitution of all things which God hath spoken, by the mouth of His holy prophets, since the world began." It was a moment of infinite solemnity. The blessings and glories, so long held before them, the establishment of the kingdom in righteousness, and their restoration to more than Solomon's splendor, was proposed to them, but proposed through the King whom they had crucified, whom God had raised up again. It was an offer not only to those who were "pricked in the heart," as in chapter ii., but to all the Jews. It was like the offer of John the Baptist, with the additional fact that He whom John pointed out had been crucified and raised up, and the glories could follow the sufferings of Christ, as attested by all the prophets. "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of *these days*."

And now the whole matter is before them, to take the ground of *ignorance* or *wilfulness* in regard to the death of Christ, to accept the Prophet foretold by Moses, or to be destroyed by refusing. It was their last opportunity, after centuries of repeated trial. It was the full invitation to the feast which, being refused, none of those who were bidden shall *taste* of it. (But God has reserved the privilege of still going to them in the end, declaring the gospel of the kingdom, and, *now*, "through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles." In that day that is coming, He will write His law in their hearts, and restore them to their land in the full joy and grace of His heart.)

Here God fully vindicates His own name, offering to this nation, first, all that had been promised, as it is said, "unto you first, God having raised up His Servant, Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." And when they shall say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," this One will come in all blessing. We see, therefore, that this is not a revelation of Jesus as Son of God, nor Head of the church, It is not what is going on now while He is seated at the right hand of God in heaven; but while He was waiting to be gracious to Israel.

Chapter iv. To this generous and gracious offer the

answer is given, not at the moment, in the heat of excitement, by the rude, irresponsible and ignorant multitude; but, as we shall see, by the rulers of the people, those who stood officially for them: and that, deliberately, and finally. While they were yet speaking, the priests and captains of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached by Jesus, the resurrection from among the dead."

A remnant received the word, and the number of the saved became about five thousand. It is only in the early preaching among the Jews that the Holy Spirit gives us the numbers of believers, and these by thousands (see also chap. **v** 40), a millennial number, as showing the peculiar character and meaning of the work at first among them, as *such*, until they were put on a common ground of being children of wrath, even as others; and the church, instead of restoration, becomes dispensationally, the matter in hand. Everything marks the hearty and full invitation, and opportunity for the nation, as *such*.

But, on the morrow, with full time to look into it coolly, the rulers and priests and high-priest, are gathered in council, and setting the apostles in the midst, they demand by what authority this thing was done. Peter, expressly by the Holy Spirit, makes answer that it was by the name of Jesus Christ whom they had crucified, whom God raised from the dead, that this man stood before them whole. It was bringing the matter at issue between God and them. He had made the stone which they had rejected, the head of the corner. God's building is solely upon Him. And salvation is alone in Him, and no other name is given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved. Everywhere and always He is the One, and it is salvation that is to be found. Even then they could take it; their own prophets told of this stone.

The miracle of healing is fully explained. They are recognized as having been with Jesus, and the man stood there sound before all. What could be said to gainsay or weaken their explanation of it? They were not of the schools of learning, they were unlearned and ignorant men; the power must be outside themselves.

And God tells us what happened in the secret chamber, their acknowledgment that they were not able to deny it, but their wilful refusal to accept it. So they gave them this sweeping charge, not to sound aloud, or teach in the name of Jesus. It was their answer to the rich grace of God that plead with them to avert judgment. The apostles had but one reply to this commandment, an appeal really to the conscience of the rulers, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." The rulers, instead of being interpreters of the mind of God to the people, are found in opposition to it.

And now we see (v. 25) a separation from the people, a withdrawing from those upon whom the judgment of God must come; and the apostles "went to their own company." Rehearsing what the chief-priests had said unto them, they all lifted up their voice with one accord to God, appealing to Him as SOVEREIGN (*Ἰεοπότης*; see 2 Pet. ii. 1, Jude 4), maker of heaven, earth and sea, for rebellion against His *authority* was made by the leaders of the Jews. And this was accomplishing what was spoken in the second Psalm. "Why do the nations rage and the people imagine a vain thing, &c.?" But how terrible to find the chosen Israel classed among the nations now taking sides with them. Who would have thought that this Psalm could have meant them? But, "Of a truth, against Thy Holy Servant Jesus whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the nations and the people of Israel were gathered together." The whole world had rejected Him; and now Israel is turning away with threatenings, and commanding that His name shall not be mentioned.

But the whole assembly were now cast simply on His grace and power, and so asked, "Grant unto Thy servants that with all boldness they may speak Thy word, by stretching forth Thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy Servant Jesus."

And God answered, "The place was shaken where they were assembled together and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and spake the word of God with boldness."

MEDITATIONS ON SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

THE PORCH.

"And the porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits was the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house; and ten cubits was the breadth thereof before the house" (1 Kings vi. 3.)

"And the porch that was in the front of the house, the length of it was according to the breadth of the house, twenty cubits, and the height was an hundred and twenty; and he overlaid it within with pure gold:....Also he made before the house two pillars of thirty and five cubits high, and the chapter that was on the top of each of them was five cubits. And he made chains, as in the oracle, and put them on the heads of the pillars; and made an hundred pomegranates, and put them on the chains. And he reared up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand, and the other on the left; and called the name of that on the right hand Jachin, and the name of that on the left Boaz" (2 Chron. iii. 4, 15-17.)

And now I am called upon to fix my eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ in all the glories He has as Head of "the church which is His body," for that is what the Spirit has pictured here.

I have seen the force of the numerals twelve and two, let me now consider the use that the Holy Spirit makes of the numbers five and seven.

There is an almost entire absence of the number seven, both in the tabernacle and in the temple, but a conspicuous use of the number five. The former, I see, signifies *perfection*, the latter, *weakness*.

"The law made nothing perfect," neither are the heavenly things, of which we have the shadows in the tabernacle, perfect, for they are but for a time; so we are not surprised to find an absence of seven in the dimensions of the tabernacle, which were thirty by ten by ten cubits, and the court one hundred by fifty cubits, all of which are divisible by five, none by seven. The same is observed in the dimensions of the house, which were sixty by twenty by twenty cubits, *but* add the breadth of the porch, which, though distinct from the house, was yet part of it, and we have seventy cubits for the entire length, thus getting the perfect number, seven; but you get it by adding the porch to the house, by neither separately. Thus the porch was the head of the house, even as Christ is Head of "the church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." What would a

body be without a head, and what would a head be without a body? "Ye are complete in Him."

As to the number six, it is the number which stops just *short* of perfection. It appears to be man's number. The seventh day is the Sabbath." Six days for man, the seventh for the Lord, typical of the millennial age of peace and rest. The number of the beast (Rev. xiii. 18,) is a triple six, and we are told it is "*the number of a man,*" and he doubtless will go to the greatest length that man ever reached to; doubtless, he will be the smartest man that ever lived, and the most daringly impious, "who opposeth and exalteth himself *above* all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he *as* God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. ii. 4). But in the very height of his folly and wickedness, he will be cut off by that Perfect One, whose name he will dare to usurp.

And upon that Blessed One I would now fix my earnest gaze. We have but three things told us of this porch: its size; that it was overlaid within with pure gold; and that in it were placed the two beautiful pillars. In its size we have the numbers two, seven and twelve, significant of stability, perfection and completeness. In its covering of *pure* gold (the house was overlaid with *fine* gold), we have the Divine counsels signified. In the two pillars we have Christ shadowed forth as to what He is for His church as Head.

We find a more detailed account of these two pillars given in 1 Kings vii. They were made of brass, and, "in the plains of Jordan (the river of judgment) did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth (tabernacles) and Zarthan (tribulation;) just in the same place where Joshua crossed the Jordan on entering the land (Josh. iii. 16). It was by coming down here, taking a human body, and tabernacling amongst us, and passing through tribulation, enduring all the judgment for us, that the Lord Jesus made a way by which we can go through that river dry shod, and with Him in resurrection, take possession of the land.

These pillars were cast in the clay ground, it was there the brass was shaped, but now they are reared up in the place of honor at the entrance of the house. And once the Lord Jesus lay in death, when all the billows of

God's wrath rolled over Him, but now, having endured the judgment, having drank the bitter cup, God has exalted Him and given Him a Name that is above every Name.

Moreover, those pillars were not naked pillars, they were clothed with beautiful work. We find that they were ornamented with chains, and the chains bore pomegranates. How sweet this is! Once He had to say, "He hath made my chain heavy," but now, having burst the net of Satan, having "broken the gates of brass," He has "led captivity captive," and those very chains win our admiration and love, for they are the tokens of His cross and triumph. "And one shall say unto Him, What are these wounds **in** Thy hands? Then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." The sword of judgment awoke against the Shepherd, but the result was that God could turn His hand upon the little ones. And now these chains are loaded with fruit. He spoiled the strong man, and those who once were the poor captives of Satan, are now the blood-redeemed slaves of the Lord Jesus.

"Sunk in ruin, sin and mis'ry,
Bound by Satan's captive chain,
Guided by his artful treachery,
Hurrying on to endless pain—
My Redeemer
Plucked me as a brand from hell!"

But the crowning ornament of all were the lilies. "And upon the top of the pillars was lily work; so was the work of the pillars finished." Why, how is this Lord? I thought lilies grew in the valleys? Ah: He who was "the lily of the valley," has now been exalted, not by Himself, but by God, for He was worthy. "Being found in fashion as a man, *He humbled Himself;*" wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name."

In the names of the pillars we have the two great things that Christ is to the church. In that on the right hand—Jachin (he shall establish,) we have what He is as the One who has been raised up to the right hand of the Father. "Sit Thou on my right hand, until I make Thine enemies thy footstool." God has not only made Him Head of the church, but it is His purpose to head up all things in Him.

But let me view Him as set forth before me as Head of the church, and, oh how important it is that one fully sees this, and then, seeing it, maintains it. This is the blessed truth that has been for centuries lost sight of, but which the Lord the Spirit has graciously revived in these days. But still there are but few who see it even now. In what is called the dark ages, this was entirely lost, the pope usurped His place; but Protestantism has not restored it, in fact, did not claim to restore it; simply protested against abuses, and made a reform. But now that the Holy Spirit has revived this wondrous truth, it becomes the bounden duty of those who have the light, to maintain it. Surely this is *the* truth for this day. There are those who, in spite of all Satan's opposition, are "holding the Head," and there are those who claim that they are holding the body. But it is apparent that while those who hold the Head, necessarily own and maintain the oneness of the body—for it is *in Him* that we are one—those who refuse to give Him His place as Head, on the plea that we are one and therefore are bound to have fellowship with all who are christians, are neither holding the one nor the other. If one do not zealously, practically, hold the Head, one becomes simply a gathering of individual christians, no more one. *practically*, than the saints of the Old Testament days; for it is the Head "*from whom* all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." And again, "may grow up *into Him* in all things, who is the Head, even Christ; *from whom* the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

The desire for unity is increasing among christians in all sections (we have to use the word, ugly as it is, unfortunately it is too true. The idea of *sections* in that which the Word sets forth as one body!) of the church; but with the majority this union is sought for by, first, coming together for a short time and then each drawing back to his shell, which he never really leaves; or, second, by mutually sacrificing what each considers truth, and the forming a union upon the platform of "no prin-

iple." But only by "holding the Head" shall we indeed find nourishment ministered to the whole body to the edifying of itself in love. Man is seeking to make a unity by breaking down everything which separates from the world, and making the platform broader and broader, but the Holy Ghost, by building the wall still higher and higher, by drawing the reins tighter and tighter, and every year it becomes more apparent who are "holding the Head," and who are not. Man professedly makes love to one another the principle of unity (I say professedly, because "love is of God,") the Holy Ghost, faithfulness to Christ. In short, man gathers round man; the Spirit gathers to Christ.

If I have, indeed, been taught that the body of Christ is *one*, and that *He* is its Head, it becomes a deeply solemn thing for me to see to it that I am giving *Him* His place; owning *Him* alone as *Lord*, hearkening to, and obeying His word.

"He shall establish," yes, indeed. *He is that*, whether it is seen or not. In God's mind the church is established in its Head, for *in Him* we are quickened, raised, and seated in the heavenlies.

The name of the other pillar was Boaz (in it is strength). Here we have the counter truth to the preceding. First, we are established in *Him*, and then, *He* in us. It is *from the Head* that all the body has nourishment ministered. And surely we can venture to say that it is in proportion, as we are "holding the Head," shall we have the nourishment ministered. We see this very sweetly brought out in the two prayers of Ephesians. First, the Spirit prays that ye may know "what you are in *Him* (raised, sealed, &c.,) and then that *He* may be in you ("that Christ may dwell in your heart by faith"); first, that you might know what Christ is to you (Head): and then, that you might know what you are to *Him* (He loves you beyond knowledge): first, that you may know what God's power *has* done (raised Christ, and you with *Him* from the dead to His own right hand); and then, that you may know what *He* will do (exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think): first, to know God as the *God* of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory; then, as the *Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ from whom every family in heaven and earth is named;

knowing Him as the God, I can understand His power; knowing Him as the Father, I can understand His affection. First, that He "may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation *to know*;" then, that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory, *to be strengthened* with might by His Spirit in the inner man."

How precious this is! I trust that it is *my* desire to have Christ dwelling in my heart, &c.; but how blessed to know that it is *God's* desire, and that the Holy Ghost is down here to do that very thing. Every saint is, by the Holy Spirit, baptized into the "one body," and that being done, the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, would, according to the riches of the glory, strengthen us, that Christ may dwell in our hearts, and that we may know His wondrous love and be filled unto all God's fulness. How inexpressibly sweet this is! Shall I refuse it? or shall I allow the Holy Spirit to teach me to give Christ His place as the Lord of my affections? The truth of "Christ in you," is founded upon the fact that I am "in Christ."

These truths are counterparts, one to the other, just as Solomon's two pillars were exactly alike. The Holy Spirit *in me*, makes real to my soul what *I am in Christ*. He is there at God's right hand as the One who bore the judgment, broke the chains, delivered the captives, won the fruit, and is honored, for His beauty shown forth in His humiliation; and I, taught by the Holy Ghost, know Him as the One who bore the judgment *for me*, broke *my* chains, delivered *me*, and in me produces fruit. Considering Him as the once "lily of the valley," but now honored, I can bear the fruit of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, &c.," and *only* by abiding in Him can I do so. "Abide in me, and I in you; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye except ye abide in me." Again we have the right and left pillars; "abide *in me*, and I *in you*." O, that both I, and all my dear brethren, in all sections (how that word does jar, when talking of one body, one vine!) of the church would just abide in Him; then should we be more faithful epistles of Christ, and should know the sweetness of His abiding in us; for "In it is strength," and in Him

alone. His strength is made perfect in our weakness. It is always so, I must first know what He is to me, before I can know what I am to Him.

“ Mine by covenant, mine for ever,
 Mine by oath, and mine by blood,
 Mine—nor time the bond shall sever,
 Mine as an unchanging God.
 My Redemer!
 Oh, how sweet to call Thee mine!

Sweet indeed! “ My beloved is mine.” Mine in all the salvation He wrought out for me by going through the river of judgment, and mine in all the beauty He has before God. But, it is sweeter still to know that not only “ My beloved is mine,” but also “ and I am His.” Oh, to know *His* love. If I leave this out. I cannot be filled unto all the fulness of God, for love was the spring of all the blessing. “ *And I am His.* The two blessed truths are linked together.

But as I get deeper into His thoughts I find that after all His love was first, for He loved me before I knew anything of Him. His love dates from before dates commenced. “ He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him *in love.*” And thus I learn to say simply, “ I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me.” And the song we have given us as the song of the bride, in Rev. i., has nothing about our love in it, but “ unto Him *who loves us,* and hath washed, &c.”

It is *God's* love, not ours, that is “ perfect,” and “ casts out fear;” and until we are brought to see this, His love is not perfected in us, it has not accomplished its mission, “ he that feareth is not made perfect in love.” But when I give up all thoughts of *my* love being perfect, and just get occupied with *His* love, dwelling in it, seeing that it is perfect, all fear is undoubtedly banished, and His love is perfected in me, it has accomplished its object, it has led me as a child to rest on His bosom, confiding in that heart that beats for me. And though we do surely “ love Him,” it is “ because He first loved us.” The means by which the Spirit would teach us to let Christ dwell in our hearts, is, by teaching us of *His love*, “ to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.”

C. H. B.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

HE ABIDETH FAITHFUL.

"If we believe not, He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. ii. 13).

Dear reader, what does this give you? "He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself." The apostles had just said, "It is a faithful saying: for if we *be dead* (not trying to die) with Him, we shall also live with Him, if we suffer (not trying to suffer) we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us."

Now, there are four "if we's" just previous to this most blessed statement of divine truth. "He abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself." Look at them! "*If we be dead,*" "*if we suffer,*" "*if we deny,*" "*if we believe not.*" Now, each of these "if we's" has its own divine answer. First, if we be dead, *we shall also live*; second, if we suffer, *we shall also reign*; third, "if we deny, He also will deny;" fourth, "if we believe not, still He abideth faithful." He cannot deny Himself. O, how wonderful! My soul leaps for joy at this truth—*He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself.*

Here we get truth in the abstract. It takes the first eight chapters of the epistles to the Romans to clear up this statement, beginning with the 11th verse: where the believer is shown his way out of an old condition, and standing into a new; out of the first man, Adam, into the second man, Christ. And from that point the reckoning goes on; *we are in Christ*. He does not say "if we are in Him;" but, "*if we be dead*" with Him, because death must come first: "death because of sin." To be *in Christ*, is to be in life, "*in Him was life,*" in me was death. "Death is passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." He takes my part, *death*, which did not belong to Him at all; that He might give you His part, *life*, with Himself.

This is the positive part; now for the negative. "If we deny Him." and "if we believe not." Can that which is in Christ, *deny Him*? Never! Can that which is in Christ, *not believe*? Impossible! What then about Peter? Did not He deny Christ? Surely Peter did that very thing. But do you see? It was Peter in Adam; not Peter in Christ. So the apostle could say (Rom. vii. 20), "Now if I do that I would not; it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Here then we

find the same thing, life, but not deliverance. Peter had life, as having believed on His Lord, but life is not power. When let go, for the moment, he has no power against Satan. So in Rom. vii. Life was there to discern the good, but there was no power. But when he comes to the 25th verse, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord"—the moment he reckoned himself in Christ. he has found deliverance, for he is in the One who has gone up out of death *by power*. "He was crucified through weakness, but He liveth by the power of God." O, to be in Him! He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself. He cannot deny *the members of His own body*. Dear reader, what does this give you? Everything, or nothing? If we be dead; if we suffer. Are you there? Then He abideth faithful. C. E. H.

GOD'S UNITY—MAN'S UNION—THE DIFFERENCE.

We have endeavored to look at three several presentations of God's unity, and three several presentations of man's union. We have seen that God has always had a unity to which He would gather His people; and have seen also that man makes attempts of his own at union, or confederacy.

There has, perhaps, already been seen enough of contrast in the two to reveal their difference in principle. We would now, however, a little more show this difference in principle, and then consider the responsibility and duty imposed upon all who would be really obedient to God's will (2 Cor. x. 4, 5).

The principle of the one is separation from evil and gathering to God on the ground of God's unity; the principle of the other is allowance of evil and confederacy on the ground of expediency. The one is Godward and centres in God; the other is manward and centres in man. The one is unity which God has constituted and established; the other is union which man, in confusion, confederates. The Holy Ghost is worker in the one; man is worker in the other.

Historically, and in fact, believers were all gathered as one upon the ground of the unity, at the setting up of the church of God as we see it in The Acts. Sadly soon,

as we see by the epistles error came in, and confusion prevailed, ecclesiastical Babylon was set up and God's truth was lost. Spiritual darkness covered the earth. Long was it so.

God's grace came upon the scene and gave therefrom anew—restoration of the truth of justification by faith. Luther and others were used for this. A century ago opened the evangelistic or missionary period. A few men of God were used for this. Near half a century ago God restored church truth—the ground of His church in the unity of the spirit, and a few of His children were used for this.

The word and Spirit of God were the power in the three restorations, and the restorations were in the reverse order of the departure—the church truth being the first lost and the last restored. So now God in grace has offered renewed, distinct testimony to His unity, and has gathered a small company—a little remnant—in acknowledgment of the name of Jesus as implying what He has done, where He is, and what He is, for His redeemed people, on the ground of the unity. A precious restoration this is, out of the ruin and rubbish of the ages, and bringing to the light of day once more the ground of God's church. This stands in testimony on the one side; and on the other, the sects, and systems, and churches of man's organization, divided, yet occasionally as we have seen, allied in a strangely confused order.

God wants His people to congregate as His unity in recognition of the corporate relationship into which by the baptism of the Holy Ghost they are brought. But they will have divisions, and disperse into sects. God says there is one body, one spirit, one endeavor, one table and one loaf as symbol of the unity, and one church. But man practically discredits all this. How great the change! God presents His word as guide and the Holy Ghost as interpreter. Man sets up traditions, councils, articles, ordinances, politics, systems and synods of His own. The children of God thus refuse God's ground. It is the old characteristic. When God said, "disperse," man said, "confederate," "lest we be scattered:" when God bade Israel put its neck into the Babylonian political yoke, God having given dominion to Nebuchadnezzar, Israel refused (Jer. xxvii). God

now forbids His people to put their neck into the yoke of the ecclesiastical Babylon, but that is the very yoke into which His people now put their necks. So it is, "ye do always resist the Holy Ghost."

But it is replied there are divisions amongst these brethren. Not so. There has been discipline within, which has led to sectarianism without. Holding to Paul's doctrine of the church, to the entire scriptures—to the person of Christ—to the presence of the Holy Ghost—the table to which they gather is the Lord's table, not brethren's, and it is open without let or hindrance to all believers whencesoever they come, who hold the truth and walk morally. We cannot go to such, and fellowship with them in their churches and systems, for that would be off God's ground and would be sectarianism—but they may all come to us, for that would be on God's ground and not sectarianism.

We wish to hold nothing more distinctly than the entire simplicity of the ground we are on, and its openness to all believers, and the title of all believers to it and to come up on it and occupy and enjoy it as we do. It is God's establishment; not ours. The ground is divine. We set up no barriers to exclude from it. We make no conditions. We are ready to own failure, low moral condition, evil of spirit and ways. But our failure thereupon does not invalidate God's ground. But those who come upon this ground are liable to the discipline that pertains to it. There must needs be soundness in fundamental truth, and there must be moral walk. So when the one or the other has come in, there has been discipline and exclusion according to 1 Cor. v. 3-5.

Though 2 Timothy shows failure and ruin, we hold that the remnant, taking the ground of the unity, in the endeavor to keep it are, through grace placed upon the ground of 1 Timothy and have the power and responsibility of 1 Cor. v. 3-5.

Therefore when evil in doctrine came in notably, it was judged, and those who were put out, or went out in consequence of this discipline, left behind them those who were on the ground of the unity in the true fellowship of the endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. iv. 3), those remaining being still in the place of 1 Cor. v. 3-5. Schismatics or sectarians are

those who are outside: non-sectarian are those who remain. Those who are out from them, are really not of them.

Suppose an assembly at Washington, one at Philadelphia, and one at New York gathered to the name of Jesus on the ground of the one body and one Spirit, in the endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit, in fellowship with other assemblies all over the world upon the same ground. Evil doctrine comes in at New York and is tolerated there, not disciplined nor put away. Washington and Philadelphia judging this evil and seeing denial of discipline at New York, in loyalty to the Lord and His truth and the due discipline and purity of the assembly, refuses meanwhile to receive any one from New York assembly, or to go to its table. New York has thus broken the unity and is out. But time passes on; Philadelphia relaxes, and in the exercise of love to saints merely as such, receives one of the New York assembly who personally disowns the evil doctrine and is individually clear, though his assembly is not clear. Washington holding to the truth and to discipline, now refuses Philadelphia also, and comes to be obliged to hold Philadelphia out also. Thus Philadelphia comes to be neutral. So that New York in the first degree and Philadelphia in the second degree, have failed as to truth and discipline and have put themselves out of the unity upon which Washington stands in fellowship with assemblies the world over. New York and Philadelphia having broken the unity, Washington only remains upon it really, in the general fellowship of the gatherings of those who are really upon God's ground.

Now as to those that are neutral—how affectionately one would speak of them as members of Christ—but avowedly in denial of the ground of God's unity—gathered to christians as christians—man to man—Erastianism, confederacy. Hence it is that where this question of discipline has not arisen, christians from the denominations can be received, occasionally, to the Lord's table, while these neutral brethren cannot be received, with whom the question is up and open, and pronounced open. They have taken their stand on the ground of gathering to christians; not on the ground of loyalty to the Lord. Two ways meet. They take the one directly pointing to

love to christians, we that pointing to loyalty to the Lord, and we believe that by this latter way we most truly reach, first, the Lord's centre, and then love to christians, and they do not reach the Lord's centre at all, by their way of love to christians. Man's old principle of confederacy is here in its most specious and subtle form. Denial of discipline is at the bottom of it all. Thus we own in practice what we know to be fact—God's unity, in separation from evil, what in its simplicity all His people would acknowledge. Discipline flows out of this and the power of discipline we claim to be here, which neutral brethren deny.

This is owned or disowned; so there can really be no neutrality. Are **not** responsibility and duty to come upon the ground of God's unity in separation from evil, thus imposed upon all God's people? No amount of service or of usefulness therein, justifies disobedience. See Saul's case. "Behold to obey is better than sacrifice." Read 1 Samuel xv. No service will weigh in the scale against disobedience. We do believe that in these days of confusion, confederacy and evil, the sweetest, most acceptable title of service and testimony an honest soul can render is just this ecclesiastical obedience—coming humbly unto God's own ecclesiastical ground. Who will be obedient ones? This obedience is joyous. With acknowledgement of abounding failure amongst us, and with outgo of love to all, who are the Lord's everywhere, we hold, through grace, to the ground of God's unity—Christ the Son of the living God, Object, Centre, Head, and the power and presence of the Holy Ghost, who would have us all keep the unity which He has established.

T. M. T.

THE LAW.

(Gen. xvi.—xxi.; Ex. xix.; Matt. xxvii.)

Wondrous are the premonitions we get in the Old Testament of the richer and fuller disclosures of the New. The Old is the dawn of the noontide that shines in the New. Among other instances, or samples of this, I might mention "the law;" for we get in a section of the history of Abraham, that is, in Gen. xvi.—xxi., a short or miniature expression of the whole legal dispensation which lies between Ex. xix. and Matt xxvii.

We may consider this great subject for a little while together.

The God of grace and glory had been dealing with Abraham from the very beginning of his history in Gen. xi.; and in chap. xv. a promise is given him that he should have a son. But he failed in confidence in God; and this, as I may say, brought Hagar and Ishmael into the house; and we know that that bondwoman and her son were, mystically, the law.

Hagar and Ishmael thus brought in through Abraham's unbelief or want of confidence in God, two things attach to them while in the house. They have title to be there, but they must be in subjection. The angel of the Lord thus instructs Hagar (Gen. xvi).

During this stay of Hagar and her child in Abraham's house, the God of grace, the God of the promise already made to Abraham, is true to Himself. He continues to make promises to His elect one. He ordains circumcision in the house of Abraham; and circumcision was the witness of grace, not of law. He visits Abraham, and distinguishes him in a very marked manner. He shelters him from the consequences of his own sad failures; and at last, He fulfils His promise, and gives him a child by Sarah (Gen. xvii.-xxi).

The birth of the promised child begins a new, but short, era in the story of Abraham. The two children are then in the house together for the little interval from the *birth* to the *weaning* of Isaac. Each, however, had his place in the house, and neither could treat the other as an intruder. It was a strange time. It was difficult to manage matters, we may say; but so it was. The two mothers and their children, the bondwoman and the free woman, with Isaac and Ishmael, were together in the house of Abraham.

The time, however, soon arrived for making a change. The two children get opportunity for manifesting their different tempers and their different relationships to the house; and this works a separation. Ishmael, the elder, the son of the bondwoman, a youth of fourteen years of age, despises the feeble infant when it was weaned, when it was just beginning to feed on strong meat, to know its relationship, as it were, and to cry, Father! All this marks a full moral divergence between the two children;

and Sarah, the free woman, demands the casting out of the mocking son of the bondwoman; and accordingly, though with some grief of heart, Abraham sends Hagar and Ishmael out of the house, and Sarah and Isaac dwell there alone. And I may say this took place ere Isaac was old enough to make acquaintance with the child who had been now sent away. All that Isaac could have known of Ishmael must have been by family tradition, or what he had heard of him, as I may further say, through his mother.*

Thus, in these materials, thus lying in Gen. xvi.–xxi., we get the story of Hagar and Ishmael in the house of Abraham. We see their introduction there, and how they were to dwell there a time, and then, their dismissal. This is the story of Hagar and Ishmael in the house of Abraham; but it is also the story in mystic dress, of the law in the house of Israel, as between Ex. xix. and Matt. xxvii.

What wonders? What a miniature, and what a full-sized portrait! And we may now see that the miniature bore all the features of the full-length figure.

Grace and salvation had visited Israel. The God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob had gone down to Egypt and delivered them out of that house of bondage, had then gone before them in a pillar of cloud and of fire, had made a passage for them through the Red Sea, and had guided them in safety and in honor to the mount of God—the pledge and earnest of the kingdom coming. (Ex. i.–xviii).

But now, as Abraham had failed in confidence in God, after God had done such wonders in grace for him, so now Israel conceive confidence in themselves, after God had done these wonders in grace and power for them. And this introduces the law into the midst of them, (Ex. xix.) as want of confidence in God had brought Ishmael into Abraham's house.† The law thus brought in by

* Isaac and Ishmael meeting together afterwards to bury their father, as we see in chap. xxv. 9, makes no difference as to this. Isaac did not know Ishmael in the house of his father Abraham.

† Want of confidence in God, and confidence in ourselves, thus betrayed by Abraham and by Israel, severally, are the two sources of the working of the legal mind in ourselves, as they introduced the law in Gen. xvi. and Ex. xix.

reason of Israel's self confidence, the same two things attach to it there, as, by the voice of the angel of the Lord, were attached to Hagar in the house of Abraham. The law has title to be there, but it ought to be in subjection, or the one to serve the heirs of promise. The Lord Jesus decides this point in His argument with the Pharisees at the opening of Matt. xii.; and so I believe Paul does in his arguments in Rom. ii., and Gal. iii.-iv.

But then, again, as during the stay of Hagar and Ishmael in Abraham's house, the God of grace, who had been there before them, was true to Himself and true to Abraham, nourishing, as we saw, the heart and the hope of His elect in various ways, so now, during the age of the law, the same God of grace nourishes the hearts and the hopes of His Israel. Among other things, we see this all through the Old Testament from Ex. xix. Ordinances were set among them, the shadows of good things to come. Long-suffering goodness was exercised towards them. Discipline was exercised. Pledges upon pledges that they had not been forgotten were given to them. Deliverances were wrought for them. Saviours were raised up to them. Prophecies of glories still to be displayed in the midst of them, with all the grace that was to prepare the way for those glories, were published from time to time. They were kept alive in spite of a thousand provocations, as they are to this day. And at the last, the promised Messiah is born to them, as the promised Isaac had been born to Abraham and Sarah.

Wondrous accuracy in the resemblance between the miniature of which we speak and this full-length portrait!

But as we compare them still further, it is only more of this we see.

The birth of Messiah, like the typical birth of Isaac, begins a new but short era in the course of the legal or Mosaic dispensation. The two children are then in the house together; as I may express it, Christ and Moses, like Isaac and Ishmael. Each had title to be there. Neither could treat the other as an intruder. It was a strange time. It was, again I say, difficult to manage matters. This was the period of the four Evangelists. But the strangeness, the peculiarity of that season, the difficulty of ordering things duly while such divers ele-

ments were found in company with each other. only serves to set off the bright moral glory of the Lord Jesus, as we see Him tread His way during that season, the season of His sojourn here in flesh. For He was then, at one and the same time, the witness and minister of the Father, or of God in grace, and the perfect servant and fulfiller of all righteousness under the law.

The time, however, arrives for the making of a change. The Lord of salvation is offered up, a sacrifice for sin. By His death He destroys him that has the power of death, as well as makes reconciliation for sinners. But not only that. He cancels the law to all who believe on Him. He nails it to His cross. And the saints of God could then say that they were dead to the law by the body of Christ. It had dominion over them as alive; but now, in the age of the resurrection of Christ, they were no longer as a *living*, but as a *dead and risen* generation.

This great event, the crucifixion of the Christ of God, takes place, as I may say, in the day of Matt. xxvii.; and then, in principle, the law had ended its course, as it began in Ex. xix. The self-confidence of Israel had brought it in; the self-sacrifice of the Son of God now, as to the elect, puts it out. And when the Spirit of the Son was given, when the Holy Ghost, on the glorification of Jesus, came down, and was a spirit of adoption in the elect, forming Christ in them, making them the true Isaac, and breathing in them the mind of the children of the free-woman, then, as Paul teaches us, the true Ishmael, the spirit of the bondwoman must go at the bidding of the zealous, indignant demands of faith. They could not dwell together. The one who shares the spirit of adoption does not, cannot, know the spirit of bondage. Isaac never knew Ishmael: the saint of this dispensation does not know the law. "If ye are led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law."*

The law still lives for the ungodly and for sinners. That I know (1 Tim. i. 9). But again I say, the Isaac

* Of course I mean in principle. The saint may know too painfully the workings of the legal mind. But he treats it as unworthy of his calling of God in Christ Jesus. One has said. "The Church has never seen Christ."

of this dispensation does not know the law, or Ishmael. It left the house ere, I may say, he entered it.

Surely, then, after tracing these wondrous coincidences between the miniature of Gen. xvi.-xxi., and the full-sized painting of Ex. xix.-Matt. xxvii., we may stand and admire the divine harmonies which are found in the oracles of God, and see another vivid and brilliant ray of that self-evidencing light which shines in the whole volume from beginning to end. And we may afresh assure ourselves, how truly known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the creation.

But still further, as to the law. Having been brought in through the self confidence of Israel, God uses it. He makes it a test. "The man that doeth it shall live by it," He is willing to say. He causes the offence to abound by it. He makes sin by it to become exceeding sinful, and turns it into transgression. These and like uses He makes of it, causing it to serve some of the ends and purposes of His holy wisdom. But—blessed to tell it—*He never joins Himself with it, as though He were making it His witness or representative.* He left it in the hands of angels and a Mediator, keeping Himself, the rather, in company with the promises, or with the ministration of grace (Gal. iii). He will have it listened to as spoken by angels, while He speaks of salvation (Heb. ii). He is still in the midst of those counsels and secrets of grace which He was occupied with, when (as it were left to Himself,) He was dealing with the patriarchs. He was then like one at home or at ease. as all His intercourse with his elect in the Book of Genesis show us; but when He appears in Ex. xix., about to take His place as in the law, He is as evidently not at home, not at ease; an expression of this is given to the whole occasion.

Again I say, wonderful—and as precious as it is marvelous! What secrets of the divine bosom disclose themselves through all these strokes and touches in the way and in the writing of God! But I must say a little further as to this, and upon law generally.

Adam was put under law; for the God of all grace, and who is love, delighting in the exercise of His nature, leads His creature to stand, not in self-sufficiency, or on title of innocency, but in grace and on the ground of redemption. He tests him accordingly, prescribing a law

to him by the observance of which he must stand, and by the breach of which he must fall. He fell—sin entered and death followed.

In a great general sense, there was no need, after this, that law should be applied to the creature, a second time. He had already broken it, and ruined himself; and immediately upon that, grace applied itself to his condition, and he was put into a blessed wondrous system of redemption, such a system of combined mercy and righteousness as was to cost God everything, and to secure to the sinner everything.

What a display of God was this; and we find it all produced immediately on the entrance of sin, in the words of the Lord to the serpent!

But, as we have seen, in the progress of this paper, though the Lord does not a second time apply law to the condition of the creature, yet, when either self-confidence in the creature, or his want of confidence in God brings it in, the Lord uses it for ends of His own wisdom, proving by it the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and by it causing the offence to abound. But it does not become His principle of action a second time. It had been that in Gen. ii., but it is not that in either Gen. xvi. or Ex. xix. It stole in, or came in, by the by, or incidentally then (see Rom. v. 20, Greek), and was not the principle of divine action, or the witness and expression of God Himself. It had already done its needed work when it had tested Adam, proved creature-insufficiency, and laid in ruined creation the basis of a displayed, glorious redemption.

And, again I may say, when it is thus brought in a second time, the Lord expresses his indisposedness to it. The very first time that he appears to Abraham after Ishmael had been brought into His house He calls on Abraham to repent, and to walk before him again (Gen. xvii. 1). This has a voice in it. And I have already noticed this same indisposedness in the evident restlessness and want of ease and satisfaction that mark Him in Ex. xix.; and also in the Spirit in the apostle being careful to show the Lord in company with *promise*, while he left *law* to be ministered by angels and a Mediator (Gal. iii., Heb. ii.)

All this, surely, gives us not only a clear, but a very

significant history of law. It tells us not only when it came in, but how it came in, and God's relationship to it. It was not His rest or dwelling-place: it was not His witness. And can I, after reading such a history of law as this, judge that it is simply in the righteousness of it God will have His saints to shine before Him in the courts of His glory in heaven? Most surely do I conclude, that it is in other and brighter robes, robes of His own preparing, and not of the law's preparing, that He will array them for His own eternity.

The Lord, in dwelling here on earth for a season, and in the midst of Israel, the circumcised, was made under the law as well as of a woman. He vindicated the excellency and perfections of that law which God gave when Israel, in self-confidence challenged or accepted it. He rendered up to God a sheaf of untainted human fruit, and proved Himself also to be the true circumcision, the only Son of man who ever kept the whole law, as circumcision under Moses demanded. But even as a Jew, as made under the law, the law had dominion over Him only as alive; when dead, and risen, and glorified, it had no title to Him, nor to His elect as dead and risen with Him. Let the law plead its own cause, and even then it must be dismissed upon its own showing, when it faces not a living, but a dead and risen man.

The Galatians, I may add, exceeded Abraham in that which was contrary to God in this matter. He grieved at having to part with Hagar and Ishmael when the voice of the Lord, through Sarah, demanded this of him; but they were daring enough to bring the bondwoman and her son back and home again, after, by the voice of the Lord, they had been sent away. (Gen. xxi.; Gal. iv.)

O, we have much to watch against—the spirit of Abraham in Gen. xvi., the spirit of Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai, and the spirit of the Galatians among the churches of the New Testament. The soul needs ever to have to do with God in grace; not dealing with Him as a Judge, but as a Saviour, apprehending Him in the exercise of a love that never wearies, and is from everlasting to everlasting. We have to live the life of faith in the love, the self-sacrificing love of the Son of God towards our very selves (Gal. ii. 20).

WHETHER TO GO OR STAY

Written by E. M. W., when, at the close of a long life, the doctor told her that her sickness might be unto death.

Was it, my heart, that thou wert weary,
 Finding this life a life of pain ?
 Or that the wilderness seemed dreary,
 And thou didst think heaven would be gain ?

No, not a thought of earthly sorrow,
 Or earthly joy or loss, or gain,
 Mingled its memory with my spirit
 In that sweet thrill of rapturous pain.

Sudden and strange the sweet suggestion,
 Loosed from these bonds to mount above,
 To see *His* face in full perfection !
 To see Him whom my soul doth love !

To kneel before my Lord and Master,
 To tell my thanks in tears of joy,
 To kiss those feet for me once wounded.
 Oh, speechless bliss, without alloy !

How long the years have seemed unto me
 Since first I knew my loving Lord ;
 Waiting His coming, watching for Him,
 Staying my soul upon His word.

But this new thought, to go unto Him,
 To fly unto His sweet embrace ;
 To lean upon the Shepherd's bosom !
 To see my Jesus face to face !

Oh, rapturous thought, too glad the prospect,
 Deep thrilling joy hath drowned my soul ;
 My spirit leaps to meet the summons,
 And waves of gladness o'er it roll.

Oh, wondrous thought, that such a sinner,
 So deeply dyed in crimson sins,
 Should dare to count myself a winner.
 And raise the shout of one who wins.

Oh, wondrous thought, that in that hour
 I could forget all guilty fears,
 And only feel the gladdening power,
 Of crowned hopes, of longing years.

Oh, thrill of joy, divinely sweet,
 Ne'er shall thy memory pass from me ;
 Until these eyes my Saviour greet,
 Till all His loveliness I see.

But stop, my soul, He has not called,
 'Twas but a stone dropped in the stream,
 These circling thoughts so quickly stirred,
 And weakened all thy spirits dream.

It may be many a year of trial
 Is yet appointed unto thee,
 Before thy spirit leaves its prison,
 And soareth upward, glad and free.

It may be that the Master needeth
 Thee for some work of faith or love,
 Down here awhile, before He taketh
 Thee to the bosom of His love.

Lord give me, from Thy grace and fulness,
 A spirit wholly one with Thine;
 My joy to do Thy sacred bidding,
 Let Thy sweet will be ever mine.

Ready to go if Thou dost call me,
 Willing to stay if Thou dost will;
 Ready to move in active service,
 Content to suffer and be still.

Ob, teach me every needed lesson
 Subjection, patience, faith and love;
 And take me in Thine own good season,
 To the bright home prepared above.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

6. "L. Z.—However grievous the error of annihilation, would brethren be justified by the Word in refusing fellowship with a believer infected by that seduction?"

Most assuredly. Our fellowship is with the Father, and with the Son Jesus Christ, and thus we have fellowship one with another *in the light*, on the ground of having eternal life (John i. 1-7). But annihilation denies that we have eternal life now, at all, and thus sets aside the finished work of Christ, and really denies Him. We do not meet for our own comfort, and to declare our love as christians, but to the person of Christ as the Head, and whatever denies Him must be withdrawn from—see 2 John 9, 10.

7. "J. H. T.," Sonora, Ky., asks for a word on Rev. xiii. 18, the number of the beast.

"It is a number of a *man*." It is short of God's number which is seven; whether taken by *hundreds*, or *tens*, or *units*, it is only six; the utmost of *man*, as Antichrist will be *man's best man*. But it comes short of the glory of God, as *man* morally considered is said to do in Rom. iii. 23. And yet this is the *MAN* that men have been following from the beginning of Babel (Gen. x. 8, 9). The explanations that try to make a name out of the numerals, is only human learning—*man's wisdom and his folly*.

THE ACTS.

Chapters iv. 32-v.

There was a new expression in the operations of the Holy Spirit in answer to the prayer of the company of believers, now that the rulers had taken sides against God. On the day of Pentecost they had all been filled with the Holy Spirit, and spake with tongues to all. It was the outpouring in *grace*, of the good news of God coming down again to save. Here, upon resistance being offered by the authorities, it was a demonstration of *power*, and the characteristic of the preaching was *boldness*. It was not a new pouring out, or coming, of the Holy Spirit. To have asked for that, would have denied that He was there, and the disciples did not do this, as is now often done. They had asked that they might speak with all boldness, His word; and this was given at once. They had asked that signs and wonders might be done in the name of His Servant, Jesus; and the house was *shaken* where they were assembled. Before, it had been *filled*. They had asked that He would behold these threatenings and take up the case, Himself; and the result was, they were consolidated the more,—they were of one heart and mind. Before, they were together.

In the former day they had sold their possessions and goods, and had all things common; now, none said that ought that he had was his own. They took a more full and clear position of strangership, for they sold their houses and lands, like Abraham, getting out from their country and kindred; and in the land of the Canaanites, owning not a foot, while it was defiled. It had been the purpose of God that the Israelite should be rich, as partaker of the earthly calling; and to be poor and houseless, was the sign of being out of the favor of God. But these had obtained the heavenly, had become partakers of the heavenly calling, and they could give up the earthly. It was distinct testimony, as coming from the *Jewish* christians. We do not read of such a thing among the Gentile converts; as their having been rich or poor before they were "known of God," was no token of blessing, or otherwise. The Gentile had nothing to sell out but his ruin, his lost condition, his being "far off," his idolatry, from which he turned, to God (1 Thess. i. 9); the Jew had his accredited dispensational standing with

God, his possessions, his blessing as being the one whom God had taken for a people. "What things were *gain*, he counted *loss* for Christ."

It was the fruit of the Holy Spirit in them, for they were all filled with the Spirit, and He was at this moment displaying His peculiar power in the heart. They did not even "part" the money themselves, but gave up the right to dispose of it, laying it at the Apostles' feet.

As if to emphasize the testimony, record is made of a *Levite*, *Joses* called *Barnabas*—a son of consolation—intimating his faithfulness in his original place. Of old the Levite had special provision made for his not being poor. No Jew should have been poor, on their own standing, more particularly no Levite. But now, he having all above, can let all below, go. He laid all at the Apostles' feet. This is all the richer and more striking than in the second chapter, from the fact of the nation despising the offer for the restitution of all things by the return of Jesus. The Holy Spirit shows that the refusal is accepted. The disciples "parted their goods" till that offer should be made and rejected, thus meeting present necessities, while waiting; but now the Holy Spirit in effect, says: "Up! depart, for this is not your rest!" The church in its heavenly position, is to be now clearly brought out.

Chap. v. "BUT"—here is the first "but" in this precious history. Alas that it could come in so soon! All the way along man's history, this "but," of his weakness and failure and apostacy has come in, as soon as God has set him up in any thing. Such is man, he always breaks down. There had been "great grace," upon all; and with "great power," testimony was borne to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and none lacked, and those that had houses or land sold them. These things show us what it was to be filled with the Spirit; and what blessed things He could bring forth, when unhindered.

The case of "Ananias, with Sapphira, his wife," was not one of failure to respond to this fine action of the Holy Spirit. Had they kept their possession it would have been that; and no demand was laid upon them to sell, or to give. While it remained, it was their own, and after it was sold, the money was theirs. He who dwelt in the assembly was the Spirit of liberty, not of bondage. Nor

was it a case of lack of intelligence, which a little patient teaching more perfectly the things of God, would correct. It was not lying to men, as if a failure to fulfil an engagement with them, by fraud, with intention to deceive them, simply. It was a lie to the Holy Spirit. He, in opening the hearts of the saints to sell their property, had done it that it might all be given up. Short of this would not be the full testimony; short of this they might have fallen, through weakness, and been guiltless. But they gave part for the whole; they kept back part. That the special grace, and its outflowing testimony, of that hour should be defiled and denied, under cover of fulfilling it, was a heinous offence, a lie unto God.

And He must needs take it up, and judge at once the sin. It was the first case of discipline in His house—peremptory and final. And the disciples accept it, justifying Him, who will have His habitation holy. “Great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.” It is refreshing to the saint to know that God will be honored among His own people. He is light; and He ~~was~~ called us light. “Now are ye light in the Lord.” So we are called upon to “walk as children of the light—for the fruit of the light is in *all* goodness and righteousness and truth”—and to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. In the first days of the church, He took out that which dishonored Him; in later days He called upon the church to act. to purge out the leaven, to put away that wicked person. In Israel, in the beginning He judged at once with severity, the wilful one, or the one who defiled the camp, for holiness becometh his house forever. But in latter days, when all had gone aside, and those who obeyed were but a few; they the remnant, as in Jeremiah’s case, were told to stand apart from the whole. “Let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them.” The condition of the professing church may change here, but the grand and precious principle remains, the holiness of His presence, excluding and separating us from evil.

And see the blessed effects of this “fear” that fell on all that heard. No man durst join himself unto them. It was a ground that flesh, unjudged man, could not take, even being associated in company with the Lord’s own. There was not, as now, a joining of the church, by one’s

own will. There is no such thing in the scriptures, as joining *a* or *the* church. It was not a thing that man could put himself into.

A second result was, "the people magnified them." It is when the house of God is purged and ordered by Himself that its power is felt. So it would have been with Israel; they would have been the praise of the whole earth. So must it be with the church. Think what it must have been, with not only not a single unbeliever among them, but not an unspiritual or disorderly or worldly one; when "the house of God was the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth!"

But did that holiness and that exclusiveness hinder the growth of the church? It kept men of the world from putting themselves there, but *believers* were, the *more*, added to the Lord, multitudes, both men and women. God takes care of His own testimony. These are important words for us, in this day of laxity, when great carelessness is manifested as to the reception into the assembly of those who come. Receive ye one another as Christ has received you, to the glory of God. They must be joined to the Lord, living members of the body of Christ, before we can, with them, show the Lord's death. And then it must be the glory of God, where no looseness, in doctrine or conduct, can be allowed. If we cast ourselves in confessed weakness, upon the Lord, He will manifest these things. The great thing is, to give Him His own unhindered place, in the acknowledgment of His presence and exclusive rights.

All things show that He is acting according to Himself. "By the hands of the apostles, were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds, and couches, that, at the least the shadow of Peter passing by, might overshadow some of them. There came, also, a multitude out of the cities round about, unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and those who were vexed with unclean spirits; and they were healed, every one." This is God's response to the threatenings of the priests.

But the leaders, in the most determined way, take sides against Him. These most unmistakable tokens of His presence and power, are met by indignation on their

part. The healing that was refused by the nation shall not come to individuals. The high priest and the Sadducees arrest the apostles and cast them into the common prison as if they were the vilest felons. But the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors by night and brought them forth and said, "Go stand and speak in the temple to the people, all the words of this life." It was the proper place, that which had been God's own house, from which His own full grace should be told out, that He might gather out His remnant. And the apostles in simple obedience, entered into the temple and taught.

A general council of Israel wait to have the prisoners brought before them, when lo, the startling message is brought to them, that the prison was found shut with all security, and the keepers, both without and within, in their places; but no prisoners within! They were found in the temple teaching the people. Sad and dreadful is the position of Israel, fighting against God. What blindness not to perceive the nature of the unequal contest, despising all the signs of His mighty hand, and playing with the vengeance that belongs unto Him. The verdict had been returned by God, in regard to the apostles and their work. How simple and wise to have accepted it, and leave them where He had put them.

But, casting off all fear of God, they fear the people, and bring the apostles, without violence, before the council. Then the high priest asked them saying, "Did we not straitly command you that you should not teach in this name? And behold you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." It seems the working of a guilty conscience, getting hold of the case, after its own way, with bitterness and wrath. But they felt it, and they were right. "This man's blood" was the grand question, and the inquest was being held. Should it be for cleansing, or an everlasting stain upon them? Was it God laying their iniquities upon Him, or their wicked hands, in utter wilfulness that had shed it? Life or death was in it. The issue was fully joined then. It is so now. All questions between God and man meet for settlement at that cross.

Peter states it therefore with full solemnity, "We ought to obey *God* rather than man." It was simple obedience, to announce the full, rich grace of God, meet-

ing their ruin. The God of their fathers had come to them on a new ground. He had raised up Jesus whom they slew and hanged upon a tree. "Him hath God exalted with His right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Spirit whom God hath given to them that obey Him." How simple, and how clear, as the gospel ever is, from God! To obey Him on the apostles' part, was to publish these wondrous facts; on the part of Israel, to believe them.

We have thus seen in this chapter, a new order of operation; that is by *power*, in answer to the prayer of the assembly and as meeting the new conditions. There was power in meeting evil in the assembly at once; then there was power in the angelic ministry. in delivering from prison; then in the sustained and thorough utterances of the apostles. And finally there is power in providence, by Gamaliel an instrument used by God, for the time, to hold back the apostles from death, and at the same time to state the case that it might be looked at in all its sides. It is a plea from among themselves. "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." To this they listen in a partial way.

It may seem strange that the apostles should have been beaten before they were let go. In other cases this could not have been, the cruelty and unreasonableness of it would have been so apparent. But we know that the human heart is opposed to God. In cases between man and man, it has not this one reason spurring it on; but as toward God, there is always malignity unless there is brokenness, and even when prudence and the wisdom of man cry, "desist," the natural hatred to Christ will show itself.

But it was a part of the testimony. The apostles had been told all this beforehand. It was *given* them not only to believe on His name, but also to suffer for His sake. And they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Him. "And daily, in the temple and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

PATTERN OR TYPAL CONVERSIONS.

It is remarkable that one chapter—Acts xvi.—brings out or suggests the four pattern or typal cases of conversion afforded to us in the New Testament record. By conversion we mean the new birth of John iii. 1-13, being made a child of God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ according to John i. 12, 13, and on the principle of Eph. ii., “for by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”

First. *Timotheus*, “the son of a certain woman who was a Jewess and believed,” “who from a child had known the holy scriptures which are able to make wise unto salvation,” “who worked the work of God,” and of whom Paul could tell of joy “in remembrance of the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded in thee also.” Many children of believers have thus been brought to the Lord, trained up in the way they should go, growing up through grace into the knowledge and fear of God, without any very distinctly marked process of conversion, as to time and circumstances, however real as to fact, and it is this, through grace, which God's people are entitled to look for on behalf of their children. We need more of this practically.

Second. “A certain woman named *Lydia*, a seller of purple of the city of *Thyatira*, which worshipped God heard us, whose heart the Lord opened that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.” Here was ground prepared, the word preached, the heart opened and the word received, and the fruits of faith straightway exemplified. How soft and gentle, simple and sweet all this! How many such cases there have been! The Lord add unto them abundantly! *Rom. x. 8-10* and verses 14-17.

Third. The jailor at *Phillippi*. Please read *Acts xvi. 27-34*. Severe startling circumstances, display of power, are needed in the case of this hard and cruel (as we gather) Roman soldier, and his case is met with these. The formal proclamation of the gospel, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (*Acts xvi. 31*), sounds out over Europe from its entrance gate at *Phillippi*, which has been ever since the glorious gospel text of the dispensation. The one to

whom it was first spoken, received it, and believed in God, with all his house, that very night, and ere morning came was rejoicing in newly found salvation. O that every one to whom it has ever been spoken in the four quarters of the wide world, had received it so!

Fourth. The apostle to the Gentiles, the apostle of the Church of God, Paul. Please read of the manner of his conversion, Acts ix. 1-22. Read also his recital of it, Acts xxii. 3-22—also Phil. iii. 4-9, to know what he said of himself as a natural man; and as a "religious" man "that after the most straightest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee;" and further of his enmity against Jesus and of his conversion, read Acts xxvi. verses 9 to 18.

See also his self-judgment in writing to Timothy (Tim. i. 13-15), "Sinners: of whom I am chief." We see in him the impersonation of Jewish malice and satanic hate against Jesus of Nazareth and His disciples—the self-righteous man in wilful and determined rejection of the Holy One and the Just—filled with enmity above and beyond any before or since; so therefore "the chief of sinners" truly, for these characteristics, in him so intensified, are more hateful than the gross and sensual ways of the most wandering and wanton of prodigals. "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them, which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." Here then we have Paul a distinct and acknowledged pattern—a typical character of conversion to God.

Children of Christian parents, gentle women, stern men of duty and of work, men of mind and learning who are sitters at the feet of Gamaliel and doctors of the schools, albeit rejecters if not persecutors of Jesus, here is a sample or specimen case—a "pattern" for each of you! "DOST THOU BELIEVE ON THE SON OF GOD?" Though conversion may thus be found to be figured, so to speak, by very few typical forms, and to be really and essentially always the same thing, without which there is not salvation, yet in variety of circumstances, and of mode and manner of operation, no two cases are alike in exactness of details—any more than any two leaves of the forest or any two faces of man are exactly alike. There is always variety, as well as unity, in God's work.

MEDITATIONS ON SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

THE EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR.

"And the house when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither; so that there was neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building." (1 Kings vi. 7.)

"And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar from the floor of the house unto the walls of the ceiling (margin); and he covered them on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir.....and the cedar of the house within was carved with knops and open flowers; all was cedar; there was no stone seen (1. Kings xi. 15-18.)

"And the greater house He ceiled with fir tree, which He overlaid with fine gold, and set thereon palm trees and chains. And He garnished the house with precious stones for beauty; and the gold was gold of Parvaim. He overlaid also the house, the beams, the posts, and the walls thereof, with gold; and graved cherubim on the walls. (2 Chron. iii. 5-7.)

There is a striking and profitable lesson to be learned here from the contrast between the exterior, and the interior of the temple. It is the difference between the epistles of Peter, and the epistle to the Ephesians.

First, let me view the exterior. We read that it was "built of stone made ready before it was brought thither." All the preparation was done beforehand, each stone was fitted for the special place intended for it by the architect. It no doubt took many a day and many a hard blow to give the stone its proper shape, but all was done before it was lifted into its place. There can be no mistake in interpreting this as teaching us that no one has any place in the spiritual temple—the church—unprepared; that does not belong there, that is not born again: of course *only* such *can* have any place in the temple that the Spirit is building, but we fear, alas, that many unprepared stones, just as rough as in the quarry of nature are having place in the temple that man is building.

Israel was told to look unto the rock whence they were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence they were digged, and it is well for us sometimes to take a look back and see with what marvellous skill, strength and patience, the Lord has raised us up from the dark, deep quarry of nature, and fashioned us by the hammer of the Word for the place intended for us by Him.

It is in Peter's epistle that we find this most fully brought out. Peter does not speak of the new creation, he does

of the new birth; but this is different. The new creation is being in Christ; the new birth is that of the Spirit and Word. Let not any one think that this is "hair splitting;" it is not. But even if it were, if God sees fit to make fine distinctions, it is worth while for us to look at them. In Peter's epistle we have the believer in his character of a converted man, once walking in "the lusts of men," but now doing "the will of God." It is Peter that speaks of God "purifying their (the Gentiles) hearts by faith" (Acts xv. 9). and here also he says, "seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth" (1 Peter i. 22). Now the truth that we get in Paul's epistle is that God sets aside the old man entirely, says it is crucified with Christ, and gives me an entirely new position in Christ risen. So he says, "Ye are *dead*, and your *life* is hid with Christ in God." Nothing about our souls or hearts being purified by faith or obedience to the truth. Well, is not this contradictory? Not at all. It is simply the interior and exterior view of the temple. Paul gives us the former; Peter, the latter. It was only the priest that went inside the temple, the people saw but the outside. We are privileged to see the former; the world can only see the latter. And what can the world see of the christian? It cannot know any thing of the place he has in Christ, but there is one doctrine of Christianity it can see, and would that it were more strikingly apparent than it is; that is conversion. They see one who once walked with them in the ways of the flesh, drawn by some strange power, leave them, and become to them both a warning and a token of mercy. They see that a mighty change has been effected, though they own not the power that has done it. The stone which once was deep in the pit of corruption has been raised to a place of usefulness and beauty; that once was in the quarry of nature with them, has been lifted from it by some outside (not natural) means, and occupies an *unnatural* place. Once it was so rough that no one cared to pass his hand over it; now it is smooth and pleasant to the touch.

The converted man acts (or should act) contrary to nature. He does well and suffers for it patiently, knowing that it is acceptable with God. He follows the example of Christ, "who when He was reviled, reviled not

again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pet. ii. 19-23). To act thus is clearly contrary to nature, and the unconverted wonder, while they do not see the means by which this great change has been wrought, which is the Holy Spirit, "seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit" (1 Pet. i. 22). The heart once full of all uncleanness has been cleansed by the water of the word through the operation of the Spirit. This is a very important aspect of the word of God in the soul, and one by far too much overlooked. A converted man is a *cleansed* man. His heart has been purified by faith, by obedience to the word of the gospel. It is to this kind of cleansing—by the word—that I have no doubt Jesus refers to when, washing Peter's feet, He says, "he that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." I know that "clean every whit," is often interpreted as referring to being cleansed by blood, but what is there of blood in John's gospel? Is not the subject, *life* by the word and Spirit?

Oh! may our walk be so marked, so distinct, that the world may have no doubt as to our belonging to God's house. May they "by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Pet. ii. 12). The point in all our deportment is, to act *un*-like self, but like Christ. Let it be apparent that we have come unto Him, the living stone, and that we also as living stones are built up a spiritual house. We may be nothing ourselves, we are nothing, but we are built up *on Him*, and in Him is beauty. "Behold I lay in Zion, a chief corner-stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe, *is the preciousness.*" This is the true rendering of the passage. Of course He is indeed precious to us, but here the point is that what He is in God's eyes—elect, precious—we are too, *we* derive our beauty, *from Him*; "unto you which believe His preciousness attaches." This is indeed precious; surely He becomes more precious to us by our knowing that his preciousness is ours!

Having viewed that which is visible to all observers, let me, as one of the "holy priesthood," enter within the

sacred walls and meditate upon the wondrous beauty of the workmanship of the divine architect there displayed. What a contrast to the exterior! There I saw nothing but stone; here no stone is seen; "all was cedar, there was no stone seen." I must consult the guide-book to the interior—Ephesians—for an explanation of this. We read of these materials used in the walls, ceiling, and floor of the temple, fir for the floor and ceiling, and cedar for the walls; all, both floor, walls and ceiling, overlaid with fine gold.

Now the boards of the tabernacle were of shittim wood (the acacia of the desert), not cedar or fir. Why was this? Because there were no cedars in the wilderness. Very true. Fir and cedar belonged to *the land*. The house belonged to the land, therefore it must be built of material belonging to the land, not of wilderness material. The firs and cedars of Lebanon were one of the glories of the land. One of the things that Moses desired to see but could not, "was that goodly mountain and Lebanon." Looking at the church in the light of Ephesians, as being raised and seated in the heavenlies, the building materials—the agencies by which the church is formed—that strike the eye, are those things that are indigenous to "the land." We do not see this in the exterior view, as given in Peter. Stone was not peculiar to the land, there was plenty of stone in the wilderness of Sinai. And there was salvation before the church was formed.

There is nothing peculiar to this dispensation in men being saved. We know that there are many *saved* men spoken of in the Old Testament, but no *church* men. For instance, David was a saved man, he had faith in God, his sins were forgiven, but he was not a member of the church, the body of Christ. *Now*, since the descent of the Holy Ghost, we are not only individually saved, but *baptized, by one Spirit, into one body*. This was something which saints prior to Pentecost knew nothing of, as we are told in Ephesians iii., "Which in *other* ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is *now* revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; (what is revealed?)—that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the *same body*, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel; whereof I was made a

minister.... To make all see what is the *fellowship of the mystery*, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God (but *now revealed*), who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that *now* unto the principalities and powers in the heavenlies, might be known through the church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Taking our stand then, inside the house, as those who have been initiated into this "mystery" by the Holy Ghost who baptized us members into the "one body," of which Christ is the Head, as those who have had the eye of our hearts enlightened that we "may know what is the hope of His calling," with the epistle to the Ephesians in our hand, let us gaze up or down, right or left, what do we see but gold, gold every-where; and the cedar (emblem of that which is undecaying, of eternal duration,) makes itself known by its fragrance. All is from God, for God, and according to the eternal counsels of God.

If I look backward, I see all originating from Him, "according to the *eternal* purpose which *He* purposed in Christ Jesus;" "according as *He* hath chosen us *in Him* before the foundation of the world." If I look around me I see *Him* still; to the intent that *now* unto the principalities and powers in the heavenlies might be known through the church the manifold *wisdom of God*." If I look forward, still all is of *Him* and resting in eternal stability;—He "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus; that *in the ages to come* *He* might show the exceeding riches of *His* grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." The church shows forth, as to the past, His eternal counsels; as to the present, His wisdom; as to the future, the object of it all, His grace. Surely as we gaze on such a wondrous scene, we know God alone could be its architect.

Well, we see the import of those little words, "all was cedar; there was no stone seen." And if we cannot see the cedar, it being covered with gold (as indeed we cannot, for "Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the earth") we discern its presence by its fragrance. Oh! how sweet is its smell! Soul, dost thou not find it so! How quieting and comforting it all is! Were it

not for the cedar we should be dazzled by the gold and bewildered: "What does it all mean? raised with Christ! seated with Christ! one body! shewing forth God's wisdom! how can these things be?" Ah! it all rests on the cedar! "according to the *eternal* purpose which He hath purposed in Christ Jesus." So, my soul, thou canst rest in quietness and peace, and further contemplate the glories that God's wisdom has displayed in His workmanship.

The workmanship of God displays variety as well as harmony, and so we read of "knops and open flowers," carved from the cedar, "palm trees and chains" graved upon the ceilings, and cherubims upon the walls, and the whole house garnished with precious stones. In these things we may expect to see portrayed the *details*, so to speak, of the truth that we have been considering. In the "knops and open flowers (significant of perennial loveliness, always in flower and always in bud) *carved upon the cedar*" I see the beautiful form God's eternal choice is clothed with, in scripture. It is man's distortion of this truth that makes so many godly souls shrink from it. Scripture does not say that we have been predestinated *to be saved*, but how lovely what it does say—"according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be *holy and without blame before Him in love.*"

But what of the "palm trees and chains" worked on the gold of the ceiling? Who can answer? The uses of the palm tree are so various that the Arabs have a saying that it has as many uses as days in the year, every part of it from its sap to its tuft is of service. And what is *not* Christ to the believer? "Ye are *complete* in Him." The thing that the palm tree can claim above all other trees is, beauty. It is one of the most graceful things in the whole vegetable kingdom. And what of Christ and the believer in Him? He hath made us accepted *in the Beloved.*" The palm tree has no branches, the leaves shoot out *from the tree itself!* Thus also every member of the Body is attached to Christ Himself, each one derives life, nourishment and beauty from Him. The palm tree is always green—is not "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day and forever?" The palm leaf is an emblem of triumph (John xii. 13; Rev.

vii 9)—do we not and will we not always triumph in Him, through Him, and, finally, with Him? But we have not space to mention even the various blessings the palm may typify. I will say but one thing more about it—it is the tree of the desert, ever intimately connected with burning skies and sandy wastes (Ex. xv. 27); yet it is the tree of the land too. The great name for Palestine, Phœnicia, signifies “the land of palms.” One of the sights that gladdened Moses’ eyes as he gazed from Pisgah upon that “good land,” was “the city of palm trees” (Dent. xxxiv. 3). And is not Christ *all* to the believer, whether you view Him as treading His weary way across the sandy desert from the world to His rest in heaven, or, as being even now raised and seated in the heavenlies? And further we may remark, as we gaze upon Him in His perpetual verdure; was He not as lovely when treading this weary earth as He is now at God’s right hand? True, not lovely to man, but to God, just as the palm tree bears its fruit as near heaven as possible. Yes, He *was* what He *is*!

We have seen the significance of the chains when meditating on the pillars of the porch.

Solomon “garnished the house with precious stones for beauty.” We are not told what those stones were, but we can say that they were the *only* stones seen when in the interior. So also in the description of the Bride, in Rev. xxi., precious stones are the only stones described. Of these, one has very sweetly remarked that whatever may be the peculiar beauty of each stone, their beauty would not be visible but for the light of the Lamb. The one has one gift, and the other another, but all are from Him and of Him; yea the “uncomely members have more abundant comeliness.” The world sees no beauty in us, but the Lord reckons us His jewels set in His temple “for beauty.” With what a lustre each redeemed one will show forth His grace in the ages to come!

The cherubim graven upon the gold, I hardly need say, figure “to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenlies (not earthly power, but angelic,) might be known through the church the manifold wisdom of God.” What a wondrous thing the church is! The heavens and the earth are the works of His hands, but it is the church that is His *ποίημα*, His

complete piece of workmanship, His Poem! In *this* only can the principalities and powers in the heavenlies see His "manifold wisdom." Whether the church, *i. e.*, the *professing* church with all its cumbrous self-invented machinery is displaying man's wisdom or God's, is a question which naturally suggests itself, and which I leave the reader to solve. But God's object is plainly stated to be the shewing forth of *His* wisdom.

Ah! my soul, such wondrous beauty and grace are dazzling. As we contemplate such things, like Sheba's queen, there is no more spirit left in us; we can only bow our heads and say, "How precious are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!"

C. H. B.

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

NOTE.

Attention has been called, by a beloved brother, to some expressions in a recent number of *SOUND WORDS*, which perhaps *are* ambiguous, and may perhaps be used by the enemy to convey a meaning very different from that intended by the writer. Satan often introduces the thin edge of the wedge of evil doctrine by hiding it under an expression which may have two meanings, and that it may be clear that there is no *covert*, no *hidden*, meaning here, it is referred to. The first expression: "He came down to us, and shared in the sickness and trials common to us" (*Med. on Sol. Tem.*, page 35), must not be taken to mean that that Blessed Spotless One shared in our *fallen nature*, or even the *consequences* of it, but simply, that He knew what bodily weakness was, "he hungered;" and grief, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" and trial, "He was tried in all points like as we are, sin apart." And if I add that it was by means of *compassion* that He bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows (not that He endured in His own body every form of grief and disease that sin has entailed upon a fallen race), I trust that it will be quite clear what the writer meant.

In reference to the second expression: "Because He rose with me," it is quite true that Scripture does not put it thus, but, ye are "risen *with Christ*." The word "with" was used by the writer as meaning, of course,

possession. Thus, although I might in haste say "I went to New York with my boy," I really mean, of course, that I went to New York and took him with me. The object of the writer was to present the *person* of Christ, not the doctrine of resurrection; otherwise he might have said: "I am with Him."

In these "difficult times," when Satan spreads his webs of evil doctrine on every hand, and every blessed truth that the Spirit has brought to light is an object of his attack (which he makes strategically), it becomes us to be very careful even as to the words and illustrations whereby we seek to convey instruction, and we are *thankful* to any brother for pointing out any faulty expression which might be used to dishonor the Lord Jesus Christ, and lead souls away from Him to questions which gender strife.

C. H. B.

ON MATTHEW XVIII. 20.

Extract from a Letter.

As to meeting in the name of Jesus—the scriptural expression is, "gathered unto His name," which is a different thing. His name is thus the thing that gathers us. "The name of Jesus," is the expression of what He is, personally and officially. Being gathered to His name, implies that this is the bond of connection between those so gathered. The allowance of false doctrine as to Him, would make such gathering impossible. But on the other hand, denominational bonds (being connected by other names) could not consist with it.

The promise "There am I," is only to those so "gathered." But I do not mean by this that the Holy Spirit does not dwell elsewhere. The house of God—the whole profession—is His dwelling place. The Spirit of God works, therefore, far and wide, but "there am I," is the Lord's presence, and gives His own sanction, and authority to even two or three gathered to His name. The presence of the Spirit is not *sanction* but the witness of the accomplished work of Christ, and the grace which flows out through this. In Matt. xviii., the Lord's presence in the midst, plainly is given in this way, whatever more be implied in it.

There is no such expression any where as the Holy Ghost in the midst, nor can we say the Lord is present by the Spirit merely ; when He spoke of the Son of Man who is in heaven, was He in Heaven by the Spirit ? In the same way after having gone up to heaven, can He not be with us on earth ? Not bodily of course, but just as truly.

F. W. G.

THE WALK OF FAITH.

(Heb. xi. 8-10, 17-18.)

The faith of Abraham, bearing as it does the very same characteristics as our own faith, is a study full of instruction for us; his difficulties, produced for the most part by his failure, are also such as we often have to encounter, whether in pursuing the path of faith or in our deviations therefrom.

What then was the object of Abraham's call? It was to be a witness for God against that independence which man had declared in the building of Babel. Noah had been the witness to the time of Abraham; but Abraham's call was altogether of faith, a witness for God *against* the evil and in opposition *to* the evil. The first action of faith was to leave his country and all associations of the flesh. This was his starting-point, and next he becomes a stranger in the land of promise, and is there by faith sustained of God.

Thus is it with the believer. He is called from the associations of nature, characterized only by human independence, and is introduced into a region where he is as yet only a stranger, and where the most thorough and entire dependence on God is necessary. We have not yet got the inheritance though the Spirit gives us the earnest of it, as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; but we are still strangers. A man in his own country would not be a stranger there. Abraham was not a stranger in the land of the Chaldees, but in Canaan he *was* such; and still further, he could only continue there by faith. If he lose his faith, for *one moment*, he is worse off than if he had never got there at all. So with us; God has done all for us—He has raised us up and seated us in heavenly places with His own Son; but if we do not maintain that position in the power of faith, we shall be worse

off, to all intents and purposes, than if we had not known it.

I am not only to leave my own country, but to go to my own place, that place where, so to speak, God has exhausted all the activity of His love. Love is never satisfied until it has done its utmost for its object, and human love knows the pain and distress which the inability to do this causes; but God, infinite in power as well as love, can and does the utmost. He has exhausted all the demands which love made on His heart, and He can do no more for us. He gave Christ; called us into fellowship with Him; raised us up with Him. What more *could* He do? In Ephesians the apostle does not pray for the saints to know the *activities* of love; he knew that it was there *exhausted*, as it were, that is, that it had done all its part, all that it *could* do for its object; but he prays that the souls of the saints already called up into the heavenlies might *rest* there, that their eyes being opened practically to realize the position which love had brought them into, as recorded in Eph. i, ii., they might rest *knowing* this love (Chap. iii).

Every christian knows, more or less, the love that has acted towards him, but it is another thing to know *where* that love has brought me to; and if I do not know this I shall be floundering. So the apostle prays that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened "to know what is the hope of *His calling*," &c. And what is this? Not that we *shall* be, but that we *ARE*, raised up with Christ. Am I, then, in heaven? Yes. God tells me that is my position. Is glory come? No; I must know very little of the pressure of the world if I think it has; but if not, we have heaven by faith, and if not maintained there practically by faith, I shall be worse off than ever; I shall become a Lot! A miserable spectacle was Abraham when he lost his faith. Seeing a difficulty, he was unprepared to meet it, for never was a person prepared by faith for a difficulty, found unable to meet it; and many have to encounter difficulties simply because they do not set themselves to meet them. Abraham's position in the land of Canaan was very different from that of Israel's. Israel was in possession, but Abraham dwelt in the land without possessing so much as a foot in it, and was sustained therein as long as

his faith failed not; but whenever it does fail, he either wanders *from* it, or gets into trouble in it. Once he drops his faith and goes into Egypt, and what is the result? He has to come back, and begin *over again*: that was one character of failure. If the soul does not draw from the resources of God, it goes down elsewhere for help. Again he deviates from the path of faith, and falls into ordinances, or human arrangements, as in the case of Hagar and Ishmael; that was *another* order. The soul drops its living link with God; and how much sorrow and trouble did he thereby bring on himself? If a christian drops from the walk of faith, he either becomes worldly or engaged with his *own* works. Nature cannot depend on God doing better for us than we can do for ourselves; it will crave after, plan and fret itself to accomplish its own way, all the while proving that we have lost our dependence on God. Abraham with shame has to retrace his steps, but God did not give him up, though He disciplined him. If He had, Abraham would have become a Lot, and there would have been no recovery or blessing. for Lot never again takes his place in Canaan.

But it is of Abraham's faith, rather than of his failures, that I desire to speak.

Let us turn and look at the action of faith, and the character of blessing which walking therein gives. Supposing, then, that while firmly treading this blessed path so happy for oneself, and so glorifying to God, I meet a Lot, who is looking about for something for nature, what shall I say to him? "Take what you like best: I want nothing. I can afford to give up all; for I know what I have in God. His love is, as it were, exhausted on me. What more do I need?" But when trouble comes upon Lot, and he is taken prisoner in the meshes he had laid for himself, *then* is the moment for service, as far as I am concerned. Abraham puts his life in his hand, summoning together *all* the resources of his house for this one occasion to deliver his brother, just as we, when on firm footing ourselves, can turn round and pull another out of the mire. Could we do so if we were in the mire ourselves? No; but if walking in faith, we can come forth, armed and ready, using all our means to declare all God's goodness, in the power

of having experienced it ourselves. And what is our reward? The *blessing of Melchizedek*.

What a place of service the path of faith puts us in! Lot knew neither the service nor the blessing. Instead of being on the sure ground and the firm position, which would have left him free to help others, he needed help for himself. We cannot wash the feet of another unless the Lord has washed our feet. Neither can we do so *rightly* unless we follow the manner as well as the act of His service to us. Why is it that, when we wish to correct a fault in another, we only offend him? Because we do it not as the Lord has done it to ourselves; we have not learnt His manner: if we had, we would be rehearsing the blessedness of it in our own souls. It was thus with Abraham; and the result is, Melchizedek meets him in the way returning from his honorable service. God reveals His mind to the soul that is walking in faith. If I have not God's mind, it is because I am not walking where God can meet me. Nothing gratifies Him so much as for a soul to depend on Him; for it is to say to Him, "I look to you because I *know* you care for me, and I can cast all my care on you."

To continue. God reveals Himself to Abraham in a special way after his rejecting the offers of the King of Sodom. "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." And Abraham replies, "What wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless," &c. *He craved the promised seed.* "What were all else to me," he says, "if I have no son?" because God had made that the centre around which all His promises were to revolve. Position would be nothing to us without the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. All our blessings centre in Him. And whatever the scope of our blessing, we never could enjoy it solitarily. Heaven would not be happiness to us without Christ. Why is man alone down here? Because he cannot trust anybody. But we can trust the Lord Jesus entirely, knowing at the same time all the anxious tenderness of His love. He is the only one we can rest in. He is up there as the perpetuity of our blessing; and we are raised up to sit with Him in the heavenly places. Everything really from God to us in this world, is through our Lord Jesus Christ. All God's mercies reach us through Him. The mercies or gifts may be removed from us; but *He*—

never! Are we prepared for every mercy we possess to pass into death? Do we only enjoy it as received in a figure from death? This is what faith teaches us, as it taught Abraham—to view every thing, though existing, as akin to death. God takes away Jonah's gourd and he is angry; but if I am prepared to let all die, I am walking up to the mark, as Abraham did, when by faith he "offered up his only-begotten son, of whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. Accounting that God was able to raise him up from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure." The greater the mercy, the greater the death. What terrible rending of soul there is in the ascent of Mount Moriah! How one shrinks from it, and puts off the evil day; and when it does come, how we fret, like Jonah, that such a thing should come. Yet not so with Abraham, his faith bore him through it; and in the power of the like faith we, too, may ascend, and see Jesus all the way; and if we do, we shall be able to say, "My only son is dead, but I have lost nothing: Jesus is mine, and I shall receive what I have lost in resurrection." What a thing to be able to hold all as liable to death, but to have my own soul at the other side of death in life and joy. All we take up will have to pass through death; yea, even all that God gives us: the more perfect the gift, the more sorrow on account of its not being permanent; for we want permanency with perfection. "I do well to be angry," said Jonah, when he lost his gourd. But what had he to learn? The sympathies of God: His love and tenderness to His creation down here, which he never had, even for himself, an idea of before.

If the Lord brings to an end what we are resting in, He always conducts to a higher scene. Moses on Pisgah had a much brighter view of Canaan than if his thought of entering it had not come to an end; and he stepped from it to the mount of transfiguration. Was there ever so happy a man as Paul? We have the practical expression of the place he was in, in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Philippians, the position and the condition; and that was, when all that his heart had been set on here, had come to an end. God will never keep His mercies back from us; but we know little of the manner of His love with us; and the very gourd that engages our affec-

tions may be that which must come down, in order to teach us His love.

To conclude, if we know our position we shall be better prepared for service, and better prepared for glory. If we want to serve the Lord we must walk by faith, holding our position, because then we enjoy the climax of God's love; and if we want glory we must pass on to it through resurrection. For twenty-two years Abraham and Isaac were in happy enjoyment of one another. God demanded him of Abraham in the full bloom of life, just to teach him the lesson of death and resurrection. Does God thus deprive us of mercies in order that we may feel how dreary is the valley of the shadow of death? Nay, but to make it the brighter. All these terrible breaks are but to show us more of our infinite resources in Jesus. Oh! if our hearts could reckon more on the heart of Christ, and know so well the shelter of His love, that if a storm comes and sweeps away every thing that comforts (as a feather from God's wing), we may know where to look, seeing Jesus every-where, restoring it in resurrection, as Lazarus was restored to his sisters. Then the walk of faith is happy dependence on God. J. B. S.

IS THERE A RE-APPLICATION OF THE BLOOD ?

I feel the subject of the greatest possible importance, and therefore do not let it drop. Many dear souls do not see clearly the truth on the point, and suffer by it. They have not the liberty before God they might have, and true holiness suffers by it; but it is want of light, and that is not a subject of reproach.

There is a cleansing or washing by water as well as by blood. I have little doubt that the real allusion is to the priest, whose whole body was washed when they were consecrated, and afterwards washed hands and feet—here only the feet. But weak as it is, the whole of the argument is founded on the first washing in John xiii. being with blood which it surely is not. All blessing is founded on the value of Christ's precious blood, from the cleansing of our conscience from sin, to the new heavens and the new earth; yea, the glory of God Himself, and the Son of Man's glory above. God's glory, our peace, and the immutable stability of all blessings

depends on it. That is not the question, but whether our consciences are cleared *once for all* by the sacrifice of Christ, known of course, by faith.

The Epistle to the Hebrews declares that we are perfected for ever, and that God remembers our sins and iniquities no more; that there being only one offering, implies that the worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins—that if it were not so, Christ must have often suffered. Now I do not call in question the putting or sprinkling of the blood on us. He has washed us too, it is said, from our sins in His own blood—only. *He has done it.* In the Old Testament we have the covenant sealed by the sprinkling of blood or putting it on the person—the leper cleansed by it, the priests consecrated by it; but these once for all. But there is another aspect of the blood, which is that insisted on in the Hebrews, namely, its being *presented to God.* You have not the application of it in the Hebrews, but its being taken within the veil. No doubt the value of this is enjoyed by faith, but the great subject of the epistle is its being presented to God. On the great day of atonement referred to (Hebrews ix. 12), there was no sprinkling of blood on the people, but on and before the mercy-seat, where God sat between the cherubim, and the transfer of the sins to the scapegoat, and this, note, was what cleared their sins; and it is this these chapters insist on, adding an illusion to the red heifer, of which I will speak. Hence, note, so far from the sprinkling of the blood of bulls and goats in the first part of the 15th verse of Hebrews ix., necessarily involving its being the sprinkling of blood in the latter part (as both included in the anti-type in verse 14), there was no sprinkling of the blood of bulls and of goats at all, on the great day of atonement referred to, except on the mercy-seat; it was not any sprinkling of the blood on the people which cleared them. There is no foundation for this argument at all. Sprinkling of the blood on us is not spoken of in the passage. The whole argument in it is founded on Christ being *offered* only once, and then sitting down, having entered in once by His own blood. The only sprinkling with blood in the chapter is in verse 19—the blood of the covenant at Mount Sinai: which was certainly not repeated, and is not the question indeed

before us. In the 14th verse even, no sprinkling or application is spoken of, but of the value of it to purge the conscience—He having offered Himself without spot to God. It is always this that is insisted on. *Shedding* of blood is what is urged—the *value* of the sacrifice, not its application by sprinkling. From verses 24 to 28, we have carefully urged, in a manner that leaves no question as to it, that it is Christ's offering Himself and entering into heaven to appear in the presence of God for us, which is the subject the Holy Ghost insists on; suffering once, appearing once in the end of the world to put away sin, bearing the sins of many, and being now at the right hand of God—in the presence of God for us—after accomplishing it once for all, or He must often have suffered. This is what is set before our minds—the value and character of the one act, and Christ being gone up on high—and this only.

The 10th chapter is equally clear. It is the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all that sanctifies by God's will. Christ is not, as the Jewish priests, ever standing occupied with a work which *can* never finish. He is *set* down when He had offered one sacrifice for sins, having no more to do for His friends till His enemies be made His footstool—"for by one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified;" and to this the Holy Ghost testifies. God's will, Christ's work (now set down), the Holy Ghost's testimony concur to give constant assurance in coming to God. There is no thought of sprinkling or applying the blood to us in the passage. It is another order of thought—*many* offerings, which can never take away sins, or *one* offered once by Him who is now gone to God. Another remark is needed here, the force of "for ever." It is continuous or continual. It is translated rightly in verse 1—"offered continually." It was constantly going on. Now, Christ having offered one sacrifice of Himself, sits down continuously, and we are continuously perfect: our conscience is as constantly perfect as Christ is constantly sitting at God's right hand. The solemn warning which follows confirms, in the strongest way, the same truth, and the true sense of the passage. If this sacrifice be given up, if we sin wilfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there is no more an offering for sins, but a fearful

looking for of judgment. It is not re-application—the value of the blood sprinkled on us being lost—but an impossibility of repetition of what has been done, because it has been done once for all. The whole passage is the urgent insisting on this, that this blessed efficacy cannot be repeated. Indeed this is universally the case in the Hebrews. Sin, if returned to, is always looked at as finally fatal. It is drawing back to perdition—impossibility to renew to repentance. At any rate, the point here is not repetition of sprinkling to cleanse, but the impossibility of repetition of that which cleanses, as that which is done once for all. Nor is it exactly justification though akin to it: justification has judgment in view—is judicial in its character. This contemplates entrance in to the holiest, and a present and constant cleanness suited to and necessary for it—a perfect conscience—no more conscience of sins—or a new sacrifice must be offered, and repeated suffering of Christ, which is impossible. By one offering He has perfected for ever—for a constant state—them that are sanctified. I do not see how any thing can be clearer or more definite and positive. I am as constantly perfect as Christ is constantly sitting at the right hand of God—and, indeed, because He is, appearing in the presence of God for me, the perpetual living witness that all my sins are gone, for He is there who bore them, and all the value of His blood who has cleansed me by it.

But I am told that the washing of the feet in John xiii. is by blood. The simple answer is, the chapter speaks of water, not of blood—"The Lord poured water in a basin;" that is not blood. What Peter looked for when the Lord said "If I wash thee not," was water, not blood; and to this the Lord answers, "He that is washed," replying to Peter, who referred to the water He had in the basin, "needeth not, save to wash his feet." The whole chapter speaks of water and of nothing else. It is what He had in the basin—what He was *cleansing their feet with*, and what the whole chapter is about, the Lord actually using it then, and referring to it. I speak of The Word, as signified by it, because, as the Lord, referring to this water-washing which was before their eyes, says, "Ye are clean, but not all," Judas being there; and in chap. xv., Judas being gone, "Now (a!ready)

ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." It is a gratuitous and mischievous alteration of the passage to apply it to blood, when the Lord had the water there and was speaking of it. A man cannot be converted and born twice of the word, any more than he can be justified and cleansed with blood twice.

The red heifer remains. One thing is perfectly clear—there is no sprinkling the man with blood in the account given. The blood was sprinkled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, seven times as it was on the mercy seat on the great day of atonement. As a fact, the man was sprinkled with running water with the ashes in it. If it is merely meant that the blood of Christ is the *basis* of all cleansing, I receive it fully. But the sprinkling of the blood is brought in here definitely and positively; elsewhere than on the man the blood was sprinkled with perfect efficacy, seven times, at the door of the tabernacle, where the people met God. There was no sprinkling with blood to cleanse, and what was noted was that ~~the~~ sin had been dealt with long before, and consumed, so to speak, when the heifer was killed and burned. The thing the man was cleansed with was running water, and the ashes which were a witness that this was so. There was no application or sprinkling of blood as blood, but the witness that that had been done long ago, the blood was gone in the fire, shed and sprinkled at the door of the tabernacle—the sin gone—according to the holiness of God's nature, and the efficacy of Christ's offering, and the value of it, perpetually before God, at the place where the people met Him. There was no sprinkling with blood, but the witness of the unbearableness of sin to God, according to that which had consumed and put it away as to us, long ago; and the blood had disappeared in the sacrifice which had been consumed, and in which sin had been judged, while its efficacy remained constantly under the eye of God, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, where, and where only, it was sprinkled as shed blood. For the rest, as made sin, all had been consumed in the fire of God's judgment.

J. N. D.

He gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world (Gal. i. 4.)

WE MAY —.

Mark xiii. 35.

The midday sun declines again,
 The shadows lengthen o'er the plain;
 And yet, before the gloaming come,
 We may have met THEE in our home;
Jesus, our Lord!

The sunset's golden tints are past,
 The after-glow is fading fast;
 Yet, ere the last pulsation dies,
 We may have met Thee in the skies;
Jesus, our Lord!

The stars are twinkling bright and fair,
 The moon lights up the cooler air;
 But, ere the noon of night we may
 Be with Thee, very far away!
Jesus, our Lord!

Darkness on all her seal hath set,
 But soon the day will break; and yet,
 Before the cock gives warning loud,
 We may be with Thee in the cloud!
Jesus, our Lord

The stars are gone, the darkness fled,
 The clouds are brightening over head;
 And yet, before the sun appear,
 We may Thy joyful summons hear!
Jesus, our Lord!

We know not when the time may be,
 But Thou hast bid us look for Thee;
 To watch and wait, and have no care,
 For Thou wilt meet us in the air!
Jesus, our Lord!

J. T.

Do you seek to love each other *as* He did, in such a way that it will rise above every pettiness, every bitterness, every hindrance. "*As Christ loved you!*" Divine love is never thrown back, and never changed by the unworthiness of its object; it is superior to everything. Like a stream, whose banks may for some distance be smooth; but when they become crooked and rocky, the same stream flows on and on, unchanged in its course and its quality; such is His love.

THE ACTS.

Chapter vi.

This beautiful action of the Spirit in the disciples, their selling all and laying it at the apostles' feet, becomes the occasion of a new manifestation of evil, within. The flesh cannot keep up with God. It is only in its complete suppression, that God can move along unhindered, in the full, rich expression of Himself. The flesh lusts against the Spirit; and Satan is ever eager to mar the special testimony of the time.

As the disciples multiplied, "there arose a murmuring"—familiar words, indeed, in the history of God's people. They have little else in their record than murmurings, making God to suffer their manners in the wilderness. Anything can be used as the occasion of this. Here, evidently, self had gotten a place, and jealousy is the result. The Hellenistic Jews—those of Greek origin—murmur against those who were natives of Judea—Hebrews—because their own widows were neglected in the daily distribution. How these things show us what we are, and the need of the exhortations, "let all things be done without murmurings or disputings." "Let *this* mind be in you which also in Christ Jesus,"—the utter emptying of self.

But, as ever, this gives occasion for God who dwelt with them by the Spirit, to meet, in perfect grace, the need. He is ever competent, and our weaknesses do but the more give opportunity for the display of His wisdom. His assembly is in no way a voluntary society, the result of man's will, or the scene for its action. Nor is it a system of rules. It is the habitation of the Holy Spirit, and in all cases, our resource is He who resides and presides there. He can meet every difficulty in its time. As He acted with an energy in Peter, in the former case, removing by death those who defiled His dwelling-place, so now does He at once magnify His grace, in the need, thus most thoroughly rebuking their murmurings.

Quick to discern the mind of the Spirit, the twelve call together the multitude of the disciples, and tell them it is not proper, or pleasing to God, that they should leave the word of God, to serve the tables of those needing. It is peculiar that this very thing of carrying money to his people at Jerusalem, was the occasion of

Paul's leaving the work in the preaching of the word, and going thither, contrary to the direct word of the Spirit. (See chapters xix. 21, xxi. 4, xxiv. 17.) There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are distinctions of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all things in all. Was there not, therefore, in the murmurs of the Hellenists, the token of something wrong, wherein an overburdening of the apostles, and a hindering of their special gifts, were caused? Romans xii. 4-8 gives us much needed instruction on this matter, keeping each at the work assigned him. It is not for us to choose our work, but for each to wait upon his ministry, according to the ability that God has given. Surely, the apostolic gift, laying the foundation truths and having to do with the word, could find no place in seeing that the needy were filled with bread.

Moreover, the Holy Spirit would show the difference between that which was directly from Himself in the dispensation of the word of the gospel, and that which was given by themselves, of their means, fruit though it was of His own presence in them. And as it was their own, they were called upon to select out seven men from among themselves, well reported of, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom the apostles would appoint over this business.

This could give no ground for the choice by the church, of teachers or evangelists or pastors, any more than of apostles, seeing these are the *gifts* from the Head, Christ Himself, and are at His disposal. These men were simply appointed to an office in the local assembly of believers, to take charge of money which they had contributed, and in no sense belonged as such to the church of God when it should spread elsewhere. And even these, the apostles appointed: they were only picked out according to named characteristics, by those who knew them as possessing these. These characteristics were necessary ones: being full of the Holy Spirit, that they might properly and according to His mind, dispense that which He had called out, giving it in an unselfish, gracious and spiritual way; and with wisdom to discern the need; and then to be such as to inspire confidence in all.

“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and

the ministry of the word." The order here is worthy of notice, putting prayer before preaching, in their work. It was the expression of their dependence on God for wisdom, and for strength in the conflict with evil. Acting in the flesh, it might have been a time when they would have put gift first, especially such an one as the apostles' gift, and peculiarly so at such a time, when there was such need of speaking. But speaking that is not preceded by prayer, and received in answer to it, being the filling up of an empty vessel, which prayer expresses, and that continually, must soon be profitless and unsavory. It *was* a time for the word to be spoken, but more so for prayer, that whatever was spoken, whether much or little, should be in the full power of the Spirit. Gift, blessed as it is, is not to be exercised for its own sake, nor to display itself; but only in immediate connection with the Lord Himself, and as the outflow of grace. And what a thorough abnegation of self is needed in the use of it!

It should be noticed, also, how richly grace rises above all complaints, as though they were but the occasion of bringing out its fulness—all those chosen were Hellenists, their names so showing. This is a beautiful mark of the Spirit's work, rising above the mistakes and infirmities of men, turning them to good account. In the early days of Israel, their murmurings served but to disclose the richer resources of Him who had led them out. They were upon His hands in their helplessness and nothingness, just as they were, and He patiently let His fulness wait upon the discovery of their need. This was while they were in the first months of the wilderness—the wilderness according to God's mind. But when they had put themselves under promise to do all that He commanded, and then had refused to go into the land, and had to journey through the thirty-eight years of wilderness—that of rebellion, He gave, after severely judging and openly rebuking. So now, a helpless people, going a way they had never known before, are rebuked only by the sweet unfoldings of grace equal to all emergencies.

These seven were set before the apostles, who laid their hands upon them, identifying themselves and the assembly with them, and so appointing them to their of-

fiat. "And the word of God increased, and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." How wonderful the change, how precious the contrast, between their continual association with those sacrifices that could NEVER take away sin, and entering, at once, upon the full virtue of that "one offering" that forever perfected them: between their standing without where the way into the holiest was not made open, and their being brought into the holiest forever, by the blood of Christ! The opposition from without, and the evil from within, which Satan was using against the truth, served rather to the progress of it, overruled by Him who was in His people. The vessel may have been a poor thing, but God was in it.

The free action of the Holy Spirit is seen in calling out Stephen, who is full of grace and power, the special manifestations of His presence. It was not by virtue of his appointment as one of the seven, that he acted; for that was only to attend to the distribution of money. He was in this used independently by the Holy Spirit. This draws out the opposition of the foreign Jews who were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit with which he spake. So they bring him before the council, and suborn false witnesses, who said, "This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us," giving their inferences from what he said, for his own utterances, the result of their fear and hatred of "this Jesus, the Nazerene."

The Spirit was then using, not the apostles, and not even the home Jews, in this last testimony to the leaders of the nation; but one born elsewhere, to bring in the full indictment against them and to close the earthly character of the testimony, himself being taken up to heaven upon their treating him as a blasphemer, by stoning him, "though his face was as the face of an angel."

This is full of meaning, terrible to them, as showing them still holding on to that which God was rejecting, and in the full intelligence of the matter, taking their place as the enemies and murderers of Christ.

MEDITATIONS ON SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

THE ORACLE.

“And the oracle he prepared in the house within, to set there, the ark of the covenant of the Lord. And the oracle in the forepart was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and he overlaid it with pure gold: and so covered the altar which was of cedar. And within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive tree, each ten cubits high. And five cubits was the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub; from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the uttermost part of the other were ten cubits. And the other cherub was ten cubits: both the cherubims were of one measure and one size. The height of the one cherub was ten cubits, and so was it of the other cherub. And he set the cherubims within the inner house: and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims, so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house. And he overlaid the cherubims with gold. And the entering of the oracle he made doors of olive tree; the lintel and side posts were five square (marg.) The leaves of the doors (marg.) also were of olive tree; and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubims and upon the palm trees. So also made he for the door of the temple posts of olive tree, four square (marg.). And the two doors were of fir tree: the two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding. And he carved thereon cherubims and palm trees and open flowers: and covered them with gold fitted upon the carved work” (1 Kings vi. 19, 20, 23-28, 31-35).

We find that just as Christ is presented to us in the scriptures in four distinct characters, as in the gospels—Messiah, Servant, Saviour, Son of God—and the believer—a saved man (Rom.), a member of the Body of Christ (Eph.), a washed man (Peter), a child of God (John)—so also is the Church; viz., as the Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, the Church (*i. e.* assembly) of God, and the Holy City. The first of these aspects we have already glanced at, and the fourth we will leave to the concluding chapter. What we have portrayed in this part of the temple is the third.

The oracle was formed by partitioning off the space of twenty cubits with boards of cedar, and a veil of blue, purple, crimson and fine linen. We know that the veil has now been rent in twain and the way into the holiest opened; yet it serves to illustrate to us this other aspect of the church.

In reading the description we cannot fail to notice that the prominent thing in the oracle was the cherubim, whose wings reached from wall to wall, whose presence filled the most holy place. To know what these signify, and thus to get also the key of the whole, we have but to consider of what they were made: "He made two cherubim of olive tree." or, as the margin very explicitly says, "trees of oil." Oil always signifies the Holy Spirit; and their form, *cherubim*, and their being overlaid with *gold* (which always signifies something Divine), confirm the thought that they signify the Divine presence in the temple, and, to us the Holy Spirit's presence in the assembly of God.

What a wonderful theme of meditation is presented to us here! Surely, my soul, thou wilt remember that thou art on holy ground. The subject of the Holy Spirit's presence is not one to be handled by the imagination; only He Himself can teach thee of Himself. And He will do it, for though He does not speak *from* Himself (John xvi. 13), He does teach *about* Himself; how else should we know His presence? *How* does he teach? *By the word!* I would not know that I, as a believer, have the Holy Spirit, but by the Word written by Himself. Dost thou then set at naught the consciousness of His presence? Not at all; but I would not be conscious that I had the Spirit, if He had not told me of it, for though I might find myself crying the Spirit's cry, "Abba, Father." I would not know that it was the mark of His presence, but by the Word. It is precious to realize that one is led by the Spirit of God; to be conscious of His guidance, not only in the intelligence of, and joy in, the blessed truth that He unfolds, but also in all the minutiae that make up every day life. It is blessed to realize that He is my Guide, that the Father has, so to speak, given Him a map of the whole road, and has commissioned Him to take me by it, spite of all opposing forces, and made Him the Agent by which all my needs are met, removing all obstacles from my way, shielding me from danger, leading me into green pastures, giving me refreshing streams when I need comfort and withholding them when I get occupied with the joy rather than the source; all this is indeed precious; but how am I conscious of it? *By the Word!* Conscious-

ness is but another word for knowledge. When I say I am conscious that I am saved, I mean simply that I *know* it. And how do I know it? only by the word of the gospel, of course. Even so I know that I have the Holy Ghost, am a child of God, am led by the Spirit of God, *because He tells me so!* I believe it and thus realize it. When the Lord opened the young man's eyes at Elisha's request, he saw the chariots of fire; but they were there before he saw them; his seeing them did not put them there: Elisha saw them there already.

Most emphatically would I say that the Holy Spirit is not a feeling; people *feel* like engaging in things most dishonoring to the Lord, and when remonstrated with say that the Spirit led them there, and what the Spirit leads to must be right. When the plain written word is brought to their notice, they reply, Oh, the letter killeth, only the Spirit giveth life. Which, in the sense they use it, is entirely untrue, for Peter speaks of the word giving life, "Being born again," he says, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.*" The letter that kills (2 Cor. iii. 6) is the very thing so many put themselves under, rejecting the doctrine of *grace* taught by the Spirit: it is *the law*; "the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones" (verse 7). If the truth taught by the Spirit is received into the heart, (the only place it can be received in,) there will undoubtedly be feelings of deep joy produced. (But who would be so foolish as to call the moon's rays, the moon!) But many have very joyful feelings which are entirely the product of carnal things (such as sentimental music, big meetings, shouting, &c.), which, as they believe not the Word of God as to the possession of eternal life by faith in the Son, we know are not of the Spirit, for the sealing of the Holy Ghost is given on believing (Eph. i. 13).

But there may be a vast amount of knowledge about doctrines, which is but intellectual; to *know God* is eternal life, and this knowledge can only be given by the Holy Spirit's writing on the heart, the Word, of course, being the instrument.

And now, having been sealed by the Holy Spirit, if I would be taught and led by Him, I must be careful not to grieve Him, which, as He is holy, and the body which

is His temple, is but flesh, requires much watchfulness. There *must be* a broken will, and self-emptiness, if I would be "filled with the Spirit." It is this, doubtless, that sincere souls mean when they talk of being "baptized" by the Holy Ghost. But baptism of the Holy Ghost is not an "experience," it is simply the word used when speaking of a number of believers who, individually, are "sealed." "By *one* Spirit are we *all* baptized, (*i. e.*, immersed, enveloped, as the fathers were in the cloud and in the sea.—1 Cor. x. 2,) into *one* body.... and have been *all* made to drink into *one* Spirit."

But there are undoubtedly many believers who have very little *enjoyment* of the Spirit's presence. The reason is, they *grieve* Him, and thus hinder His leading them into the deep things of God. Their own wills are sweet to them; sweeter, alas! than the manifestations of the presence of the Father and Son that He would give. How sad! A fine dress, a fine house, a little excitement, preferred to the company of the Lord Jesus!

"Oh, set me as a seal upon Thine heart, O Lord!

Let the undisturbed communion of the Holy Ghost

Be mine for ever to enjoy.

May Thine own presence cheer me,

And peace—the deep, profound, unruffled peace of God—

My present, everlasting portion be!

Grant, too, my gracious God,

That in these faithless, formal days

I faithful to the end may prove—

Leaning upon Jesus all the way,

In peaceful confidence of His love—

And like a Nazarite indeed!

Be separate wholly to the Lord,

And purify myself, even as He is pure."

The Holy Spirit dwells with us in a double sense: speaking individually, the body of each believer is His temple—"Know ye not that your *body* is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?" (1 Cor. vi. 19)—and collectively, the assembly is His house—"Know ye not that *ye* are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16.) These, of course, are connected, the latter being dependent on the former: because of this, we turned aside for a moment, to dwell on the individual indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but it is really the assembly that we have before us in this type.

"The house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

What is it that constitutes me a member of God's assembly? Let us consider the entrance into the oracle. It is remarkable that the Spirit should have left the description of the doors of the temple until after the doors of the oracle had been described, so that they both come together, our attention thus being called to their sameness and difference, which is chiefly this: The entrance into the oracle had posts and doors of olive tree; the entrance into the temple, posts of olive tree and doors of fir. What I gather from this is, that while one can only find entrance into God's kingdom by faith in Christ held up to the soul by the Holy Spirit, it is the Holy Spirit alone by which we gain admittance into God's assembly. It is said in 1 Cor. xii., where the relationship of the assembly is spoken of, "*By one Spirit* are we all baptized into one body." The church is the visible expression of the body, the testimony to it. Being saved, and being in the assembly are not the same thing. I am saved by faith in Christ, I am baptized into the "one body" by the Spirit. I do not wish to *separate* these things for a moment, but to *distinguish* them, and this we find to be of vast importance when taking up the practical bearing of this truth. Let us remember that we have before us a house, as it were, within a house, the oracle within the temple; or more strictly, perhaps, these two divisions, temple and oracle, within the house. Last month we were looking at the outside view of the temple as given in Peter, and the inside view as given in Ephesians; but we have here the assembly view of 1 Corinthians.

Turning to that book, we find that, just as the prominent thing in the oracle was the cherubim, their wings stretching from wall to wall, so the Holy Spirit has a special prominence here, being spoken of oftener than in any other epistle. From the very first chapter, human wisdom is set aside and prominence given to the Holy Ghost as the only teacher, as the only *power* in the assembly. Their running after *men* was not recognizing this, for the Spirit gathers not to men, but to Christ. As for himself, Paul disclaims having any wisdom, he was with them in weakness and fear, and much trembling

the only power he could speak of was that of the Spirit. He did speak wisdom, but it was the *wisdom of God*, "which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." Therefore, in an assembly of God, human wisdom will not be sought after, for it could not tell us anything, "eye had not seen nor ear heard," those things which we now know, but not by man's wisdom, but by the Spirit of God. "Now we *have received*, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

It is the presence of the Holy Ghost that constitutes an assembly, God's assembly; and this cannot be too strongly emphasized. The mere fact of an assembly being composed entirely of Christians, does not constitute them God's assembly. In the normal condition of Christendom such an assembly would have the Spirit's presence and would be His assembly, but let us remember that it is the Spirit's presence *in the assembly*, not the individuals indwelling, that makes them an assembly of God. And now that Christendom is so very far away from her normal condition, it becomes of vast importance to recognize this truth. That assembly which can count upon the presence of the Holy Ghost and can claim to be of God, is that gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; (there is a great difference between meeting as Christians, or as brethren, and being gathered to Christ; He is the foundation of the temple in the assembly aspect as in every other.—1 Cor. iii. 10, 11;) where the Holy Spirit, not man, is ruler, distributing gifts and ordering them as *He* wills; where the Word of God is the only authority, and *is* an authority, there being no appeal from its decision, no evading of its force, no twisting of its meaning, its instruction being bowed to as the voice of God written by the Spirit. Such an assembly, and such alone, are we warranted in recognizing as an assembly of God.

Such an assembly cannot expect to be among the great things of the world, and therefore we find that in none of the epistles is weakness so dwelt upon as in the Corinthian. In the second epistle, especially, which like all the other second epistles, has a special application to the last days, weakness is much dwelt upon; the apostle

glorying in it, however, that the power of God might rest upon him. We find an intimation of this, too, in the oracle, for the posts of olive tree were five square (five is the *weak* number), also each of the wings of the cherubim were five cubits wide. The "power" that an assembly of God has, is not what would be considered power in the language of the world. God's power is displayed in weakness; not by taking away the weakness, but by making use of it, that it may be apparent that His instruments are not taken from the wise, the mighty, the noble, after the flesh; but from the foolish, the weak, the base, the despised, the things that are not, "that no flesh should glory in His presence." Hear the language of the church apostle when addressing the assembly of God at Corinth: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. (He is writing this, not to sinners, but to saints; for they were rich, they were reigning as kings, they were seeking after fleshly power, going after men, &c., see chapter iv. Had they forgotten that Christ was *crucified!*) And I was with you in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Power was there, but it was the Lord's power, not Paul's.

We must just notice in concluding this chapter, the significance of *two* cherubim. It is briefly this: "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." The believer has fellowship with both by the Holy Spirit, as in John xiv., the promise of the Comforter is followed by the promise of the abiding of the Father and the Son with the believer who keeps His words. And we know that the assembly gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus has the promise of His presence, and such an assembly is also the temple of God. But it is noticeable that the assembly is but once called the Church of Christ (Rom. xvi. 16): with this exception it is always called the Church of God. This adds force to the remarks already made as to what the assembly is. (The words church and assembly, mean the same thing.

The Greek word for church—*ecclesia*—is taken from the verb *eccaleo*—to call out of. When we remember that the assembly of God is composed of saints “called” (Rom. viii. 30) forth from the world by the Holy Spirit, we see its beauty and appropriateness, and receive a lesson as to our place of separation from the world that we are no longer of (John xvii. 14).

But let us be careful lest in making these distinctions we exalt one person of the Godhead to the lowering of another, for we read, “both the cherubim were of one measure and one size. The height of the one cherub was ten cubits, and so was it of the other cherub.” All are equal; although as different subjects are before the mind, one assumes a temporary prominence. As regards salvation; if we consider the *plan*, the Father is first, for “God so loved,” &c.; if we consider the *manner*, the Son is first, for “without shedding of blood is no remission;” and if we consider the agency by which man receives it, the Spirit is first, for the natural man cannot receive the things of God; only by the Spirit can he know them. But each is God, and co-equal, and co-eternal.

C. H. B.

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

INTIMACY WITH THE LORD.

Notes on Genesis xviii.

The position in which Abraham is presented in this chapter gives a very descriptive display of the ground of intimacy with Himself on which the Lord has set His people. In many respects it is a positive blessing to be brought into association with the Lord, as we find in the case of Abraham; but he is here presented not as the depository of promises or the object of covenanted blessings, but as enjoying the *intimacy* which his position brought him into with the Lord.

The condition of the revelation, which separated him from natural associations and earthly ties and made him a stranger and pilgrim in the world, put him into this place of intimacy; as God had said to him, “Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” But the testimony to us is, that in virtue of God’s dealings with us in Christ, we also are brought.

into this place of confidence and intimacy, though in a much higher sense. Abraham stood on the earth, the place of judgment, but God's call in grace puts us in direct association with the blessing, and as risen with Christ, altogether apart from the place of judgment. Ephesians i. 9 presents this intimacy as resulting from the place in which we are set in Christ: "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which he hath purposed in Himself," &c. This revelation to us of the thoughts of God does not relate to our own direct blessing, but is the token of confidence toward us whom He has set in such intimacy of relationship with Himself. As Christ said to His disciples, "I call you not servants: for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends: for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you."

Abraham's position with the Lord was one of perfect peace and unquestioning confidence. He has no question to settle with the Lord, but is on that ground where he can enjoy without any hindrance, communion with Him. Neither the scene that was passing before him, nor the thoughts of the judgment that the Lord tells him He is about to execute, have any power to disturb the quiet with which he maintains his intercourse with the Lord.

In the sixteenth verse it is said, "The men rose up from thence and looked towards Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on their way." The Lord directed them in judgment, and Abraham went with them to show them the way. He is here the companion of the Lord, and confidant of His thoughts. And to us the Lord is not only the eternal spring of blessings to our souls, but He makes His saints His companions; not invariably, it is true, but still He does so. And it is in the communications which the Lord makes to us, that He thus makes us His companions; for certainly there is not a more happy or certain way in which any one can show his love to another, than by communicating to him his thoughts and feelings. "Who hath known the mind of the Lord?" "But we have the mind of Christ." "Enoch walked with God and he was not, for God took him." So we are called to walk with

Christ until He comes and takes us up to Himself. The exercises and the path of faith are all in this world, but the issues of the trial and the bright "hope of righteousness by faith" are above. "Abraham went with the men to bring them on their way." That was all. He was entirely apart from the judgment that was about to be executed upon Sodom; as the Church is also above the world's judgment, though not above the Lord's discipline for its good. Lot, in his desires after the good of this world, had looked toward Sodom, and found himself ensnared by it; but Abraham was so entirely out of it, as to be talking to the Lord about its fate, when Lot had to be roused by the startling words of the angels: "Hast thou here any besides? Sons-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place," for we will destroy this place. But the Lord said to Abraham, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? For I know him," &c.

The Lord God put Abraham into the place of covenant blessing, and on this ground He communicates to him His thoughts. He had in a sense, bound himself to be Abraham's companion by the very terms of the revelation He had made to him; for He had said, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that *I will show thee.*" And the result is, this introduction into confidence and intimacy of intercourse with the Lord, who speaks to him "of his house for a great while to come." And the ground of the Lord's communications of His thoughts to us is, that having centred His love in us, He lets us into His confidence. He has united the Church to Christ, and associated it with Christ, and hence He makes known to us "the mystery of His will." It is the consequence and result of the place in which He had set us.

The Lord says of Abraham, "*I know him,*" &c. There is the greatest blessing in this; it is so entirely the language of friendship, and so opposite to the way in which He speaks about judgment. He does not talk about "*knowing*" those He is going to judge, but says, "I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know." Until He has fully in-

vestigated, He will not strike even in judgment. But it is not thus with the Saints; He has no need to go down to see about them, for He fully knows and owns them, as He said to Abraham, "I know him."

The men turned their faces from thence and went toward Sodom; but *Abraham stood yet before the Lord.* It is a blessed thing so to know our place and blessing with the Lord as to be able to do this. For if the Lord thus "knows Abraham," so as to secure to him the blessings He had promised, it is answered by Abraham's staying with the Lord Himself.

He is going to bring judgment on the world; but He will not smite until He cannot help it: as He said, "The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." But no judgment that was coming on the cities of the plain could separate Abraham from the Lord. The Lord's eye so rests on him that He is able to rest quietly in the Lord. And so it is with us; whatever trial, or sorrow, or judgment is coming upon the world, our place is to abide with the Lord Himself; and then, like Abraham, the effect of having drunk into His grace will be, that we shall be calm, quiet, and happy. There will, alas! be Lots many, in the well-watered gardens of the plain; but let us be in the mountain with the Lord, abiding in perfect peace; not alone in security from the judgment, but in that which is far higher, with the Lord Himself.

Abraham being thus with the Lord in perfect peace has nothing, as we see, to ask for, himself; but becomes the earnest intercessor for others. And even subsequently, in the case of Abimelech, the Lord says, "Restore the man his wife, for he is a *prophet*, and he shall pray for thee and thou shalt live." The force of this is, if he be a prophet, if he has this intimacy with the mind of the Lord, let him pray for thee, and I will hear him. So it is with us: If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." The possession of the Lord's mind gives us the power of intercession for others. This is not like wrestling Jacob, who had to get the blessing for himself, though it is possible we may have to wrestle for ourselves in order to get individual blessing, for we must not be untrue to our actual state: but Abraham's prayer for Sodom is communion, and the knowledge of this

communion produces peace and joy. It is not that reverence will be absent from the soul, for Abraham says, "I am but dust and ashes," in the profoundest sense of his own nothingness in the presence of God; still there is the most perfect intimacy, as we witness in his advancing from point to point in his pleadings with the Lord for the sparing of Sodom; while this whole wondrous scene closes with the simple words, "And the Lord went his way as soon as He had done communing with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place. x.

HIS PASTURES.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures" (Ps. xxiii. 2).

What boundless expanse of evergreen pastures, does our gracious Shepherd open and spread out before our wondering eyes! What a freshness of "tender herbs," glistening in the sunshine of His presence, favor, and blessing. Come, ye that hunger, come, ye that are thirsty, and behold the bright, boundless scene of exuberance, that bursts upon our view, as we approach it under His guidance. Not narrow meadows, with shriveled, half-withered grass, hedged in by human religious creeds, prejudices and ordinances, confined within the narrow pale of a sect; but enter here with that liberty, wherewith Christ, your Good Shepherd, has made you free; and your soul shall be satisfied, as with marrow and fatness, and your mouth shall praise Him with joyful lips, who is the door, and maketh His sheep to go in and out and find pasture.

But there is more. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." Blessed Shepherd! He not only leads the sheep to the pasture, and says: "There is the food! Now go and feed." But He makes us to lie down in the midst of that exuberant expanse of "tender herbs," to rest in the repose of perfect peace. But mark, Christian reader, "He maketh me to lie down." He alone, and none else, can do it. "He, Jehovah Jesus, must be at the head of this second verse, as He heads the first, and as we shall find Him at the opening of the third. It is He who does the whole work of feeding, and restoring, and comforting the sheep, as it was He who did the work of salvation. It is the Shepherd who sought the sheep, when

it was lost, and carries it home on His shoulders, after He has found it. When the sheep was lost, Jesus loved it, and because it was a lost one, He sought it. After He has found it, He loves it, because it is a found one, and He carries it home on His shoulders.

But here, it is neither the going of the Shepherd after the lost one, nor His carrying home the found one, but His making the feeding one "to lie down." His disciples, at His command, could make five thousand hungry people "to sit down" upon the tender grass, to satisfy their natural hunger from His abundance. But neither they, nor any other servant of Christ, even if he be the most gifted preacher, teacher, or pastor, can make the feeblest lamb of the flock of God "to lie down" in the tender herbs of the green pasture of Jehovah Jesus. Such a gifted under-pastor of Christ's flock may make the people to "sit down" under His ministry (as is the current expression), just as the Lord's disciples made those five thousand to sit down upon the grass, but none but Christ can make them to "lie down."

Let not the reader think I am playing with words. The evil propensity of holding men in admiration, instead of honoring God's laborers "for their works sake" (*i. e.*, for God's sake), is vastly increasing every-where; although God, in our time, perhaps more than ever before, takes care to remind, by most solemn lessons, His blood-bought people, of His warning word, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils." An exciting sermon, or a "stirring lecture," often produces effects very different from the "lying down in green pastures." "One thing is needful," Christian reader, in our days, more than ever. A more constant sitting at the feet of Jesus, feeding upon His Word, with open eyes, open ears, and open hearts. Eyes fixed on His beauty and glory, in the power of faith, and of an ungrieved Spirit. Ears, swift to hear, and to listen to the voice of that Shepherd, and hearts responding in adoration and thanksgivings. No lying down in His green pastures without such sitting at the feet of Him, by whom "grace and truth came" into the world. There alone we learn to take in truth, and there alone we learn to digest it, in the deepening sense of His grace.

It is His grace that says to you: Ye sheep and lambs

of My flock! I want you not only to feed upon My pastures, but to lie down in the midst of them. The only use you have made of your feet, has been to run astray with them. Therefore I not only carry you home on My shoulders, but, as to the pasture, after you have been feeding, I fold your feet under your body, lest you should use them for running hither and thither in My pasture, and thus turn the very abundance of it into snares for your feet; growing weak instead of growing strong. And so I lay you down in the midst of them. Rest now, ruminare, digest, meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, in the peaceful, reclining posture of calm repose, in the midst of the verdant exuberance around thee, that thy profiting may appear to all. Blessed feeding! Blessed lying down! And thrice blessed Saviour and Shepherd of our souls, who alone, and none else, can make us thus to lie down in evergreen pastures.

A few words as to the character of our loving Shepherd's pasture, *i. e.*, the Word of God. It has a two-fold power and aspect; one for the conscience, and the other for the heart. It is like the little book which the angel gave to the apostle John; in the mouth sweet as honey, and making the belly bitter. It has a searching, detecting, judging power, as to the conscience; a healing and comforting power, for the broken heart; and a formative power for the conduct. And as there is no healing, where there is no wound, so there can be no comfort for the heart by the Word, unless connected with true exercise of conscience. Its comforting power cannot be realized in the heart, unless its searching power has been felt in the conscience. Further, the Word of God has a detaching power, as to all that belongs to this world; but an attaching power to the person of Christ Jesus, who "is altogether lovely" (a word for the heart), and also "the chiefest among ten thousand" (a word for the conscience).

But "whilst the Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, a discern-er of the thoughts and intents of the heart," (an effect, which, in itself, implies rather the opposite of food and pasture,) it is at the same time "sweeter than honey

comb" to the taste (Hebrew "palate") of him, who has been exercised thereby. Let us remember here again, that there is no real feeding of the heart on the pasture of the Word of God, unless there be, at the same time, real exercise of an honest conscience (made true by grace) under the eyes of "Him with whom we have to do." Christ Jesus is the Good Shepherd, but He is also "He that is holy, He that is true." It is of the utmost importance, constantly to remember this, though well known, yet, alas! so often unheeded truth, especially in these latter times. Do we not hear, across the distance of eighteen hundred years, the solemn note of warning from that faithful watchman, when, from Rome—then the capital of the Gentiles, not yet "The mother of harlots,"—but the closing scene of labor of the most faithful witness of Christ and His truth—He thus prophesied:—

"For the time will come, when 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 shall be turned unto fables." A time, when there is much enjoyment in the light of truth, but amazingly little exercise of conscience under its power and authority; much laying hold upon truth, without truth laying hold upon people's souls. Great talents, great powers of oratory, and beautiful language, in sermons and writings; but the Cross, and its power, lost sight of, or hidden by the very flowers of human oratory, that professes to set it forth by adorning it! A time of much stir and excitement, often called "Revival," with the saddest, hardening reaction and relapse in its wake; constant appeals to the feelings of the natural heart, "sowings to the flesh," even in the preachings and writings of real and zealous servants of Christ, but little appeal to the conscience, where God begins His work by His Spirit and Word. It is well worth noticing, I think, that the apostle referred to above, in that most solemn third chapter, when speaking of the activity of the divine Word (2 Tim. iii. 15-17), mentions only those effects of Scripture which refer to the conscience, "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." Does not Scripture minister sweet comfort, peace, and joy, "sweeter than honey-comb" to the heart of the believing reader? Where is the tried saint of God, who has not experienced it, and blessed God for it, when reading the Psalms, for instance; that portion of Holy Writ, which in an especial way bears this characteristic stamp of the whole Word of God, *i. e.*, its appealing power for heart and conscience? Is it not to this comforting and edifying element of Holy Scripture, that the same apostle refers, when he (Acts xx.) commends the flock of God, and especially its pastors, to the word of His Grace, which is able to build us up, and to give us an inheritance amongst them who are sanctified? Most assuredly! Why, then, does the apostle, in enumerating to his beloved son in the Truth the blessed qualities of Scripture, mention almost exclusively those which act upon the conscience? It is because, in those parting words, alike touching and solemn, He forewarned Timothy of a time, then already budding, but now in full bloom; a time of profession, when there would be those who had the form of godliness, but denied the power of it, "having their conscience seared with a hot iron." Christian reader! God has not given us the light of His sun, "from the heat of which nothing is hid." to look at it, and merely to enjoy its brightness, as being a "shining light;" but that we should walk in that light, and discover our path by it. It is the same with the light of His Word. The Psalmist does not say, "Thy word is a lamp for my eyes and a light for my head," (to enjoy it,) but, "it is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path;" (to walk in it).

Bear with me, for having enlarged so much on the question of conscience and exercise; for you know, that there can be no real feeding of the heart on the Word of God, without true exercise of conscience, under its divine authority and power. I certainly do not want to frighten any sheep or lamb of the flock of God, or to prevent their joyful feeding and peaceful lying down in the "green pastures;" but the contrary. But you, lamb of His flock, who, with little knowledge, perhaps, but with an honest conscience, a true heart, and a hungry and thirsty soul, turn to His pastures—you will find them *abundant, evergreen, full of "tender herbs."* Who can

count the hosts of His flock that have been feeding here, and yet the pastures are exhaustless—ever the same exuberance, the same verdure—and why? Because they are *Divine*, and because that gracious Shepherd does not suffer His sheep to trample on His pastures, but makes them to lie down in the midst of them, to *feed* and to *digest*. The “tender herbs” are both *food* and *pillow*. Of what use could the legs of the sheep be in such a place? Our Good Shepherd, in pasturing His sheep, does not make them to run over the pastures, but to “lie down” in them. Going after knowledge is not feeding. There are those who are “ever learning,” and “yet never come to the knowledge of the truth.” They are always on their legs, but seldom, if ever, “lie down.” Unless you yield your restless feet to the bidding of our Good Shepherd, who wants to fold them gently, and thus to make you lie down in His pastures, you will never learn to rest and feed at His feet, and thus grow before the Lord.

O may we learn more truly to sit, like Mary, at His feet, the only place to learn true service; and to lean on His bosom, the only place to learn something of His love, like the disciple “whom Jesus loved.” Alas! how constantly are so many Christians on their legs, when reading the Word, *i. e.*, leaning on their own understanding, their own learning, vain knowledge, and fancied wisdom, religious prejudices, and preconceived notions, early imbibed through wrong teaching and training in the divers religious schools of these days, (which bear in many of their features so fatal a resemblance to the religion of the Pharisees who “possessed the key of knowledge,” but only to shut Heaven to themselves, and to others too,) or through the dangerous habit of “spiritualizing” the Word of God. Are not all these our own feet, that refuse to submit to the gentle *folding* and the quiet “*lying down*?” How sadly they rob themselves of the food, our gracious Shepherd intended for them, growing lean and barren, with such a fulness close at hand. J. A. V.

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.

This is a very solemn subject, and yet it is one most satisfactory, the better we understand it. I believe every act of our lives will be set forth there; so that God's

grace and dealing with us with reference to our own acts will be known there. It is said in Rom. xiv., "every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." The judgment seat is there referred to in connection with the admonition to the brethren, not to judge one another with respect to a day, or eating meat. I am disposed to think that only the deeds will be matters of manifestation; but so much is every act of our lives dependent on inward feelings, that it is in one sense hard to distinguish between deeds and thoughts. Acts always declare the strength of the thought or feeling. I believe all our doings shall be detailed there—not to us as in the flesh for condemnation, but to unfold to us the grace which has dealt with us, regenerate and unregenerate. In God's counsel I am called before the foundation of the world, and therefore I apprehend that our whole history will be detailed there; and in parallel line, the history of His grace and mercy toward us. The why and the how we did this or that, will be declared then. It is declarative, and not judicial for us. We are not in the flesh before God—in His eye, blessed be His name, we are dead; but then, where we have walked after the flesh, we must see how we lost blessing, what a loss it has been to us; and, on the other hand, His ways toward us all, in wisdom, mercy, and grace, will be fully known and comprehended for the first time. Of course, there will be no replying, but each history will be like a great transparency. How you yielded and how He preserved; how you slipped, and how He rescued; how you approached danger and shame, and how He by His own hand interposed. I believe it will be the bride making herself ready, and I regard it as a wondrous moment. There will be no flesh there to receive condemnation, but the new nature will enter into the transcendent love and care, which in true holiness and justice, even in grace, have followed us *every* step of our journey. Passages in our lives, now utterly unexplained, shall be all seen clearly then. Tendencies of our nature, which we may not think would lead to desperate issues, and to curb which we may now be subjected to a discipline which we have not interpreted, will be fully explained there; and still more the very falls which distress us sorely now, will be shown then, as used to pre-

serve us from worse. I do not believe that we shall get anything like a full view of the evil of our flesh till then. How blessed to know, that then, not only in the purpose of God it is done with, but it clings no longer to us; and, on the other hand, I believe the display of His grace individually to us will be so magnificent that even the sense of the evil of the flesh that was ours, if it were possible to intrude, will be prevented by the greatness of the other. Why do we not deny and mortify our members when we remember that hour? The Lord enable us to do more to the glory of His grace!

The subject leads the soul into a very full sense of our individual place, to think of each giving an account of himself to God.

I do not know that the judgment seat of Christ is used oftener than in Rom. xiv., and 2 Cor. v. In the former, to prevent private judgment; in the latter, to provoke, to present well-doing and self-judgment, in view of that day.

J. N. D.

CHRIST THE ROCK OF OUR REFRESHMENT.

They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (Cor. x. 4).

When Paul was reproofing the Galatians for having fallen from grace by putting themselves under law, he said, "Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" And all of us who have found eternal life by believing on the Son of God, need to be reminded that the water that is to refresh us when weary, comfort us when sad, and strengthen us for the trials of the wilderness, flows from the same source as that which "satisfied our longing as nothing else could do," when as poor broken sinners we found life by believing in His Name.

Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, "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 fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." If the believer ever thirsts after the things of this world, getting discontented with his present circumstances, and complaining of his lot, it is because he is not drinking of that fountain. The remedy for all evil is Christ. If the

soul is occupied with Him, all will be well. But what of him who has backslidden? Is he to come again to that water and drink as one who has *not everlasting* life? Has he to begin afresh, to come crying, "Lord have mercy upon me a sinner?" Not at all. To do so would be to disparage the eternal efficacy of the "*one sacrifice for sins.*" He knows that he *has* everlasting life, that he received that as a *gift* when he believed in the Son of God.

We see this plainly brought out in the second Meribah (Numb. xx. 7-13). Moses was wrong in smiting the rock. He failed to sanctify the Lord in the sight of the people by so doing; he had been told simply to *speak* to the rock "and it shall give forth his water." The rock had been once smitten at God's command (Ex. xvii). There was no need to smite it again. And for me to come as if I needed to be "born again" a second time, is doing the same thing. And preachers who tell sinners to *do* something for salvation, or exhort saints to come to Christ as sinners, are smiting the rock again. Beside the injury done to souls, there is this grievous dishonor done to the Lord—they fail to *sanctify Him in the sight of the people*. The fact is that all the smiting was done eighteen centuries ago, since then the living water has flowed forth for whosoever will drink; "whosoever will let him drink of the water of life freely."

Surely if, when weary, and thirsty, and discouraged with the wilderness journey, we would but *speak* to the Rock, it would give us forth refreshing streams. Did it ever fail us? Ah! weary one! you have spoken to this one about your *peculiar* trials, you have written to another about the labyrinths you are in, you have "looked this way and that way" for help, but *did you speak to the Rock?* He is always near to help you with all that He is; "they drank of that spiritual Rock that went *with* them." If your soul is drinking of that living water, cares will flee away.

But sometimes, after a period of prolonged trial we look for refreshment; we go to drink and we find the waters bitter; *this* is the time of proving (Ex. xv. 26). Can we drink the bitter waters and find them sweet? Any one can bear a trial when he *has* to do so, but the test is, to take the cup from God's hands,

willingly drink it, and relish it. This is not the stoicism that makes its forehead marble and its nerves steel, and says, "I can bear *anything*;" nor is it simply the sweet submission of a child that says, "My father knows what is best, and therefore I say, Thy will be done:" though surely the soul that does that will find it sweet in the end, even though it is bitter now; but rather is it the soul that *knows the tree that has been cast into it*, and drinks it for Jesus' sake, rejoicing to have *fellowship* in His sufferings. This is not nature. Nature, however amiable, cannot find the bitter cup sweet, and the believer can only do it as he is alive to the fact that the Lord is in that cup. Here is a poor woman confined to a sick bed. Once she longed to get up from it; she grieved at the trial; she thought that her Father was angry with her; then she bowed her head to His will, and was content to lie there, or to arise as He thought best; but now her bed of sickness is a bed of joy, for she is conscious that the Beloved is *making* Himself known to her there, and that cup of bitterness has become the sweetest cup she ever drank of.

Nature shuns trial, and looks every way for a door of escape from it, but beloved brother, let not *us* do so; rather let us take the cup with a firm hand, and looking into it, I am sure if we meditate a moment in the presence of God, we will be able to discern the healing tree in it. Hark! What is that we hear? "In all their afflictions, He was afflicted." As a believer in Christ it is given unto me not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake. And surely if I have *Him* before me, what can be more sweet than to drink the cup of sorrow which He shares with me?

This is the time when the soul really learns what Christ is. I have found life, &c., *through* Him, but now I am to learn what He Himself is to me. He that drinks of the living water, has "*in him a fountain*," he has the source of refreshment ever with him; not himself, but Christ; and surely our cheeks should blush with shame if we cannot find enough in Him who found enough in us to sell all that He had to buy this Pearl. Every murmur, every thought, word, look of discontent, is witness that He is not enough to us. Shall we bear such a testimony as that? No! No! In faith let us drink the cup

and we shall find rich blessing to our souls follow. for after this they came to Elim with its twelve wells and seventy palm trees.

“ Oh, shun not thou the loving cup,
Nor tremble at its hue;
There is no bitter in the bowl,
But Jesus drank it t: o!
’Tis Love’s own life hath won it us,
Christ’s lip hath pressed the brim:
Come, drink ye, drink ye all, of it,
In fellowship with Him.

“ Come, drink thou of the loving cup!
Thou wouldst not pass it by?
’Tis kept for every chosen one
Of God’s dear family.
Nor, unbelieving turn aside:
The Lord the cup bestows;
And Oh, His face above thee bent,
With love and pity glows!

“ Those hands, once bleeding on the cross,
Are now outstretched to bless:
He draws thee closer to His heart
For that draught’s bitterness:
He hears thy faintly sobbing breath,
He marks each quivering limb;
He drank a cup for thee alone,
Child, drink it now *with Him*.”

In the wilderness the fountain succeeds the thirsty desert, and the thirsty desert the fountain; but there is “a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills,” that land is Canaan, the heavenlies. Taking up our place there, we know we have “all spiritual blessings in heavenly places.” Our life, we know, is hid with Christ in God; and setting our minds upon things above, we can drink of the water native to the land, the river that flows from the Throne. But though walking thus, we are still on earth; yet the heart in fellowship with Christ will find that the fountains of that “good land” spring up not only from the *hills*, but from the *valleys* also. If I indeed apprehend my place up there—sealed with Christ—the highest place ever given to creature, and drink of the fountains of the hills, I can afford to take the lowest place down here, and find fountains in the valleys too, for I cannot go too low for Christ to be with me, nor lower than He has been Himself. He who had been caught up to the third heaven

could afford to take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake. He who knew his strength as connected with a Risen Christ up there, could afford to glory in his weakness here. There cannot be a hill without a valley, and if we want to know the power of the truth of being up there, we must be content to take a very small place down here.

C. H. B.

CHRISTIAN EXPECTANCY.

Luke xii. 32-53.

The distinct character of the Christian is that of one in a state of expectation. (ver. 36.)

"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning." The state of the soul comes first. Before we can serve, our own state is in question; not the service, but the quality of the service depends upon it. You must have your heart rightly tucked up, "your loins girded." These are two great things—our hearts in order (kept in order by the will of God), and no will of our own. The instant we are not in the consciousness of God's presence, self comes up. Then, when you have got your hearts in order, there is the full confession of Christ before men—"your lights are burning."

The character of the Christian is, that the affections are fixed upon Christ, and that he is watching for Him.

There was not one act for self in all Christ's life. He was always at the service of every one. It is difficult for us to believe in the love of Christ: we are so selfish. We do not believe in the love of Christ. Love likes to serve, and selfishness to be served. Christ was love; He delighted to serve. He took upon Him the form of a servant. He took it as a man, and He never gives it up. In that day, "He will come forth and serve them" (ver. 37). He says, "You shall never make me give up this delight of myself to serve you."

First, we get, "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh, shall find *watching*." Now we get, "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find *so doing*," that is, serving in the place where his Lord has set him.

When their affections are *watching*, they get Christ's affections in return, serving them in heaven; when they

are *doing*, they get the ruling all that He has. Where we serve, we rule; where we watch, we sit at the table, and He serves us.

Christ shows His perfect love. If I love a person a little, I give him a little, a small thing; if I love him much, I give him more; if I love him perfectly, (which, of course, I cannot do), I give him every thing I have.

But when the world gives any thing, it has to part with that thing; but He says, "Not as the world giveth give I unto you," He shares every-thing He has with us.

Ver. 49. The cross brought in what man will never accept: he will not have the *reproach* of it. They despised and rejected Him *even before* the cross; the fire was already kindled. The cross that tests the heart of man, unlocks the heart of God. When He was baptized with *that* baptism, it opened the flood-gates of God's love. I never can meet a cross that I do not meet a blessing, if I take it up as such.

Ver. 53. A quotation from the prophet describing the most horrible state of things. The cross *will* do it. Take care that *our own will* does not do it. The state of man is such, that when God gives His Son, *there is* effect of it.—*Brief Notes.*

RESTING.

My God, my Saviour, let me feel for Thee,
As feels the infant for its mother's breast;
Of whose loved presence being well assured,
It turns again to its accustom'd rest.

So may Thy presence ever comfort me,
A sense of safety all my soul pervade;
So may I rest, confiding in Thy love,
Nor ever more by evil made afraid.

If thou be with me, Lord, I fear no ill,
All power is Thine, in heaven and earth the same;
And Thou wilt make all things to work for good,
To those that hope in Thee and love Thy name.

Not in ourselves, oh Lord, is aught of good,
But, in Thy power, in saving faith, we stand;
Eye hath not seen, the ear hath never heard,
The good things we may hope for at Thy hand.

Things Thou didst die to purchase, all Thy gift,
The love that prompted, and the glory Thine;
Rich, precious things, eternal as Thyself,
That faith in Thee, hath made for ever mine. J. T.

THE ACTS.

Chapter vii.

The accusation against Stephen, who was used by the Holy Spirit to sum up His indictment against the Jews, was that he had spoken blasphemous words against the temple, and the law, declaring that Jesus, the Nazarene, should destroy the former, and change the latter. They themselves had defiled the temple, making it a den of thieves, and despised the law, making it void by their traditions: but, in their hypocrisy and enmity, they turned these charges against this one whose wisdom and spirit they could not resist.

Among the Jews, the accusation was that the disciples opposed the law; among the Gentiles, that they opposed Cæsar; afterwards, that they turned the world upside down. The Lord had told them they were *not of the world*. Here was the world's statement of the fact—the religious world. It was surely so. They were crucified to it, and it to them.

The question of the high priest, "Are these things so?" gives occasion to Stephen to review the whole case of the Jews from the calling of Abraham, showing how in all cases the peculiar grace of God had been resisted by them.

"The God of glory" is the wondrous title, now brought out, to be more familiar as disclosed clearly in the gospel of Paul, now almost ready to come forth. For Stephen, appearing but for this one event, marks a wonderful period, the closing of the earthly and the opening of the heavenly character of the truth. From that eternal glory He will now shortly bring forth the infinite purposes His grace, which were before Him in all the course of the ages, "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

The principle of separation is the leading topic of this address. Abraham in his day was a separated one, called out by God, acting according to His glory, when the whole world had gone into idolatry. God stood apart from it, as defiled, calling upon His own to leave country and kindred and go to the land which He would show him. And though he did this slowly and not without a halting step until death severed the bond left unbroken, yet into the land of Canaan he came. And

here he dwelt as not owning a foot of it, while wickedness was unjudged there—the Canaanites still dwelt in the land. And until that wickedness should come to its full measure, his descendants should be apart, outside the land, in bondage. How many marks of the God whom we know are involved in this, holiness and matchless grace, separation from evil with long-suffering patience and judgment that declare His righteousness, and bring out His glory. Then the covenant of circumcision sets him and his descendants apart for the land, when purged.

Special prominence is given to Joseph, too, as expressive of the same way of God. He was separated from his brethren, not by the direct call of God, but by their enmity against him while iniquity abounded among them. They sold him into Egypt. But God was with him, and raised up him who through envy was thus persecuted, and made him governor over all Egypt, and the giver of bread to others, and the lord over his own brethren.

Moses, in his turn, too, preserved as one exceeding fair to God, and one mighty in words and deeds, is rejected by this same Israel, as judge and leader. In each of these times, and by each of these three men, God was opening a new pathway for Himself and for His own to come out from that which was evil, and giving intimations for our instruction, of His heavenly meaning.

Moreover, He brings them to Joseph's feet, whose hatred delivered him up to the Gentiles, and magnifies Moses, whom they thrust from them, to be leader and judge, giving him special honor as a deliverer, ratifying all by signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, forty years. These are beautiful rehearsals of the exaltation and the glory which He would give the "Just One," who had come to be cast out with more rage and bitterness, by this same generation of evil doers. These two, Joseph and Moses, were each cast out among the uncircumcised, and became strangers to their fathers' house, as He who was now cast aside by them, and raised up by the righteous Father. The Holy Spirit was thus giving the testimony of John xvi., demonstrating their sin in not believing on Him, and their judgment as a consequence. But it was making them of "the world," which He was thus to convict. The word of Stephen, who was to take his place

with these separated and rejected ones, was thus telling with immense power the fearful moral issues of the case, and their own condemnation.

Moreover, they had made God Himself a stranger and an outcast in the land. They who, in the wilderness, had said to Aaron, "make us gods to go before us," had, in the full fruition of the land, turned to a riper idolatry, worshipping the hosts of heaven, and Moloch and Remphan, figures which they made, to worship them, and God had gone up from them.

They had charged him with speaking blasphemous words against the temple, as a holy place. It was strange that this very house, which had been dedicated amidst the tears of those who had seen the glory of Solomon's temple, who felt the smallness of it, and their own littleness, thus taking their right place and justifying God, who was not dwelling in the house, by the cloud of His presence, should now be gloried in, when itself was empty still, and worse, and they not His people. Their fathers had the tabernacle of witness, in the wilderness, which they brought in with Joshua, into the possession of the Gentiles; but the house was not built while the heathen still defiled the land. He who was holiness could not dwell with defilement nor mix His glory with the enemy. It was when there "was neither adversary nor evil account," that Solomon "built Him a house."

But even then it was acknowledged that the Most High dwelt not in places made with hands. Solomon's heart saw this as he ordered all things for the house: "Who is able to build Him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens can not contain Him? Who am I, then, that I should build Him an house, save only to sacrifice before Him?" (2 Chron. ii. 6.) And Isaiah lvi. 1, quoted here, is, we may say, very bold:—"Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all things hath mine hand made." Israel's house and the dwelling of the true God among them had been used of Satan as a snare unto them. They had boasted of this while ceasing to know Him at all. They made their boast in the law, forever breaking it. They had rejected every one that was sent unto them, Joseph, Moses, the

Lord Jesus Christ. and now the Holy Spirit; they had *always* resisted. It was their habit. The years that had passed over them had been a record of the long-suffering and patience of God, and of their entire hatred and rebellion to Him. The first sin, the first opposition, is, therefore, yet charged against them. "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before the coming of the Just One, of whom ye are *now the betrayers and murderers!*" The whole history is traversed; the indictment made out. It was not here an offer in grace still; the very riches of such an offer was the occasion of their accusation against this simple-hearted servant, who now must take his place in company with the rejected and the slain ones who had been sent unto them. Fatal, terrible hour! The judgment was final. They were stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears. As their fathers did, so they did. There was no remedy.

Nature in man has nothing for God, and of itself will never yield to Him, and this has been clearly demonstrated in Israel's dreary history. But there shall come a day for them when grace shall triumph over nature, when God will, according to the prophet, "pour upon them the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall look on Me, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." Jesus exalted to be Lord and Christ, is Israel's "first-born," her "only Son," whom they are yet to receive, and His reign shall be righteousness and peace. He *shall* save *His people* from their sins. Where sin abounded, grace shall much more abound.

But in this chapter we have the close of the first phase of the church in its connection with Jerusalem as a centre, and the Jews, as such, wherever their iniquity is brought to a head, that through their fall salvation might come unto the Gentiles. "When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth."

"But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Be-

hold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." Emphasis is given to the distinct action of the Holy Spirit here, as in other places, as we have seen in the preceding chapters. In chap. i., the promise is given them of His coming and power, and that by Him they should be witnesses of Christ in Jerusalem and Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. In chap. ii., they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and spake with tongues, giving testimony in grace of the fulfillment of the promise of God to Israel. In chap. iii., Peter being filled with the Holy Spirit, gives the meaning of the healing of the lame man, and the offer of salvation through the One Name. And, in the same chapter, it was being filled with Him that they spake with *boldness*. So the Spirit was lied against, and resented it, in chap. v, and the men appointed to serve tables were full of the Holy Spirit.

Now a new thing is brought out, and the Holy Spirit leads. All is under His direction, and by Him Stephen looks up into heaven. Until this hour the scene had been on the earth; the testimony had been of grace flowing down from Him who was risen; but now it is heaven opened, with another meaning. Jesus is there, the glory of God which offered to come to the land, is there, and fixed, for the time. It is the position and portion of the believer, henceforth, heavenly instead of earthly; and as they had sold out all of the earthly led by the Spirit, by the same Spirit the heavenly is indicated as opened now. It is our place. Stephen is used of the Spirit of God here, to close the old and intimate the new. It is a transitional point. God takes the nation at their word, but it only gives Him occasion to open the scene in which He will, for the time to come, show the exceeding riches of His grace. The ministry of the glory may have its course now, and "the mystery" be made known to all men. Its Object is, Jesus at the right hand of God.

He was here seen standing, as if He had been, up to this time, waiting to return. We know that He is now sitting there; and, consequent upon that, we are raised and seated in heavenly places in Christ. The disclosure of all this was almost ready, and the "vessel" of the mystery, the young man named Saul, had almost run his

course, first displaying his thorough unfitness in himself, his whole-hearted enmity to Christ and the heavenly truth, that the excellency of the power might be manifestly of God. While heaven is opening upon Stephen, and its light is making radiant his countenance, and all is heaven to him, Saul guards the clothes of those who stone Stephen, associating himself fully with them in all their malignity.

Meanwhile, this precious servant of the Lord, rejected by the earth, is accepted of heaven, the first of that long line of those who, in the quiet of home, or in the rude persecutions of the mob, have departed, to be *with Christ*. The way is open, the title clear, the journey short, the assurance of it positive. It is but "absent from the body, present with the Lord." A moment sufficed for it all.

It is not going to the glory; that awaits the coming of his Lord and the resurrection, and being caught up to meet Him in the air. It is "the spirit received" and welcomed to the Lord. But it is really to Him, up there, and gives token of that as the only thing now. We are yet in this wondrous hour. So he invokes the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit, and then, in fellowship with the Lord, and satisfied with the heavenly, forever, he can dismiss all that is of the earth, and all thoughts of vengeance that might spring from the occasion, thus revealing that all the sharpness of his words had been but the grief of and for Christ, and not bitterness.

And then he kneeled down and, with the quiet and deliberation of the bended knee, at such a supreme moment, cried with a loud voice, "Lay not this sin to their charge." With the Lord whom he saw, he was conqueror here.

This is all in character, and it is written for our instruction. While *we* look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, we reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. The one who received and gave the revelation of the heavenly truth and our hope, was the prisoner of the Lord, and for us it is written, "Unto you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to *suffer* for His sake."

MEDITATIONS ON SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

THE ORACLE.—*Continued.*

“And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto its place, to the oracle of the house, into the most holy house, even under the wings of the cherubims: for the cherubims spread forth their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above. And they drew out the staves of the ark, that the ends of the staves were seen from the ark before the oracle; but they were not seen without. And there it is unto this day. ‘There was nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put therein at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt’ (2 Chron. v. 7—10.)

Solomon made new altars, candlesticks, lavers, &c., but he made no new ark. That same ark of the covenant which had been with Israel in their wilderness wanderings is now brought into that place of typical glory where all was new. The companion of their wilderness trials, is now their companion in the peace and rest of the land. A new temple, altars, &c., set forth the work and beauties of Christ in new aspects, but we have no new Christ, no new centre. He who is our risen Head in glory, is He who is our leader in the race of faith in the wilderness. He with whom, as pilgrims and strangers, we cast our lot, unto whom, going outside the camp we gather, is our centre also when as an assembly of God, on new creation ground, we are called out to be the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.

The ark of the covenant! How many precious memories are linked with it! It is identified with the history of God's people. Let us meditate for a moment on that part of its travels which is connected with our subject. How came it into “the land?” It came in with Israel; it opened the way before them; it closed the way behind them. “And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were clean passed over Jordan” (Josh. iii. 17). Precious type of the manner in which the Lord Jesus opened a way through the river of judgment for us, by Himself descending into its waves, and remaining there until all His ransomed ones are brought on to new creation ground. *Now*, the very same judgment through which *we* have been brought

dry-shod (the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water (Josh. iii. 15) has reclosed its waves behind us, preventing any return.

The ark of the covenant preceded them going into the river, and followed them out of it. Rest on it, my soul; Christ never left the grave till He had *accomplished* thy redemption. When he left Jordan's river He brought thee and every one of His saints on to a new ground, from which there is no going back. Death and judgment now flow *between* me and the old Adam state. Before, death stared me in the face, for fear of it I was in bondage; but I found a passage made for me by the Cross, and now death is mine. "Who is he that condemneth?" Ah! who is he? let them come; let them bring all the sins that I have ever been guilty of and lay them before my face, and my answer to them all is—"Christ died." He who was my vanguard, is now my rear-guard, and "no condemnation" is the precious verdict that God has passed upon all those who are "in Christ Jesus." Yea, not only is it "Christ that died," but also, "yea rather, that is *risen again*."

What a thrill of joy must have passed through the soul of the Israelite as he at last realized that he was actually standing in that land which had been the goal of all their hopes, the subject of all the promises. And what joy it is for me to know that by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, I am brought into a new place, old things passed away, all things become new; I am no longer a member of the first Adam, but of the second, the heavenly man. A member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, I share in the place He has now as the One who passed through the river, bore all the judgment due to me, and has now been raised and seated in heavenly places.

"And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord *unto its place*." Yes, the consummation is at last reached; the Jordan passed, the land possessed, peace reigning; now then, here is the *dwelling place* for the ark. Now therefore the staves are drawn out, for it is no longer a traveler. Nothing is in the ark now but the two tables. The manna had ceased on their entering the land, it was the wilderness food; once in Canaan they fed upon the "old corn of the land." The memento of it—the golden pot containing manna—is gone too, for

all is to be consistent with the glory types. As being in the wilderness we feed upon the manna, the bread which came down *from* heaven, a *humbled* Christ; as being raised into the land—heavenly places—we feed upon that which is indigenous to the place—a *risen* Christ.

Aaron's rod that budded is gone too; that was a symbol of the resurrection of the body. The two—the golden pot of manna, and the rod—were beautiful figures of that which God has laid up for us in Christ for our journey through the wilderness—food for the present, and hope for the future. The contemplation of the *humbled* Man, and the hope of *being changed* into His image, sustain us through the wilderness; while the contemplation of the *Risen* Man, our Head in the glory, enables us to maintain the heavenly truth. One thing remained—the tables of the covenant; this was what gave the ark its name. All Solomon's glory was but typical; they were still under the law; *but that law was hid under the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat*. It speaks to us of *covenant* blessing, but of the *new* covenant dispensation. "This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for many."

We have seen the import of the cherubim of olive tree—that it is the Holy Spirit that gathers: that baptizes into one body; that dwells in them as God's assembly; we now come to consider that which is the centre of gathering; the visible expression of that "one body;" the testimony that is maintained.

Typical to us of the *new* testament, the history of the ark, and all its details, is a vivid picture of the *one* Lord, the *one* testimony, the *one* table. In all their wilderness wanderings the ark was Israel's centre, and now, brought "unto its place," it is the centre of all the temple worship. The Spirit gathers to the one centre—Christ; the visible testimony is the Lord's table. These two chief things are testified by those thus gathered—"the Lord's death," and, the "one body." The first we get in the account given to us of the institution of the Lord's Supper, but given afresh by the Church apostle, who received it not by report from Luke or Mark, but "from the Lord." The second is given to us by Paul alone, for it could not be declared until the truth of a Head in heaven, of a body on earth formed by the descent of the Holy Spirit, *after*

the death, and *consequent* on the ascension of Christ, had been preached.

Viewing the Lord's table first in the simple aspect of a memorial, what a blessed subject it is. What can be more sweet or profitable to the soul that knows the Lord, than to *remember* Him? "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come."

What wonderful love! The same night in which He was betrayed He thought of us and left us this memento that we might think of Him. He well understood our poor wandering hearts, and knew how apt we are to be occupied with other things that bring leanness to our souls, and left us the one simple remedy—Remember Me. Thus remembering Him, we have Him before us as our hope. we shew His death "till He come."

How often should we shew the Lord's death? The word does not say; it simply says, "as oft as ye do it." But surely, one who loves the Lord will not seek to lessen the number of times in the month he does this, but rather to increase them. However, we have the example of the disciples as to this, which to a simple mind is conclusive. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread" (Acts xx. 7). Thus it appears that not only was it their habit to break bread on the first day of the week, but it was the object that drew them together. Paul, passing through there, discoursed to them, but they came together not to hear Paul but "to break bread." That this is *the* meeting of the church, that the "breaking of bread" is the centre of gathering for God's assembly, we find also most conclusively shewn in 1 Cor. xi. 20. "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other, his own supper," &c. There was such con-

duct there that it could not be called the *Lord's* supper, but we see they came together into one place professedly for that object. The Apostle corrects the abuses, but reiterates the command as to the celebrating of the supper.

It is very sad to know that this simple and blessed memorial to the believing soul of what Christ has done for him, is so commonly made into a "sacrament," a "means of grace," &c., a kind of stepping stone to heaven. Surely no unconverted person has any place at that table, neither one who knows not whether he is saved or no; for how can he return thanks for that body and blood given for him, when he all the time doubts in his heart the reality of the forgiveness which God has covenanted to the believer in the blood of Jesus?

Sad also is it to know that so many christians make the Lord's supper a place for the confession of sins (proving thus that they know not what a purged conscience is), instead of the place of returning thanks and worship. Surely the very last place to offer up our sins to God is that table which speaks to us of the blood shed that put our sins for ever away, leaving nothing but praise to offer; *He* having made the *one* offering for sins.

Sad again is it to see a man put into the place of a priest to "administer the sacrament," a thing quite unscriptural, and which denies the priesthood of all believers. In the account given in Acts xx., we do not find that Paul even administered the supper, but simply "when he . . . had broken bread and eaten:" broken bread with them and eaten with them. As also particularly said in 1 Cor. x. 16. "The cup of blessing which we bless . . . for we being many are one loaf," &c.

All these things deny the duty and blessed privilege of believers in the Lord Jesus to gather round Him, owning Him only as Lord and Master, and mutually breaking bread, returning thanks for the grace that made them sharers in blood-bought blessings. Not doubting the love of Him whose love was "stronger than death," the proof of which lies before them in these symbols, nor praying Him to forgive, but offering by Him the sacrifice of praise for sins forever put away, never to be remembered any more. Each one realizing his right as to the entrance into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and, as washed by His

blood and made a priest to God, drawing near and worshipping Him in spirit and truth.

As to who should return thanks on behalf of the assembly, that must be left to the Lord to direct; surely, if they are really gathered to Him, He will be able to find one whom He can use; but whether it be a Paul who is sojourning there a few days, or the youngest brother in the assembly, it must be in the Spirit, and as He chooses, not in words ordered by man, but by Him who is the life of prayer—the Holy Spirit.

This, then, is the memorial of the Lord's supper. Extremely simple, but all the more blessed. And surely it is a dangerous thing for man to add to God's word, and put his brother under the bondage of forms and ceremonies. How simple was its first celebration! He sitting as Lord, they as disciples! Surely He is none the less Lord now; will we not give Him His place?

But there is another truth declared in the Lord's supper, besides our shewing His death till He come; we have it in these words: "The bread which we break, is it not the communion (*i. e.*, fellowship,) of the body of Christ? For we *being many* are *one* bread (or loaf), and *one body*: for we are *all* partakers of that *one* bread (or loaf)" 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. Thus not only do we see in these emblems the memorial of what He suffered for us, but by the fact of us, the many, mutually partaking of the *one* loaf, we also give expression to the unity of the mystical body of Christ of which every believer is a member. When we see this we can understand why the apostle should so strongly denounce the divisions that were in the church at Corinth. Their coming together, he says, was not for the better but for the worse. "For first of all when ye come together in assembly, I hear that there exist divisions among you, and I partly believe it. For there must also be sects among you that they which are approved may be made manifest. When ye come together therefore into one place it is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating each one taketh before other, his *own* supper," &c. So though they broke bread and drank wine, he declares it was not eating the *Lord's* supper, but each one his *own*.

Saints gathered by the Spirit to Christ then, own *Him* only as Lord, not man, even though it be a Paul, an

Apollos, or a Cephas. The occasion of their gathering together into one place in assembly is, not to hear preaching, but to eat the Lord's supper. In that supper there is a two-fold testimony given. It speaks of a crucified and coming Lord, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come," and of the oneness of all believers in Him, "For we being many are one bread, and ONE BODY; for we are all partakers of that one bread."

We will notice now the peculiar solemnity of the place of this testimony in the assembly. We see this typified in the position of the ark of the testimony. It was put into "the most holy place, even *under the wings* of the cherubim; for the cherubim spread forth their wings over the place of the ark, and *the cherubim covered the ark, and the staves thereof, above.*" How strikingly this sets forth the Holy Ghost's overshadowing of the Lord's table.

The place of worship is peculiarly the place of His sway, where all must be of Him and in accordance with His holiness. Indeed, *indeed*, there is need for the warning, "whoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body." The Lord's table is no place for the drunkenness, &c., that brought condemnation upon the saints at Corinth; neither is it the place for gathering as a sect: neither is it the place for an unsaved soul.

Why was Uzziah smitten with leprosy? Because *he took upon himself* to offer incense before the Lord (2 Chron. xxvi. 18). What an awful thing it is for one who has not been made a priest to God by the washing of the blood of Christ, to pretend to worship Him! Neither is it the place for the exhibition of man's religion. Why were Aaron's sons devoured by fire? Because they offered strange fire, *which the Lord commanded not* (Lev. x. 1). It is not for man to add to the simplicity of the manner of worship laid down in the word.

Let a man then examine himself, not by the ten commandments, or any code of resolutions, but let him take

the tenth and eleventh of 1 Cor. and other portions of the word relating to the subject, and examine himself *as to the manner in which he is celebrating* the Lord's supper. As to his own personal right to be there, he has but one simple question to settle—Have I, a poor lost sinner, accepted of the Lord Jesus as my Saviour? But as to the manner in which he is doing it, there may be many a solemn thing to examine himself in. Do I eat with a mixed multitude of saved and unsaved? Do I “break bread” in remembrance of the Lord, or do I have a “sacrament” “administered” to me? Do I shew the Lord's death “till He come,” do I have His coming before me? Do I partake of that “one loaf” which sets forth the “one body,” with those who practically deny it by being a sect? Am I practically confessing the unity of the body of Christ? Do I recognize Jesus as *Lord*? Is it the *Lord's* supper? These are solemn questions, and if we see how the Holy Spirit has thrown His wings over this subject, we shall seek, with a broken will, to answer them in His presence.

To eat and drink unworthily is to eat and drink in a manner that He has not ordained; the consequence is, judgment. “many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” Not the loss of the man's salvation, that can never be lost; it is in the Father's keeping; but punishment.

“When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” Surely to be guilty in respect of such a thing as the body and blood of the Lord, is sufficiently sad and solemn for a child of God, without the fear of losing his salvation. *That* is not his to lose, it has been bought, not by his acting worthily or unworthily, but by the precious blood of Christ. Moreover, it is a *past* thing: he *is* saved. If he is not, he has no right whatever at that table.

God has given us the one centre of gathering, and that is CHRIST. He has left us the one thing which above all others reminds us of His love to us, and of the love we owe to Him; shall we not then seek to obey Him in His loving request, and do so in the manner the Spirit has laid down in the word?

C. H. B.

(To be continued if the Lord will.)

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST, IN ITS APPLICATION TO THE GREAT EXHIBITION.

Daniel v.

While Jeremiah was left at Jerusalem to witness the course of moral corruption there, and to warn of coming judgments, and while Ezekiel was among the remnant in the place of discipline or of righteousness on the river Chebar, Daniel is set among the Gentiles, even at Babylon, to learn the history and the ways of the Gentile, or the world.

We may see this in his first six chapters, which constitute the first part of the book. In chapter i, we see the Gentile, or the world, set up. Then in chapter ii, we get the same system, the world, in its political career onward to the kingdom, figured in the great image, seen in all its parts, from its head of gold to its toes of clay iron; and judged, in the appointed hour, by the stone which becomes a mountain, to occupy the scene of power all the world over with an untransferable kingdom. Then in the four following chapters, the stories of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius give us the moral course of the world. In Nebuchadnezzar we get a persecuting power, connected with human religion or idolatry. The king sets up an image and demands the worship of it on pain of the fiery furnace. The righteous refuse and suffer. In Belshazzar we get the easy, worldly, self-indulgent thing, with contempt of religion. The king makes a feast, worshipping all that which ministered to his pleasures. The righteous are utter strangers to it all. In Darius we get a persecuting power again, but it is in connection with self exaltation. The king makes an interdict, that none are to be treated as God but himself for so many days on pain of the lion's den. The righteous again refuse and suffer.

These are plain and sure distinctions in the progress of Gentile iniquity. And it may strike us, I judge, very clearly, that we are at present rather in the day of Belshazzar. Persecution and idol service gave character to the preceding day, and persecution and the deification of man to the day which followed; but all was easy indifference, with thorough satisfaction in the present things of the world, in the day of Belshazzar. Refusal and consequent suffering form the path or history of the righteous

in the times of the idolatrous, persecuting Nebuchadnezzar, and of the self exalting, persecuting Darius; but in the times of Belshazzar, perfect and thorough separation is the place of the saints of God.

There is a voice for us in all this. Daniel is not seen at the feast. And there is one, though not in his strength yet much in his spirit, who is absent also—the queen, the king's mother. The king is ignorant of the man of God who was then in his dominions. He is also unmindful of the doings of God which had been in the same dominions in the days of his father. But the queen has recollections and knowledge of these things, and she is a stranger to his feast.

Is not the question then with us to be this: Who is the separated one now? Who is going to the king's feast, or who, in the light of God, is separated from it? The present is an easy, self-indulgent, worldly moment. The gods of gold and of silver, of brass, of wood and of iron, are praised. All the capabilities in the world to make a feast are produced, and displayed, and gloried in. Social accommodation and social delights are the great objects. Man's works, the fruit of his skill and the resources of his country, adorn and furnish the scene, and are the host of the feast, that which gathers and entertains. Man is providing the joy of this awful hour in the world's history—awful indeed, not in the judgments or sorrows which are upon it, but in the moral principles which are quickening it. The captivity of Zion was heedlessly forgotten by Belshazzar. So now; the rejection of Christ is by common consent forgotten, that man may meet his fellow, greet him with a common joy and with a common welcome, because they are all of one earth, of the same world, of kindred flesh and blood; and all God's claims on His elect, and testimony against the world, are thrown together as what for a season must be passed by, till the feast-day is kept.

Where, then, again I ask, is the separated one? Where is Daniel? Where is the king's mother? The feast does not attract either of them, though they may be in different measures of strength. Daniel knew the character of it before the judgment of it was pronounced. He does not wait for the fingers of the man's hand to put him into his place in relation to it. He is not moved by the mys-

terious writing on the wall. Sudden destruction, as a thief in the night, does not come upon him. He and his companion, though "a weaker vessel," are, in the spirit of their minds, in the place from whence these fingers were sent—they were "children of light and children of the day." In a divine sense they watched and were sober (1 Thess. v, 3). In the separated place Daniel knew the judgment of God about it all, long before the writing on the wall announced it to the world. All this is full of meaning for us.

There is something in Belshazzar himself, which especially provoked the Spirit of the Lord. Daniel can feel for Nebuchadnezzar, and Nebuchadnezzar is brought to a right repentant mind, and the judgment of God is reversed. Daniel, too, can feel for Darius, and Darius is seen in humbled gracious meltings of soul, and we can all pity him—pity him when we see him unwittingly involved in results which a moment's vanity and easiness of nature had led to. But from us Belshazzar gets no kindly movement of heart, from the Spirit of God in Daniel, nothing but stern rebuke, and from the hand of God, nothing but swift destruction, the fingers on the wall announcing it, and the sword of the Median executing it. "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain."

He was the easy man of the world. He despised all religious fear. What he worshipped was his pleasures, the gods of silver, of brass, and of gold, the vessels which could fill out his entertainments and make provision for his lusts. He did not summon the world to either his idol or himself, but to his board and to his holiday. Nebuchadnezzar makes an image, Darius a royal decree, Belshazzar a feast. But Jerusalem and her sorrows are forgotten, the temple and its furniture despised.

And what I ask, is the effort to deck out the world, to enjoy it, and to boast of it, while Jesus is rejected by its citizens? Is it not a thing in kindred spirit with this? The rejection of Christ is forgotten, yea, despised—for that is gloried in and displayed which continues the word, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Is not this somewhat of taking of the choice vessels of God's house, in the very day of their captivity, to make merry with them?

The present moment may surely thus remind us of Belshazzar's feast. Gods of gold and of silver, of brass, of iron, and of wood are praised; the resources and capabilities of the world are displayed, thoughtless of its rejection of Christ. And are any of the captivity at the king's feast? Israel was captive together with the vessels of the temple. Would any of them be so thoughtless as to make merry with the king who was despising the spoils of that house? Would any of the servants of the rejected nobleman take part with the citizens in setting forth the wonders of their blood-stained land? (See Luke xix.)

The mind turns with these thoughts to the present moment. It cannot refuse to give itself, in some sort and in some measure, to the subject of "The Great Exhibition." It would not be fit that it should be indifferent to it—for it is no common sign of the time and ought to be morally judged.

It will be pleaded for. No doubt of it. It will be said, that it is designed to encourage brotherhood among the nations, and to promote the great business of social comfort and happiness as wide as the human family. But, I ask, are these God's objects? God has scattered the nations, and never proposes to gather them till He gathers them to Shiloh. God would have us strangers here, "content with such things as we have," without making it our business to increase or improve them. God would have us testify against the world in its present condition, and therefore neither flatter it, nor reconcile it to itself, nor glory in its capabilities. The Exhibition is therefore in full collision with the mind of God. Christ exposes the world; the Exhibition displays it. Christ would alarm it, and call it to a sense of judgment; the Exhibition makes it on better terms with itself than ever.

I own, when I think of it, it is to me wonderful that a Christian should find satisfaction in this thing. That it is an awful advance in the development of those evil principles which are to mark the day of Christendom's ripened iniquity, I have not the least doubt.

The Lord of old scattered the nations (See Gen. xi). This was judgment on a bold attempt of theirs, when they were of one speech and one language, to make themselves independent of God. And has He reversed that judgment? There is indeed an appointed time when it shall

be reversed. Jerusalem shall be a centre, and Shiloh a gathering object. The nations will flock to Zion, there to see the King in His beauty. But this is still future. This is for "the world to come," after the Redeemer has come out of Zion, and turned away ungodliness from Jacob. See Isaiah lix. and Romans xi.

The name of Jesus was proposed as a gathering object in the day of Pentecost. Tongues were then cloven as they had been at Babel. But it was to reunite what had been already severed. But this proposal, like every other on God's part to man, was disappointed. The hard unbelieving heart did this. And what is man now proposing? He who refused God's proposal to gather to Jesus, in the power and presence of the Holy Ghost, is proposing to gather to himself. He will exalt himself as at Babel. He will be independent of God.

Isaiah, anticipating in the Spirit, the last days, warns the people of God against saying "a confederacy," in common with the world around them (chap. viii). And I ask myself and others, do we in deed and in faith receive these notices from the prophets? Do we judge that man will thus exalt himself and confederate—thus gather round himself? And if we treat these warnings of the character of the last days as divine, can we doubt from all we see and hear, that man has already begun to practise his hand in kindred attempts, in efforts which shall issue in all this?

The facilities and the speed in linking the nations one with another is now well known. It is used and gloried in. And what is this "Great Exhibition" but another trying of his skill in forwarding the main leading purpose of man's heart? No doubt it suits the spirit which is moving all this, to have it under the sanction of religion. When he can use it for his own ends, nothing suits the devil better. He would fain have had Christ exalt Himself under the sanction of Psalm xci. And again and again, he would have acknowledged Christ, had He allowed it—as the spirit of divination would have witnessed to Christ's servants, had he received it (Acts xvi). But this could not be. We can have no fellowship with that against which we are called to testify (Eph. v. 11).

Nor can we say that the judgment we form on this matter is a small, or an indifferent thing. It is not so.

The subject is well fitted to exercise the judgment of a saint of God. It is eminently so, I believe. His mind *generally* will be much affected by his sense of this thing and his decision respecting it. The mind can become dull. The eye gets dim betimes. And if such a process as that be going on, the next attempt of the enemy finds us less prepared. And I ask, Is not all that dangerous, when delusions are multiplying as they are and as they will?

We are counselled to buy eye-salve of Christ, that we may see. That is something beyond or beside faith and confession of the gospel. Laodicea had the common faith, and in a sense boasted of it, but Laodicea wanted eye-salve. And sure I am that, let this great shop of the world's ware expose what it may, that eye-salve is the very thing which will not, cannot be had there. It is the article which would detect the whole character of the place, and it could not therefore be had there. It is a palace. Man's art is enthroned there, and man expects to be admired and wondered at there, and thousands enter it in the spirit of doing homage to man. It is a mirror in which the world is reflected in a thousand attractive forms, and the unworldly, humbled, earth-rejected Jesus is forgotten. Jesus may be named there, it is true, but an unworldly Jesus is practically forgotten there.

It is indeed as I surely judge, solemnly, awfully, significant. It is full of the spirit of the last days. This palace for man's productions to be gazed at, is but a stage before the temple for man himself to sit in—and admiration of it is getting a generation ready, morally ready, to "wonder after the beast." One is amazed that any christian can find the least satisfaction in it.

This Exhibition in its way shows all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. It does not hide this. It professes to do this. Like John Bunyan's Vanity Fair, there is the Italian row, and the German row, and the English row. It has human skill and resources in all variety, and from all lands. It presents the kingdoms of the world, and "the glory of them." And who, I ask, was it that did this before? The Spirit led the Son of God into "the wilderness," a place of strangership and pilgrimage—but the devil shewed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.

The world, according to the scriptures of God, is a lost and a judged thing. It is incapable of recovery. The word of God does not, in a single passage of it, warrant the thought that it can be advanced or cultivated for God. He has judged it—though in grace the judgment tarries, and the long-suffering of God is salvation. But the world is a system past all hope of recovery, till the judgment be executed. But confederacy is an attempt to fix the world in its present condition, to settle it, though it be in departure from God and in enmity against Christ. This was the thought at Babel of old.

Separation of His own out of the world is God's way now. And this separation is the deepest and most thorough judgment that could be passed upon the world. This is a more complete judgment of it than by the waters of the flood, or by the plagues of Egypt, or by the sword of Joshua. The withdrawal or separation of all that God owns, bespeaks final thoughts about the world, and not merely a purifying of it from present corruptions, as by the waters of Noah, in order to put it on a fresh trial. The trial of it is over, the judgment of it is pronounced, and the delay is but for the salvation of the elect. The attitude of the church, that is, separation from the earth, and heavenly calling, tells us of the full moral condemnation of the course of things here. And thus the church judges the world. Her position and calling do so.

Incorruption, I may say, cannot inherit corruption. The spotless Jesus cannot hold an unpurged dominion. The woman of Revelation xvii glorifies herself, and lives deliciously in the earth during that very time in which the judgment of God is awaiting it; but the bride of Revelation xxi does not become manifested in the earth till it has been cleansed and is ready, not for the judgment of the Lord, but for the presence of the glory.

There is infinite moral distance there. The world must be judged ere it can be adopted of God. The earth must be purified before it can be furnished and adorned for Him.

It is despite of the holiness of God, we may therefore say, to be presenting this evil world in its ornaments and furniture, in its resources and capabilities, as this Exhibition is doing. And it is also despite of the wrongs and

sorrows of Christ. The citizens who have cast outside their city and country the blessed Son of God, are exhibiting what their country can produce, and what their hands can skillfully weave and fashion. I ask, could a servant of such a rejected Master aid and encourage such things? Could he be a servant a moment beyond the time that he thus practically forgot his Lord's rejection here? He could not. He might, indeed, be a useful member of society, and serve his generation in their generation well; but a servant of Christ (properly speaking) he could not be if once he forgot the world's rejection of Christ; and acceptance of the invitation of the citizens (see Luke xix.) to come and rejoice with them in the resources of their country and the skill of their people, would, at once, be such forgetfulness.

The sorrow and the humbling of a saint is that he remembers the rejection of his Master so coldly, and acts on that great fact so poorly. But to have it estranged from the soul so as to consent to take part with the citizens from one end of the world to the other, in a great confederated effort to display the world as a wealthy and desirable place—to do this in full and hearty fellowship with all, on the ground of the common humanity, is confounding light and darkness, Christ and Belial. The language of the whole thing is this—We will forget, at least for a season, the claims and the sorrows of Jesus, and have a holiday with the world that has rejected Him.

Has so little "eye-salve" been bought of Christ as to leave the saints in such a blinded condition of soul as this? "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." When Daniel and his companions entered the place of the Gentiles, they carried one purpose of heart with them, that they would not defile themselves with the king's meat (Dan. i. 8). He knew not what this might cost him, but this was his purpose. He had bought this eye-salve of Christ, ere he stood among the uncircumcised. And in the strength of the Lord, he and his dear companions stood. The fiery furnace and the lion's den witness the victory of men strengthened by Christ. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us." And so at Belshazzar's feast. Daniel entered it as a conqueror, as afterwards he entered the lion's den. He had no affinity

with the feast—not a bit. He was, in the day of it, as we have seen, a separated man. But he was called to it, and he entered the banqueting hall as a conqueror. The king who was there promised to make him “the third ruler in the kingdom.” “Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another,” said the servant of Christ. He was as much a conqueror in the day of the feast, as he was in the day of the lion’s den.

Noble attitude of a saint of God! Could such a man have accepted an invitation to the feast? Morally impossible. And “the eye-salve” which Christ had supplied him with, disclosed its further virtues, as he stood in that palace of the world’s enjoyments. There was nothing in the language of the writing on the wall beyond the astrologers of Babylon more than beyond Daniel. Not so much, I might say. At least the words were as familiar to a Chaldean as to a Hebrew. But the wise men of Babylon, the scribes of Belshazzar’s court and kingdom were not equal to interpret them. They were morally incapacitated. A single eye to Christ alone can do so to this day—the “eye-salve.” If we test a thing by any test but Christ, we shall misinterpret it. It will appear fair, and good, and desirable, if we try it by its relationship to the welfare of society, or to the advancement of man and the world; but if we look at it in the light of a rejected Jesus, its bloom will be found to be corruption. Standing in the festive hall, Daniel traces the whole scene in Babylon at that hour in relation to God.

We judge of things in reference to ourselves, and not in reference to Christ. We think rather of the world’s improvement than of His rejection. We talk of human capabilities rather than of human and incurable apostacy.

O for the anointing which Christ has for His saints! O for power in our souls to judge the king’s feast, the Gentiles’ greatness, the world’s advancement, the jubilee of Babylon, in the light of the rejection of the Son of God, in the hearing of that cry. “We will not have this Man to reign over us.” Then let us ask ourselves, if we have a pulse of affection or allegiance to Jesus, can we glory in this present moment with all its costliness and pleasures!

CHRIST THE ROCK OF OUR SALVATION.*

"Blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation" (2 Sam. xxii. 47).

One of the most blessed similes of salvation to be found in the Word, is the Rock. It sets Christ before us in such a way that the weakest believer cannot but be established, the most faint-hearted made strong, the most tried one comforted, and the most experienced find fresh delight. As the Rock, He is our Salvation, our Refreshment, and our Refuge.

Perhaps, the first thing that impresses one on seeing a rock, is its strength and stability, and this is the characteristic of its use in scripture; "shall the rock be removed out of its place?" And this is a very comforting thought for the believer; the rock upon which He is built cannot be shaken, the floods may come, and the winds beat upon it, but it still will stand. Many a vessel is shattered to pieces on a rock, but the rock stands unchanged; and it is a deeply solemn thought, that those who are not *built* upon the rock, will be *shattered* upon it; "whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." But in that day of judgment the believer will have boldness, for he is attached to that which judgment never can touch; "we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved."

The world has a rock too, but it is the rock of pride, the rock of a hard heart, the rock of nature; "for their rock is not as our rock, even our enemies themselves being judges."

Nothing can ever shake the soul that is resting on Christ, for He in whom he rests, is the Son of God. It is a Divine Rock, this is what gives it such firmness; "ascribe ye greatness unto our God: He is a Rock." The Rock upon which Christ said He would build the church, is the revelation of Himself as Son of God; this is the foundation upon which the whole doctrine of Christianity rests; take away the truth that He is the Son of God, and you build on sand. That Christ is God is plainly shewn in this scripture, "ascribe ye great-

* NOTE.—This article should have preceded "Christ the Rock of Our Refreshment," in June SOUND WORDS.

ness unto our God: He is the Rock;" and in 1 Cor. x. 4. we are definitely told that "that Rock was Christ."

Next in importance to the truth that Christ is God, is the truth that He is a crucified Christ. So having seen that He is the Rock, let us view Him as the *cleft* Rock. Let us see who smote the Rock, why He was smitten, and what results from it to the believer. "Behold *I will stand before thee* there upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so *in the sight of the elders of Israel*. Here we have a forcible illustration of Christ, "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God;" smitten by the rod of the law, "being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. iii. 13); the elders of Israel witnessing the scene (Matt. xxvii. 41); the result being—living water, brought forth by the power of God. But I pass over that (living water) now, that I may dwell simply upon the fact that He is the *cleft* rock. If there is one soul reading this who has not perfect peace, a peace that cannot be shaken, let him pause a moment and consider this question. Was Christ smitten? What was it for? Do you see that the rod that smote Him was the law? Has the law's penalty been paid? For whom did He pay it? Was He not made a curse *for us*." Well, then, it is gone, and you can, in faith, say, "He bare *our sins* in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes *ye were healed*."

Where then, is the believer now? Well, if you look in Rom. viii. 1, you will find him in the same place that God had to put Moses in before he could see His back parts—"in a cleft of the rock;" safe in that refuge, and kept there by the hand of God, we can see the Lord's goodness, grace, and mercy (Ex. xxxiii. 19). It is precious to hear a soul pray from the heart, "Rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee," but when that prayer is answered, he will have found that "the Lord was ready to save me," and be enabled to sing—

"Rock of ages cleft for me,

Grace hath hid me safe in Thee,"

Moses could not see God's *glory* there, but the Lord caused His *goodness* to pass before him, and proclaimed

His name, that He was gracious and merciful; but although we know we must go beyond the cross to the heavenlies to see the glory, we can see *grace* displayed there, Oh, how sweetly! Ah! the soul that has Christ need fear nothing, for there is no condemnation to those who are *in Christ Jesus*. Hidden in the Rock that *has borne* all the curse, we can rest secure, nothing can shake that foundation.

Joseph laid the body of Jesus "in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock;" from that rock Christ arose. The rock having been smitten the living water can flow forth. This was by the power of God, for strokes of a rod could never bring forth water. The wrath of the law may be meted out, but to give life it is needful that God should raise again that One who bore its curse. "The wages of sin is death," and Christ paid those wages for the believer, but still "eternal life" is purely a *gift*, and it is given to every believer, it is—life in a risen Christ.

If we look at the incident that followed the smiting of the rock (Ex. xvii. 8-16), we see that we are not taught to pray *for* salvation, but *on* it. In the conflict with Amalek we see typified the first warfare that the believer has to experience, the conflict with the flesh, that thing which is to be reckoned dead, against which God has declared constant warfare, which does not cease while we are in the body. How can the believer have power over it? First, by taking his seat upon the Rock (v. 12), believing the truth that God sets before him in His Word, "There is therefore now *no condemnation* to them which are in Christ Jesus," God reckoning the "old man" crucified and giving us a new place "*in Christ Jesus*." So, *having* salvation, we are sure of victory, "for sin *shall not* have dominion over you; for ye are not under law, but under grace." Then for practical victory over the old nature, power to reckon it dead continually—prayer. And this is what we get in Rom. viii; what the law could not do, the spirit of life can; having drunk of the living water from the smitten Rock, I have a new nature and that which gives me power to pray. "But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and *he sat thereon*; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands—the one on the one side, and the other on

the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek with the edge of the sword." Poor things as we are, we cannot pray of ourselves, and our gracious God does not expect us to. He has put us on another ground than law entirely; that *commanded* obedience, but gave no power, but now, being under *grace*, obedience is the outflow of power. Moses could not hold up his hands of himself, so Aaron and Hur stayed them up, "the one on the one side, and the other on the other side." And thus God in His grace has provided for us, we have a supporter on each side, both the heavenly and the earthly. In heaven, we have One who ever liveth to make intercession for us, who is able to preserve to the end those who come unto God by Him; and on earth, we have the Comforter, who "maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered: and He that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God." Let us not faint then, nor be discouraged because the flesh continually lusts against the Spirit; but knowing we *have* salvation, and, confident of victory, let us—having one on each side to support us as long as we are in the body "until the going down of the sun" (I apprehend that the priestly intercession of Christ above, and of the Spirit below, cease when the church is gathered to Him, the need having ceased also.)—let us *pray*. The result will surely be victory: "and Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people, with the edge of the sword."

C. H. B.

FRAGMENT.

The suffering is to bring out a peculiar virtue from His own grace which no other suffering could bring out. You thresh corn for the grain, but you *grind* the grain to make flour—the produce is useful according to the severity and peculiarity of the process by which it is made available for use. We dry grapes for raisins—we *bruise* them for wine! Who does not value the wine more than the raisins? and yet the same grapes which made raisins, might have made wine, if only they had been subjected to a more severe *pressure*.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

8. "P. R. Please tell us in SOUND WORDS what part women are permitted to take in the assembly of God."

Just such part as comports with 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35; 1 Tim. ii. 11. We find very precious mention made of a ministry of women in Rom. xvi., of Phoebe, a servant (deaconess), of the assembly at Cenchrea, who is to be received as such, and was a succorer of many, including Paul; also, Priscilla and Mary, Tryphena and Tryphosa, laboring in the Lord, Julia, the sister of Nereus and Olympas. Out of twenty-four mentioned by name, eight, at least, are women, and there seems to have been no limitation of service unto the Lord, though His saints. There is also mention made of Dorcas and her labor, of Priscilla in connection with her husband, who took Apollon and instructed him more perfectly in the way of God. In Acts, xxi., we find the four daughters of Philip, who were in Phil. iv. 3, "those women" are spoken of, who labored with Paul in the gospel. And this could have been done in a multitude of ways, and yet they have kept silent in the assembly. prophets, not *Evangelists*, however. Prophets were such as gave the mind of God, speaking for Him, and this was not necessarily public; as we see in the case of Agabus. And knowing what directions are given in the quotations above concerning the assembly when gathered, we know their ministry could not have been public.

9. "A Believer," N. Y. The "binding" and "loosing" in Matt. xviii. 18, is the act of "the church" (v. 17), or assembly. It was the discipline of the gathered saints in case of an offender, and where they acted, the judgment was final. The offender was outside, or on repentance was received. The authority given to Peter in chapter xvi., in the kingdom, was here conferred on the two or three gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus in the church. It was the presence of Christ himself that gave the authority. And this was sanctioned by heaven. There is not a word here of forgiveness of sins, but simply the power to separate from an offending one, and the act ratified by heaven. Of course this authority could not be exercised elsewhere than within its own sphere, "on earth." That is, they could not bind or loose anything in heaven, but binding and loosing *on earth* were committed to them, and are now to those gathered to His name.

In John ix. 23, there is a picture of the assembly about to be formed. They have authority to retain or remit sins—not as a question of eternal forgiveness, which is God's prerogative, but administratively in discipline. When one is received from the world, or is restored to fellowship, it is remitting sins; when excluded, it is retaining his sins. See, as examples, 1 Cor. v. 4, 5, and 2 Cor. ii. 6-10.

In none of these cases is there any allowance in the slightest degree of the priestly assumption of "absolution." Who can forgive sins but God alone? But the assembly, having the Lord's mind through the word as to whether sin is judged and purged, can, by receiving or rejecting, remit or retain sins.

THE ACTS.

Chapter VIII.

Saul was consenting to, or rather taking pleasure in, Stephen's death. He was the representative of the Jews in their thorough religiousness and their thorough hatred to Jesus Christ. As he says of himself, he profited beyond others in the Jew's religion, even so he persecuted unto death those who were of the church. He thought he ought to do these things, they were God's service. It was this one with a perfect blindness that saw not one thought of God, and a master purpose that absorbed life and business to resist all that was "of this way," that was suffered now for a season to go the full length of his own will laying waste the assembly, entering into their houses and dragging off to prison both men and women.

"At that time there was a great persecution against the assembly, which was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles." It may have been failure on the part of the apostles to stay, or they may not have discerned the mind of the Lord that they should leave, for the remnant were not all gathered out from Jerusalem; but whether they were wrong or right in remaining, evidently God who was ruling all, was making ready to have the gospel proclaimed "to every creature" (Mark xvi. 15; Col. i. 23,) by another, a special apostle. See Rom. i. 1-5.

But we see the true character of ministry of the word by preaching, that the calling and sending forth were only of God. Those that went everywhere preaching were not authorized by man. It was individual responsibility to the Lord, to make known the message of grace. Clericalism gets no warrant thus far in this history.

We notice, too, the distinction between the "devout men" who carried Stephen to his burial and made lamentations over him who were Jews, and "the church which was at Jerusalem."

Among those scattered abroad preaching, Philip is especially mentioned, who went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them. It was in this proverbially wicked country that the clearest and richest testimony had been called forth to the name of Jesus (See John iv). "Now we believe, . . . for we have heard ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the

Saviour of the world." It was the simplest order of God, for faith comes by hearing.

Here, too, the ancient pride had deepened the feud between the Jews and the Samaritans, till there were no dealings between them. As the law could do nothing for man through the weakness of the flesh, so Judaism, with its self-righteous claims, could effect nothing but hatred and separation with the Samaritans. But the gospel went out with its announcement of the very Christ, whom the Jews despised, and it was the power of God unto salvation to these poor lost ones. The Holy Spirit in the track of the Lord Himself, rejected and wearied in Judea, found refreshment, the "meat to eat" in Samaria. The people, with one accord, gave heed unto the things which Philip spoke, hearing (the power of the *word* is felt first) and seeing the miracles which he did.

Surely they were a people prepared by their very need and the simplicity of their hearts. They were an outcast race; the gospel of the kingdom was not sent to them: they were by name excluded from that when Christ sent forth His messengers (Matt. x.) with that word; but the fuller, deeper expression of the grace of God to the lost was emphatically theirs. It suited those who "were Samaritans and had a devil."

And the reception of it brought out at once the proper fruit. "There was great joy in that city." It was to the Samaritan woman in her abject misery and pollution that the first announcement was made of what worship is, and that this was God's object as a Seeker; and it is here again that the likeness to that picture of John iv. is manifest.

Among the Jews, miracles had the prominent place, the Lord graciously *working* in behalf of his own people, while yet He could take them up on that ground, and so working as to make it a sign of the better thing given, and thus open the way for the word which was life. Outside the city, especially among those not on that ground of ancient relationship, the first place is given to His *word*. So we find here they believed Philip preaching the glad message concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, and were baptized, both men and women.

Attention to miracles, as such, is a snare. There may be the simple wondering occupation with this act itself.

Faith is not belief in the miracle, but the person ; not because we have tested it, but because He says it. The heart must be first affected, the mind quickened to know God by the Spirit with the word, before the miracle can be received or understood in its proper way. "I am Jehovah, your God," is the declaration to Israel before a single mighty work is done. He is already there, in pity and love, and then He acts according to Himself as occasion requires. The word is thus first, ALWAYS. It was the suitable thing, therefore, in Jerusalem, where God was known (not actually, it is true, now in their apostacy, but still acknowledged as God), that He should begin by signs as being already there. If the apostles could proclaim a new word from God, they could be met by a statement of the necessity of clinging to the word already given by Moses in every case. Their hearers could say in effect, "We know if God is in this He will act in mighty ways like Himself ; where are the signs ?" This is met at once, and miracles proved the word of testimony to them. Besides, the nation that had seen His intervention in power in their behalf must now witness the working of His hand in behalf of those they persecuted.

But to the Gentiles, as we find all through this book, the word is the first thing from God, appealing to faith, and the miracle only comes in to remove hindrances to the reception of the truth, or to confirm the word already spoken. The great object outside was to show what suited lost man, God in grace speaking the word of salvation.

Accordingly we see in Samaria, which in a moral way lay between the Jews and Gentiles, both the word and miracles are prominent, though as suiting their confessedly ruined condition, the word of grace, rather than the work of power, comes first. The miracle following the word here was the accompaniment in grace of the hand to heal, with the word of the mouth.

In Simon we see one, who though announced as a believer, gets occupied with the wondrous working of God, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Thus his own mind got to acting, and this is always dangerous, even though the object be God's own things. What can we, in our own minds, make of the displays of the power of God ? It is only by the Spirit of God that we can re-

ceive anything of God, His words or His works. Our own thoughts on His matters are but a wasting and a folly, a testimony of what we are. It is ever true that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things of God, but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God. that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

The result in Simon's case led him to suppose that the gift of God could be purchased with money. How dreadful the thought! How utterly opposed to God! This gift referred to the power to bestow the Holy Spirit, rather than to the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer. There is a great difference between the specific gifts bestowed by the Spirit, and His being bestowed upon every believer as such, the seal setting him apart to God as His, now, while waiting for His Son to take us unto Himself.

Simon had no part or lot in this matter of bestowing gifts, his heart was not right before God, and, therefore, he is called upon to repent of this wickedness, and entreat the Lord if perhaps the thought of his heart should be forgiven him. It is not the word addressed to a lost sinner as such, for there is no "if" or "perhaps" on the part of God, as to forgiveness or salvation to the sinner; but the need of forgiveness of a specific sin of very gross character, and it would seem punishable with death (See chap. v. 5, 10, 1 Cor. xi. 30). It was of a character pertaining to the crowning sin of the last days, the bond of iniquity, the gall of bitterness, as perceived by the apostle through the Holy Spirit. And hence the anxiety of Simon that Peter should pray for him that none of these things should come upon him.

The apostles after having fully borne witness and spoken the word of the Lord in Samaria, returned unto Jerusalem. But the gospel of God's grace is to go elsewhere, and the Lord selects His own instrument for this. Philip is told to go toward the south unto the way that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza, the same is a wilderness. "And he arose, and went."

This is very beautiful as an example of simple obedience in the servant. After having been used in the cities with

such striking results, to go to a wilderness uninhabited was a change. But he had no question nor suggestion in the matter, the angel of the Lord told him to go. It is not to be overlooked that flesh might have objections to interpose, thoughts of results as being of no account. And many get into perplexity in these things, because the heart is not simple. We want to see great things before us. We would measure the importance of work by the number of people we can get at, or the encouragement that circumstances may lend. But the true servant will have for his rule, "I do always the will of Him that sent me." This simplifies everything vastly. Not, we doing great things, but, what He wants us to do. May this spirit increase more and more!

And the result justifies the obedience to the word. It was the opening of the gospel to Ethiopia. It was meeting a deeply anxious one, who, in all the feast of the city of solemnities, found no peace, but in whose heart the word was working power. It were worth crossing an ocean or a continent to meet one needy soul made ready to receive the word of life.

The treasurer of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, was returning from Jerusalem, reading in his chariot, the prophet Isaiah. The Spirit directed Philip to join himself to him in the chariot. There is a difference between the *angel* of the Lord directing him to go to the place and the *Spirit* telling him to go to the chariot; the former attending to simple circumstances, the latter to the spiritual work. To be guided by circumstances is not to be guided with the eye of the Lord. He that lives in fellowship with the Lord may count on the Spirit's guidance; the servant of the Lord may have both.

How simple and easy the work when thus led. This great one is eager to know the meaning of what he reads, but how can he hear without a preacher, and how can Philip preach unless he be sent? Then from the portion of the prophet which he was reading, Philip began and preached unto him the glad tidings of Jesus, the complete and satisfactory answer to all his inquiries.

And it gave peace at once. How precious the facts of God meeting thoroughly every need of our souls! How blessed to be the messenger of such truth that gives light and glory wherever received!

At once he is baptized, himself asking for it. It is the demand of a good conscience purged by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It should be noticed that v. 37 is to be left out. It is without good authority, and is really man's addition to the scripture account. And like all man's contributions to the word, it is a blunder. The testimony that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, was first given by Paul (chap. ix. 20), and is distinctly the foundation of all his peculiar apostleship—Christ in the glory of God, determined to be the Son of God, with power, by the resurrection from the dead. The testimony thus far by Peter has been of Christ as the servant of God, and Philip preached Jesus as the fulfillment of Isaiah liii., and as there was no teaching of Christ as the Son of God, there could be no demand for the confession of this on the part of the believer, up to this time. Certainly, an ignorant Ethiopian could not go beyond the testimony given him, though simple and receptive. The conversation in this verse is doubtless a fiction.

The narrative is very clear and simple. "As they went on their way they came unto a certain water, and the eunuch said, See, water! What doth hinder me to be baptized? And he ordered the chariot to stand still, and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. But when they came up out of the water the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip that the eunuch saw him no longer, for he went on his way rejoicing."

Joy is the natural fruit of salvation received. What a different ending to his journey, the remaining portion of the wilderness passed with the springing gladness of a new-born soul made free through the work of Christ! And how easily he could do without Philip, who is now caught away, he going by the Spirit from Azotus to Cesarea, preaching in all the cities: while the eunuch, with his joy, passes on another way, first fruits of that land that shall yet stretch out her hand to God.

We notice here that the Holy Spirit as fully and notably accredits both the workmen and the work outside of Jerusalem as He had done in it, acting in the same rich grace and clearness of judgment, too, upon what is evil, in those taking the ground of profession.

MEDITATIONS ON SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

THE VESSELS OF BRASS.

“Moreover he made an altar of brass . . . a molten sea . . . He made also ten lavers, and put five on the right hand, and five on the left, to wash in them: such things as they offered for the burnt offering they washed in them: but the sea was for the priests to wash in . . . Thus Solomon made all these vessels in great abundance: for the weight of the brass could not be found out.” (2 Chron. iv.)

We are still, in type, in 1 Cor. If we turn to that book we shall notice that just as between the description of the cherubim and ark (which we were last considering,) there come these details of the altar, sea, lavers, &c., of brass, so there between the teaching about the presence of the Holy Spirit (chap. ii. iii.) and the Lord's table (chap. x. xi.) come solemn instruction as to self-judgment, and the judgment of evil in the assembly (chap. iv. v). Brass, as has been before noticed, signifies judgment.

Having already, in our first chapter, spoken of the judgment for our sins borne by the Lord Jesus on the cross, as being the foundation of the whole work of redemption, we will not therefore consider the altar of brass in its teaching of the grand doctrine of atonement, precious and untiring as it is, but rather in its bearing upon the believer's and the assembly's walk; in other words, its present rather than its past application. For though the believer, as to his standing, his position before God as a son and a saint, has the blessed assurance from God's own word that the judgment against sin was all borne by his blessed Substitute upon the cross, who by the price of His own blood cancelled the whole debt of his sins, which will never be remembered more, they all being buried in the tomb of Jesus, so that he is beyond judgment, and will never be brought into judgment for his sins (for to do so would be setting at nought the atoning sacrifice of the Spotless one), yet in order to walk in fellowship with the Father and Son he needs to *judge himself* continually.

We find three pieces of brass furniture made: the altar, the sea, the lavers. These teach us self-judgment in three ways—the condemnation of the flesh by the cross; the cleansing of ourselves by the Word; the cleansing of our worship by the Word also.

In regard to the first, there is much to learn and to

remember daily. In the cross God has "condemned sin in the flesh;" not only has the cross put away all my sins, but God by it has passed His verdict as to the utter worthlessness of the flesh. And this has its bearing on the conscience in two ways: first, as to my place before God—the flesh reckoned us dead, our old man crucified with Christ, and the believer past condemnation and looked at as in the One who bore the condemnation and is now beyond it—and second, as to his walk, the very fact of his being dead is the argument for the non-allowance of the flesh. I am to reckon the flesh dead not only in its grosser lusts, but in everything that proceeds from it, the very principle itself. Whatever originates from self must be bad: a corrupt tree cannot bear good fruit. My standing before God being in the **New Man**, I am to "put on the new man." "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Let us ever bear in mind that the teaching of Rom. vi., Col. iii., &c., is meant to be practical, eminently so. We are told of being baptized into Christ's death, in order that we may not let sin reign in our mortal bodies, that we should obey it in the lusts thereof; we are told that we are dead and our life hid with Christ in God, that we may mortify therefore our members on the earth. That same cross of Christ that gave me deliverance never ceases to have its bearing over my life. As to my salvation it *had* its power, as to my walk it *still has*. If the *truth* of the cross were but stamped upon the hearts of the saints, instead of its picture (with a garland of roses round it!) being hung up in their parlors, the line of demarcation between the world and saints would be pretty distinct. This world has crucified the Holy One, and now places a *garland* around that cross! "Ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets." The cross makes a chasm between the world and the saint. How should he, how can he, have any fellowship with that which crucified his Lord and adds to its sin yearly by a more and more complete rejection of Him? Alas, that a child of God, an heir of glory, should talk of "social position" for a moment! Alas, that a disciple of Him who was despised of men

and counted unworthy to live, should think of "keeping up a position in life!" Yet indeed we *are* called to "keep up our position in life," for though walking through the valley of the shadow of death, we are to live as those whose life is hid with Christ in God, breathing the atmosphere of heaven, deriving all our vitality from the Head in Glory, we are to show out that in Him only is life: all the world is dead in sins, and lieth in the arms of the wicked one. Yes indeed we have a position in life to keep up, but not life (death rather.) in this corrupt world, but the position in life we have as risen and seated with Christ in the heavenlies; and to *keep* this position we shall need to walk in communion with Him, not with the world. We cannot walk with both: "friendship of the world is enmity with God; whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

And this applies, of course, to the church, as well as to the individual believer. All alliance with the world, all seeking after fleshly wisdom, power, help, favor, is a setting aside, an overlooking of the momentous fact that our Lord was *crucified*.

The molten sea, we are told, "was for the priests to wash in." To be able to exercise our office as priests, we need not only to have our "hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience," but also "our bodies washed with pure water. My *right* as to the entrance into the holiest is "the blood of Jesus," but my *power* to do so will be determined by my being washed or not by the water. As in Lev. xxi., 17. *any* of the priestly family could *feed* upon the offering, but if he had a blemish he could not *offer* them. If evil is allowed there can be no fellowship with the Father, and no worship. Let us then not neglect the bathing in the molten sea. Let us come to the word, not to be enabled therewith to point out the faults of others, but to cleanse ourselves from all that dishonors the Lord and binds us to the flesh and hinders worship. The sea was made to *bathe* in: we must allow the word to cleanse us thoroughly, from head to foot: our thoughts washed from impurity and used by and for the Lord; our voice used not to speak evil of one another, but to bear testimony to His grace; our ears not to be listening to idle gossip, but to receive His teaching; our eyes not to roam after an object to gratify its lust, but

in gazing upon "the King in His beauty;" our shoulders not to be loaded down with this world's goods, but to be employed in bearing one another's burdens; our hands to be used in His service; our feet in walking the way of peace; our heart given up unreservedly to Him as His residence; and our bodies used, not as pegs for the display of the wares of the milliner and jeweller, but as temples of the Holy Ghost—"Know ye not that your *bodies* are the members of Christ!"

The "sea" is also for the assembly of God. The water of the word must be allowed to cleanse here also. If the word is not allowed to wash us, *i. e.*, point out the evil, judge it, and be obeyed by putting away the evil, there is no real worship. It is not enough that the majority of the assembly are personally free of evil, in morals or doctrine, if they are not also free from association with it. The presence of Achan defiled all Israel, and the allowance of *one* who holds to evil defiles all the assembly. By a *little* leaven the whole lump is leavened; and the longer that leaven remains there, the more extended will be its corruption, the larger the lump that is leavened. Moreover, he who, while professing to abhor the evil, will yet fellowship it, must be worse than the one who openly avows it, for there can be no neutrality here. If I cling to the leaven, I must be purged out with it; I must be either with the old lump or the new. When Achan was discovered as the one who weakened God's host, "*all* Israel stoned him with stones." What would have been said of the Israelite who had refused to stone Achan, would he not have been condemned and stoned with him? Let those who make light of the toleration of evil in God's house, consider these solemn words: "If any man defile the temple of God (*i. e.*, the assembly, for he is not talking here of the body of the believer being God's temple, as in chap. vi., but of that temple of which Paul laid the foundation and others are building thereon, 9-17.) him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. iii. 17). He does not say which *you* are, or which temples *ye* are, but "the the temple (sing.) of God is holy, which temple ye are." Oh what a host of temple defilers there are! Men who will *boast* of their ability to fellowship evil and call it "liberal-mindedness," and denounce those

who have become fools by obeying God's word (1 Cor. iii. 18) as "narrow-minded," "men of one idea," "bigoted," &c. God has graciously taught many of His saints the truth of the assembly being His dwelling place; woe to those who defile that blessed testimony by the allowance of evil there!

As long as we are in the body we need the washing of the word, we shall never be beyond the need of it until we reach the glory; but there, instead of bathing in a sea of water, we shall sit upon a sea of glass (Rev. iv. 6).

We shall then be conformed unto the image of God's Son, and shall not need any more cleansing; the sea of glass will but serve to reflect back, to show to us, what we are in God's sight. We shall see Him as He is, and be like Him, knowing even as we are known.

"Blest region! where each soul is free

From all that wounded here,

Favored with full conformity

To Him whose name they bear.

O! when that happy land I view,

Its holiness and peace,

I love to think that soon I too

Shall share its glorious bliss.

There's calm in heaven, and perfect rest,

And undisturbed repose;

Sweet prospect to an aching breast

Is such a peaceful close.

It's sweetness I delight to own,

But its purity is bliss;

I shall be like the Holy One,

And see Him as He is."

The oxen (upon which the sea stood) give an idea of strength. The number twelve seems to refer chiefly to its dispensational teaching that "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness" (Zec. xiii). The water of the word shall have its power over them to separate them from evil, so that the principles of the kingdom given in Matt. v. 3-10, shall be acted upon. "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid (Zeph. iii. 13).

As to the shape of the sea—"The brim of it like the work of the brim of a cup, like a lily-flower (*margin*)."
I

have but this suggestion to make—"Soul, dost thou hesitate to judge self thoroughly, fearing humiliation? Does the flesh shrink from taking the lowest place? Remember Him, the Lily of the valley, who "made himself of no reputation" He is the vessel, so to speak, that contains the water for our cleansing. He exemplifies the teaching of the Word as to self-humiliation. "therefore let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." Was He any less lovely for being in the valley? Rather was it the humiliation that displayed His beauty. Therefore, my soul, shrink not from humiliation, for by that the fruit of the Spirit is developed. The ten lavers were used "to wash in them such things as they offered for the burnt offering." Everything used as a medium of worship must be tried by the word. We can only worship the Father in spirit and *in truth*. Nothing should be introduced into worship that is not according to the written word of God: singing, praying, teaching may all be used to bring out or express worship, but all must be tested and approved by the word. In 1 Kings vii. we find eleven verses given to the description of the bases on which these lavers stood; these then surely have a meaning, but, I think, chiefly dispensational, for there is a great similarity between these bases and the cherubim Ezekiel saw which are expressive of God's power and ways in the government of the earth, and therefore they would apply chiefly to Israel when placed in the position of head of the nations. However, in principle its application is the same even now—Divine government by the word. The presence of the Ruler—the Holy Spirit—in the assembly must be recognized, not as a theory, but as a living reality. It is the fact of the assembly having Him indwelling that enables them to retain or remit, loose or bind.

"The weight of the brass could not be found out." The judgment of God against sin is unfathomable by man. The cross is the expression of it, but who but God can understand the intense anguish of that Holy One who took the sinner's place and bore the judgment against sin in His own person! And that cross is the measure of all judgment, self-judgment, and the judgment to be inflicted upon the world that rejects that sacrifice.

THE VESSELS OF GOLD.

"And Solomon made all the vessels that were for the house of God, the golden altar also, and the tables whereon the shewbread was set; moreover the candlesticks with their lamps, that they should burn after the manner before the oracle, of pure gold, and the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs made he of gold, and that perfect gold; and the snuffers, and the basons, and the spoons, and the censers of pure gold" (2 Chron. iv. 19-22).

The incense altar was made of cedar (1 Kings vi. 20) overlaid with gold. Worship is not only Divine in its power and object, but also in its duration—it shall never end. The time will come when the sea and the lavers shall be needed no more, but the feeble way in which we worship now is but the commencement of that heavenly employment which shall be uncensuring.

The twelve loaves of shewbread placed upon the one table were emblematical of the twelve tribes of Israel seen in their unity before God continually; and typically, each member of Christ being ever before God as "complete in Him," "His fulness," "His body." But why ten tables here? The reply is, Each assembly is the manifestation of the one body. The mere fact of a plurality of assemblies does not affect the manifestation of the unity of the body of Christ, *if their testimony is the same*; each table had the twelve loaves upon it; the unity is shown in the uniform testimony. Moreover, although there were ten tables, candlesticks, lavers, there was but one altar of brass, and one altar of gold; but one measure of judgment—the cross; one place of worship—God's presence. However weak the assemblies may be, (and the number ten is suggestive of it) before God each is bearing testimony according to His mind. And it is very sweet to know that although our testimony has so little weight with man, and indeed, so obscure are we that few, perhaps, know of it, it is *before God* that the shewbread was laid.

Thus also with the candlesticks; they were not placed outside to light the people, but inside, "that they should burn after the manner before the oracle." The seven candlesticks that John saw, were seen *as candlesticks* before the Son of Man. And He walks among them and trims their lamps not according to their idea of their

dimness, nor according to the world's idea, but as He sees their need of it. It is blessed to know that every time we preach the Gospel of His grace, we have at least one appreciative listener. One to whom we are "as sweet savor of Christ," one who will perceive that the right kind of oil is burning. The two witnesses of Rev. xi. are spoken of as "the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth."

One more thought : The tables, candlesticks, &c., were of gold. The Truth rests upon a Divine platform; the testimony is of Divine power and of Divine things. Even the snuffers were of gold, for He only can discern as to our lights and will trim them as He knows we need and as He has the power. So that in spite of the ruin, the church is a vessel that displays His manifold wisdom, by the marvellous way in which He can raise up a testimony in the midst of it all, a testimony that is but the purer by being brought through the fire, and maintained only by suffering and loss.

C. H. B.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

VICTORY OVER THE WORLD.

(1 John v. 4, 5).

"Who is he that overcometh the world!" The first thing I have to know is, what the world is, and in one verse this is summed up: "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but of the world." Of course, if I do not know what the world is, I cannot know what I ought to be delivered from. The world knew not Christ; whatever knows not Christ is the world, and whoever loves it, the love of the Father is not in him."

There are, I may say, four distinct ways in which we are delivered, or rather, in which the *sense* of deliverance is made known to the soul, as well as the *power* of it.

I. *The first is stated as a principle in the passage before us*—"That which is born of God overcomes the world;" and, therefore, every divinely new-born soul does in some degree overcome the world. Faith is the power by which it is effected, and the Son of God is the object for faith, by which the victory is consummated. If I, by faith, have my soul set on Jesus as the Son of God, apart from, and beyond the world, I receive the

strength and the sense of His victory over it. I am of good cheer, because He has overcome it. I am in His strength and with Him above it. I am not alone, buffet-
ing the adverse activities here; but I see Him above them all, as having surmounted them; and from the very fact of my believing in Him, my soul is with Him, away and apart from all that is contrary to Him. I am above it, in the very action of life, the result of faith in Him. If the world besets me, or hampers, or baffles me, in any way, the moment my eye rests on Him, the Son of God, I am above it. I may not see my extrication, but I am in victory over it, I have a place and power superior to it.

II. *The second way or power of deliverance is that my true place now is with Christ in heaven.* That is the reach, if I may so say, of the Spirit of God now. It is the place where the soul by faith enters into the great result of the love of God; that inner circle of His presence where the prodigal shares in the joys of God, and knows that he is in intimate nearness in his Father's house; where he is unincumbered, irreproachable, and irreprovable in His sight. My citizenship is there, and if known and enjoyed there, I must, in proportion, be dissociated in principle, taste and interest, from the world. A really heavenly man could not be of the world, for the great power, or effect, of being in heaven now, even by faith, is an unconsciousness of the existence of that which connects me with the world, while abundantly conscious of the great blessedness into which I have been introduced. A man happy with Christ in heaven as his own place, could not be happy in the world as such.

III. *The third is that I am dead—that God treats me as dead.* Now, if I am dead, the world is nothing to me, because it is only as a man "living in the world" I could enjoy the world. A man really *dead* has no interest whatever in it.

The place of death in which God places us morally, effects varied blessings for us in respect to our deliverance from the world.

Let us note them in order. In *Romans*: I, being dead through the body of Christ, am freed from the law, and therefore I am to present my body a living sacrifice as my reasonable service, not conformed unto this

world, but transformed by the renewing of my mind. How else could it be if I am freed from the law by being dead? What more grateful than to present it to Him who freed me from a world where I could only cry out, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

In 1 *Corinthians*, i., &c., the apostle shows how the cross of Christ sets aside the wisdom of the world; and therefore he determined to know among them only Jesus Christ, and Him crucified; for if there had been wisdom in the world, the princes of it would not have crucified Him, therefore the cross is foolishness to it. The cross—Christ crucified—delivers me from the wisdom of the world, as in 2 Cor. v. I am an entirely new creation; "old things are passed away, all things are become new."

In *Galatians*: I find that because I am crucified with Christ, the law has no place in perfecting me; and therefore the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

In *Ephesians*: I am on the other side, through Christ's death, and therefore above the prince of the power of the air, which otherwise I could not be.

In *Colossians*: I am not like the Gnostics, trying to detach myself from the world by not touching or tasting, but through Christ, I am dead to the rudiments of the world.

IV. *The fourth way in which I am loosened and detached from the world is, by being impressed with the vanity and impermanency of it; but this is the lowest order of deliverance. It is only alluded to when there is a distinct leaning of the heart to earth. Paul speaks of it in 1 Cor. vii., when writing on marriage; and again in Heb. xii.; but he never speaks there of their being dead, though he connects all their blessings with resurrection. James speaks of the world being a vapor which passeth away; and Peter dwells largely on the present heaven and earth being dissolved, and argues therefrom what manner of persons we ought to be. Finally, John, in the Revelation, judges, afflicts, and by terrible strokes, crushes the whole of the present order of things, so that there is not a shred left for nature to cling to—the wrath of God devouring it all.*

THE "I'S" AND "ME'S" OF ROMANS VII.

There are three things in this chapter. In the first six verses, we have the doctrine—we have died to the law by the body of Christ, and we are married to another, even Christ risen from the dead; then verses 7 to 13, the conclusion with the inquiry, is it sin, does it work death? and verses 14 to end, experience, before being delivered from the law. And here it is of importance to mark how the Apostle uses *I* and *we*. When he says *I* he is taking us in our individual state; but when he says *we*, then it is as christians, as believers in Christ, that he is speaking of us. If he says *I*, then he is beginning to deal with individual members; for if I begin to talk of myself, then I find sin in myself every day. It's a personal, practical consciousness of what is working in my heart. But that is not my place in Christ, and there is the difference. And this gives us the key to the passage. It is one, who has christia knowledge, judging what flesh is, but what it is in its effect on me in the presence of, and under the law. It is what I am in myself, that is, in the flesh. I am carnal; in me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good thing; therefore, in this part of the chapter all is *I* and *me*, and they are used some thirty times; but he never speaks of Christ or of the Spirit at all until the close of the chapter. It is the experience of what the flesh is, viewed in the light of the requirements of a spiritual law, deliverance being yet unknown, and not the knowledge by faith of what I am in Christ. It is the personal experience of myself in flesh, but mixed with the clear knowledge of a christian, who looks back at it; but not the state of a man in Christ, whom the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made free.

Then, what is it in the seventh chapter, is a man under the law? It is not simply the effect of conflict between the new and the old nature, but the effect of being under the law when both are there. It does not say that Christ is good; but it takes much lower ground, and says, the law is holy, just, and good. The seventh chapter is the discussion of the law applied to the practical experience of a man struggling to live righteously under it. A natural man cannot delight in the law of God with his heart, the new nature does: but then, according to that nature, we see he always wills what is right, yet he never does it,

because he has no power. Now, don't you find that in a vast majority of cases, that what you want is power to do what is right? Well, then, the law will never give it you: for the law is as weak to give you power to do right, as it is strong to condemn you when you do wrong. The secret of it all is, that when in the flesh there is no power, and it is all self till we see that; and till Christ is known as the deliverer from the law, it is always *I, I, I*, and we shall be floundering about, and only getting deeper and deeper into it, like a man in a morass, who attempting to lift one leg out, only sinks the other deeper into the mire: there may be a desire to get out, but he must have a deliverer; there is ever the desire to be this or that, or to do this or that, thus being occupied with self instead of Christ. It is true you ought to desire holiness, but how are you to get power to be holy?

Suppose you were, what will never be, a great deal more holy than you are, would that give you peace, when you have not been brought to a righteous standing before God in Christ? If you think your own holiness could give you peace, you are not even depending on His blood, and certainly you do not know yourselves. What, then, is all this struggling meant for? Just to let you know you can't have peace in this way, nor righteousness and holiness in the flesh and by law: that you may know yourselves, and what flesh is.

There is such a tendency in us to be thinking of these *I's* and *me's*, thus to set up *self*, in God's place, that God says, Well, you shall have so much of *self*, that you shall be thoroughly glad to have done with yourself, and to this end, God often suffers us to be brought through all this, to be put under the law, with a new nature and a good will, which only leads to "O, wretched man that I am," for it is only man, there is the love of good, but no power to do it, for man is as powerless as he is wicked. He is brought, through laboring to do, to cry out, "Who shall deliver?" He is looking for another to deliver him: he gives it up as a hopeless thing, yet cannot, dare not do without it. It is not that man is to get a better *self*, but a deliverance from self. This may be the work of a day or years, according to circumstances: man is brought to his own level, and then God in grace can come in. Then comes thanksgiving, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Verse 25.)

The only way by which man gets power, is by being shewn that he has none of himself, and then he is not delivered by getting victory, and so peace, but by finding he is in Christ, has died to and is out of the flesh, and only in Christ, through whom he lives before God. Then God can give him power. "When we were without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

Man must know God as his Saviour, before he knows Him as his strength. There must be salvation, then come peace and progress.

J. N. D.

"HAVE YE RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST SINCE YE BELIEVED?"

Acts xix. 1-7.

Dearly beloved, I have a few thoughts connected with this passage, which I wish to express for the benefit of any who may be in need of such a word as the Lord shall give. And when I say this, I realize most sensibly, and feel most deeply, dependence on the Holy Ghost, to say any thing at all as I ought to say it. For it is not the wisdom of the natural man, nor of this world, nor yet of the schools of this present age, nor of past ages, that can understand, much less teach in the things of God. For, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them—because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14).

Here, then, we have two things.

FIRST. The absolute necessity of an indwelling Holy Ghost, in order to discern spiritual things. Discernment is the first quality of understanding. We never understand a thing, only so far as we are able to *look into it*, and this is discernment. In the student, this may be an acquired ability, but not so with the christian. For he has not begotten himself to God, nor given himself eternal life; much less has he acquired the Holy Ghost. He is begotten by the word of truth (James i. 18). "I give unto them eternal life." "The gift of God is eternal life" (John x. 28, and Rom. vi. 23)—"and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 38.) "When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Eph. iv. 8).

SECOND. The gift to teach God's truth, or spiritual

things. These are not the same thing. That is to say, a capability or capacity for discerning spiritual things is one thing, a gift to teach spiritual things is quite another.

I doubt not it is the privilege of every christian to have this capability for discerning, and hence understanding, spiritual things; as it is the privilege of all christians to have the Holy Ghost indwelling; but it is not the privilege of all to teach. And now let us see if you and I can submit our hearts fully to what the scripture teaches on this point.

And *first*. Read Eph. iv. 11. "And He gave some apostles; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers." Notice this: He gave *some*, not all. Read 1 Cor. xii. 4. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit;" verse 8, "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another, faith by the same Spirit; to another, the gift of healing by the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will; for as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." And here he brings in the human body, with its many and distinct members, to illustrate the church, as the body of Christ.

And they are all supposed to have the Holy Ghost, since it is by the one Spirit that they are all baptized into the one body, the church, and, as thus united to their glorified Head in heaven, Christ.

And then, to make it so plain that all might understand, he adds, beginning with v. 27, "Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." Now this is a very important passage, inasmuch as it gives us God's order, of the relative importance of the gifts which He has set in the church. That is to say, the gift of first

importance was apostles, the second in order, prophets, and the third, teachers.

Mark this carefully. The apostles and prophets of the New Testament. Not apostles of the New, and prophets of the Old, as you will see by reading Eph. ii. 20: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone." And then, in iii. 5, speaking of the church as the mystery of Christ, "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." Here, then, we have two gifts, of first and second importance in the foundation; and a building always rises from and rests upon its foundation. You lay but one foundation for one building. The foundation is an important part of a building, but it always occupies the one place, at the bottom, never at the top, nor yet mixed in with the top. This is very important in these days of apostolic pretensions. The building is not yet complete, but the foundation is blessedly complete. None may add thereto, and none can take therefrom.

The New Testament apostles and prophets have given to the church, in their writings, all that is, or has, or ever can be needful in the way of fundamental principles; as it is written, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17).

So that while we do not find the church brought out in Old Testament scripture, we do find much that is profitable, as it is written, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. xv. 4). "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. x. 11). The church does not need apostolic presence, but it does need apostolic instruction. The church does not need the bodily presence of her Lord, while in the world; but she does need the Holy Ghost. Hence the Lord said, "It is expedient that I go away, if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you."

And I add just another word here, as to our needs individually. What I have said as to the church, as the body of Christ, is one thing: what I wish now to bring in, as to individuality, is quite another. And this is of first importance, inasmuch as corporate relationship grows out of the individual. To illustrate: my child is first of all related to me as my child, then to other members of the family, because of this first relationship. And the child who could not identify his own parents would hardly be able to identify his brothers and sisters. The corporate relationship (as members one of another) then, grows out of the individual: and the person who does not understand the latter, could hardly be expected to recognize the former.

That is to say, the person who has not yet received the Holy Ghost could hardly be expected to identify himself in a meeting where the Holy Ghost was ruling and guiding. And if you bring together a company of such persons, they are at once confounded when the truth of the Holy Ghost is brought in. They are strangers to Him (the Holy Ghost), and strangers to one another, for the very same reason, and what is still more, the bringing them together does not give them the Holy Ghost. True, it might be the occasion of receiving Him, as in the case of the disciples, at Ephesus. They had been gathered, not by the Holy Ghost, for they had not yet "heard that there be any Holy Ghost"; but by the preaching of repentance, and had been baptized "unto John's baptism." They were quickened souls, no doubt, like many in our day, but the apostle could not recognize them as brethren, inasmuch as they could not identify themselves as *united by the Holy Ghost* to a glorified man in heaven, and as being one in Him, and consequently *members one of another*.

And now let us consider this point carefully, for it is one of first importance. To trifle with God is serious business. Let us, then, look carefully to the *word of truth* for a right understanding of this point. Now, if you will take your concordance, you will see that this peculiar expression, "the Holy Ghost," does not once occur in the Old Testament. And why is this? Not that the Old Testament scriptures are thereby without authority. For we are told (2 Peter i. 21). "For the prophecy came not

in old time by the will of man ; but holy men of God spake, *moved by the Holy Ghost.*" So that, while we see that the Old Testament scriptures were indited by the Holy Ghost, and are, therefore, of Divine authority, we see also that there was a wide difference between the Spirit's operation then, and the Spirit's operation now. We will notice just a few points of difference, together with a few passages of scriptures to make it plain.

In the former, God was dealing with man on the ground of what man was, a sinner, and could not approach God nor come into His presence. For God was holy (Joshua xxiv. 19). "Ye cannot serve the Lord, for He is a holy God ; He is a jealous God ; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins."

In the latter—the gospel of His Son—God has been dealing with man on the ground of what He Himself is ; while the question as to what man is, is left one side for a little, to come up again and receive its full answer at the cross.

In the former, God was proving man (see Ex. xx. 20, 21): "And Moses said unto the people, 'Fear not, for God is come to prove you and that His fear may be before your faces that ye sin not.' And the people stood afar off ; and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was. And the Lord said unto Moses, 'Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, ye have seen that *I have talked with you from heaven.*'"

In the latter—the gospel of His Son—God has come out of "the thick darkness," to show Himself. In the former, he proved all that was in man's heart. In the latter, He reveals all that was in His own heart (see John i. 18). "No man hath seen God at any time, only the begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father. He hath declared Him." "And no man hath ascended up to heaven but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John iii. 13). "Philip saith unto Him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him. Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip ? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father ; how sayest thou, shew us the Father ? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me ; the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself, but the Father that

dwelleth in me He doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me" (John xiv. 9-11).

And now for one moment consider the parable of the prodigal son, in Luke xv., and the difference of which I speak is beautifully illustrated. It is not God as a judge of sin, speaking from heaven, to the prodigal; for then it would have been in the language of the law, which required him to be stoned, his father and mother being witnesses against him. (See Deut. xxi. 18-23.) But it is rather, God come out from heaven to express the *joy of His own heart*, while in sovereign grace He receives the prodigal without one word of chiding, but with an embrace and kiss of love. Yes, here most clearly do we get expressed and illustrated *the infinite joy of God's own heart in saving sinners.*

Now, in order that we may see this difference still more clearly, let us draw a parallel, and,

First. The father and mother bring out the son, saying to the elders of Israel: "This, our son, is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice, *he is a glutton and a drunkard.*" "And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones that he die; so shalt thou put away evil from among you" (Deut. xxi. 20, 21).

The second. (Luke xv. 11-24,) "And he said, A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father; but when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him,

and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, bring the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry." Here, then, are two cases. One, under the dispensation of the law; the other under the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. But, do you see? In both cases God is dealing with a rebellious son. In the one, to put away evil from Israel, the rebellious son must be stoned till he die; in the other, every thing is forgiven, and the rebellious son is received with outstretched arms of mercy and love. How is this? In the one, God's holiness demands the sinner's death; in the other, God's holiness demands the sinner's forgiveness, justification, salvation, glory. For the prodigal is received, owned, kissed, cleansed and clothed, yea, adorned, and brought into the Father's house, where every thing responds to the joy of the Father's heart; every thing is suited to His presence.

Now, there are many other portions of scripture which illustrate the same difference of which I am speaking. See Moses and the burning bush, Ex. iii. 5. and Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor, Acts ix. But these will suffice to bring out the point.

And again the question returns. Why is it that in the one case the holiness of God demands the death of the sinner, while in the other case the same holiness demands his salvation and glory? The answer comes in from all parts of the scriptures, *i. e.*, from the Old Testament, in types and offerings, and from the New in Him who filled out all the types and offerings. As Elihu said to Job (xxxii. 24), "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." And as the blessed Lord Jesus Himself said (Matt. xx. 28), "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many." And how wonderful that the release of Barabbas, when Jesus is judged to take his place, illustrates this very truth. "For Christ

also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God (1 Pet. iii. 18).

In the one case it is the death of the sinner which meets the demand of God's holiness; in the other it is the death of the sinner's substitute. In either case, then, the sin is judged and punished. This is what we have need to see; that the demand of God's holiness is perfectly and Divinely met. Then the sinner who sees this, and who believes it, can be saved; can he not? Yea, more; the sinner who sees this truth and believes it, is saved, is he not? On this very ground, Jesus could say to the thief on the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

C. E. H.

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

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER TO ONE IN SERVICE.

You will find yourself left alone with the Lord as to it all, not only with respect to people, but as to circumstances also. There may seem to be no results, and yet the soul happy in Him does not turn away. I hope you may be lifted above everything and everybody. Work for Him is sweet, just because it is for Him, and it is only rightly for Him when done in His presence. It becomes, therefore, the more delightful, because it is the occasion of keeping us right before Him, in dependence and intercourse. Just think of it! *His* things all that we are to be engaged with! It is too good! "I had rather be a *door-keeper*," is the expression of a servant. To enjoy the pleasures of sin," is to be waited upon out of His presence. In His presence is fulness of joy. And service that keeps us there, is the thing; not service for its own sake, as satisfying a restless nature, or giving room for activity. *Himself* is vastly more than all service.

Doubtless we shall be refreshed, and be as a strong man for a race, all the time, thus. The result of each meeting should be, and will be, a deeper joy in the truth of the word given, and we ourselves the largest receivers. How much we need grace to give graciously, and not too sharply, in such a day as this, "when all truth is fallen in the streets." There is little tone to the mind, or conscience, as in a case of utter prostration in bodily

sickness, enfeebled by drunkenness, we must administer slowly and with intense patience. Are you patient? Ah, how much we have had expended upon us! I break down before such tenderness. No harsh, strong word ought to be said, other than as a sob, or in tears. It should be the grief of the Lord and with Him; and then what pity will mingle with it. I see these things, though so little acting in them.

We are to get no aid from without, no real sympathy that is up to the mark, from brethren, no absolute appreciation of what we are saying or doing, or why we say it or do it. We are, in the most sensitive moments, to have, often, a rude word of judgment thrown in, out of the way, really misjudgment. He had. His soul was as a weaned child. The servant is a sufferer in acute ways, if he enter fully into fellowship with his Lord. He will minister to those who do not understand what they are getting, or what it cost him to say it, for God often, if not always, makes all we say, *cost*. It has to be real. If we go a little beyond, He will add this also. Keep your mind off of everything but His *appearing*, as a servant. As a *son*, His coming is sweet. But His appearing is the *servant's* day. We are handling things and souls for the glory only, not simply for salvation. God's purpose to bring sons to glory, to conform them to the image of His Son, must be in us the reigning absorbing thing. We must be beside ourselves.

I have run on in this way, giving what seems to be the direction which we face. It is the Lord, only, all the time, more and more, and that will keep us fresh, simple, fruitful and child-like.

I only add a line from what an aged servant of the Lord, well known among us, has just written to me: "For rest we must wait for other scenes than these; for joy and thankfulness, not. Patience and long-suffering with joyfulness are the fruit of His great power in us."

Another adds, in a letter: "I have been long convinced that the professing church has refused the Philadelphia testimony given, and that Laodicia alone remains for it. Solemn, if true, which I fear it is. Still, the Lord is ours, the Holy, the True, the Beginning of the creation of God." In the midst of it all may we more deeply feel the force of the word in 2 Tim. ii. 15, iii. 14.

THE UNFAILING ONE.

Thou failest not! though every thing be failing,
The surge of evil every side assailing,
Thou art above it all, our faithful God—
Thou failest not.

Thou failest not! above our failures, errors,
The grace that silenced once our fears and terrors,
Is still the same, through JESUS' precious blood,
Thou failest not.

Thou failest not! Thou wilt forsake us never,
Christ Jesus, yesterday, to-day, forever!
Our everlasting portion and our lot,
Thou failest not

Thou failest not! our Sun is ever shining,
Sends forth His rays, light, warmth and strength combining,
Through clouds, towards hearts that sigh to Thee, O God,
That faileth not.

Thou failest not! above wants, cares, and sighing,
A Father's love divine, all need supplying,
Us guideth still upon our homeward road,
That faileth not.

Thou failest not! 'bove havoc, wand'ring, straying,
A Shepherd's eye, once closed in death, surveying,
Restore and comforts still with staff and rod,
That faileth not.

Thou failest not! 'bove ruin, shame, and weeping,
The en'my's watching, and thy servant sleeping,
Thy faithfulness, O God, can slumber not—
Thou failest not.

Thou failest not! above man's puny lever,
Thou art our help, Lord, God, blessed forever!
Who under foot the serpent's head hath trod,
Thou failest not.

Thou tarriest not! above world, sin and devil,
Soon shall we rise, leaving behind all evil,
With rapture shout "Forever with the Lord,"
Thou tarriest not.

" Oh, wondrous joy! to live as those
Whose eyes *in death* may never close,
Nor body see decay ;
But like the stars of darkest night,
Which fade into the morning light,
Be gently 'caught' away."

THE ACTS.

Chapter ix.

In this chapter we come to that grand display of grace and power in the conversion of Saul, of Tarsus; found the bitterest and most zealous and intrepid enemy of God, who was thinking he did God service in exterminating the name of Jesus from the earth, and made the most single eyed and devoted of vessels, the receptacle of the richest testimony that God has ever given among men.

As his apostleship was unique, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead; so was his conversion a most marked change from death unto life, from the power of Satan unto God. The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant. It was the effectual working of His power.

He was still breathing out threatenings and slaughter at the opening of the chapter. There is no gradual preparation for what is to come. He was not called because he had been one of the people of God, to whom the offer of repentance was made, on the promises made to them and their children. All this was over. He had gathered into his own bosom all the deep settled and defiant hatred of the nation as brought out by these offers of grace. He was, heart and soul, in the slaying of Stephen, that open, purposed, final answer of the rulers and the people of Israel. In short, though blameless in moral life, he was, to use his own words by the Holy Spirit, "a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious."

And then Sovereign mercy meeting him in one moment, according to the riches of the glory and God's own delight in His Son, he became "a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." That is, it is man taken up at his worst, the end of the world having come in at the Cross, upon the ground, as far as man is concerned, of the entire judgment of the flesh.

Henceforth there is no trial of man. All that was ended at the crucifixion of Christ, and God will act according to Himself, according to what He has found in Christ. The whole ground, as to man, is swept clean. There is nothing in him for God. God will get nothing from him. It must be the New Man, the beginning of

the creation of God. Accordingly He must be brought forth as He is.

So, as Saul journeyed on the way to Damascus, to bring all whether men or women who were believers, bound to Jerusalem, suddenly, when almost at his destination, the Lord appeared unto him. "A light from heaven shined round about him; and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul. Saul, why persecutest me? And he said, Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." As a Jew, hearing one speak from heaven, he would address Him as Lord—Jehovah. But what a startling announcement, that this Lord, who was evidently God, in heaven, was Jesus, the very One whose name he was attempting to blot out from the earth, that he was found in the act of fighting against God, a manifested enemy!

What was religious man, then? Clear down to the foundation, all was found rebellious, blind, ungodly. Himself, deeply versed in the law and the Scriptures, with a conscience acutely sensitive and imperious in its demand for action, a Hebrew of Hebrews as touching the law, a Pharisee; and the high priest, God's appointed vessel of ministry once, among His people, giving him letters of authority to destroy the Saints—all by this light from heaven, are seen in one instant, in their true position. The Jews' religion, his own zeal, and profiting in that religion beyond them all, had come to this! It was a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge, and, revealed in that sudden flash, he was discovered as the chief of sinners. It was the presumptuous sin, but he obtained mercy in that he did it ignorantly in unbelief. He could well say afterward in speaking of his kinsmen according to the flesh, that his *conscience* bore him witness that he had great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart for them, for he had himself wished to be accursed from Christ; he knew what it was.

And this was the end of Saul; it was being crucified with Christ. The will was broken, himself forever judged, the mind brought into subjection, and the heart led captive, and forever occupied. He had seen the Lord in glory, the same One who was crucified, and henceforth there was nothing the other side of that cross and that glory. Life, truth, testimony, all began there. No man

was to be known after the flesh any more, not even Christ himself. Wonderfully radical was this fact!

But the light from Him who is LIGHT, was accompanied with grace, for He is LOVE. Instead of being dead in his own death righteously deserved, he is dead through Christ, and he is told to arise, and go into the city. Grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life through Jesus Christ his Lord. It is, in principle, resurrection. The "three days" in the city give intimation of this.

But the Lord of glory, who had revealed Himself unto him, gives this amazing announcement, I am *JESUS whom thou persecutest*. The disciples, after whom this savage instrument of Jewish authority was hastening, were members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones! The mystery hid from ages is told out. He is the Head of the Church which is His body! Judaism was gone, the heavenly had displaced the earthly, and henceforth the middle wall of partition is broken down, for he is to go to the Gentiles, definitively sent unto them, a debtor to both Jews and Gentiles. Thus the conversion of Saul displays, in its pregnant meaning, the unity of the Church with the Lord Jesus, the SON OF GOD.

There is also the wondrous element of *power*, as Paul speaks of it in Ephes. iii. 7, the effectual working of His power; and power. "the working of His mighty power" (Ephes. i. 19), becomes one of the fundamental principles of his preaching and teaching, and that in which he exhorts us to be strong. This is resurrection—the bringing up of Christ from the dead, and seating Him in heaven.

In a special and altogether superabounding way does his conversion reveal the *grace* of God. He obtains mercy at the hour of his most defiant hate, being met with the exceeding riches of grace, which becomes the sweet revelation that he bears to men everywhere—his "gospel." What a contrast between the earth and heaven at that moment; murder and violence met by the calm of an infinite compassion taking occasion now to lavish itself upon the most undeserving, and to open at length the treasured counsels of His mind from before the foundation of the world.

It is not that Saul understood these things then. He

was blind, and for three days he may have been occupied with the astounding facts without knowing their meaning; but the Holy Spirit was given to him, by whom alone the facts of God are brought to the spirit, and His own thoughts on them made known. Just as the twelve, though dwelling with the Lord while He was on the earth, had to have the Holy Spirit, to bring them to their remembrance and to reveal the *truth* in them; so he could not, of his own mind, make out any thing from what had happened, but the Holy Spirit revealed.

What follows in the end of *ver.* 5 and the former part of *ver.* 6, although true, belongs in a later recital of this incident in chapter xxvi. The Holy Spirit has His own purposes in giving three different accounts, and in these differences, and this is more in accordance with what He has to teach in the later recital.

And now the Lord goes before to Damascus, to open the way for Saul's reception, by acquainting one of His dear servants, one of Saul's intended victims, doubtless, of the work that He had wrought in this case. And how beautifully we have told us, the state of matters, in the interview between the Lord and Ananias. The Lord allows the objection of His servant to be stated, as though He did not know all about the persecutions of Saul, even feeling it in a deeper sense than Ananias understood, as done to His own body; and then explains His purpose in this chosen vessel, to bear His name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. "For I will show him how great things he must *suffer* for my name's sake." And thus this chosen one falls heir not only to the wonderful revelation of the mystery which had been hid in God—Christ and the Church; but to sufferings for Christ, and the afflictions of Christ, also.

Surely, the Lord's grace was bearing sweet fruit in the heart of Ananias also, for he addresses Saul on the ground of the change, that grace had wrought in him, "Brother Saul;" all is done now and he is known in Christ, "the Lord Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

And then Saul enters among the company of the saints, in the way the others had entered, being baptized.

"And straightway he preached Christ in the syna-

gogue, that He is the SON OF GOD." This is the first time this testimony had been given. Peter had announced that he was exalted to the right hand of God, that He was made both Lord and Christ: but His own personal glory is now fully proclaimed, the fundamental fact of Paul's gospel, upon which it all rested. Jesus in the glory is the Son of God, made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection of the dead. And this One—the man in glory—in His own personal dignity and excellence, is set forth thus in answer to the rejection of Him as the Holy Servant, to Israel, who was offered to come and reign, the Messiah of their prophets. This is the characteristic testimony of Paul. It is not that the twelve did not know Him as such: but they were not to preach according to their own knowledge, but as the Holy Spirit revealed Him and gave the truth for the time. There was therefore, the revelation first to the Jews, as such, of Christ as the Man, who was ready to reign and through whom salvation was offered and the remission of sins. And then upon their despising this—though the remnant believe—the bringing forth of the richer thing, the full truth of the Son of God, and they who believe get, not forgiveness of sins simply, but a new nature, because new men, sons of God, and as such are baptized by one Spirit into one body, the church, the body of Christ, and heaven is their place, purely, the glory their destination. Paul was the minister of this truth and of the church formed by his preaching. To be turned away from him, is not to lose Christ as a Saviour; but to lose the ground of what one is saved to, of what he is a Christian for. It is to link us with His Son in the heavens that we are called out, and hence we are not of the world at all, nor to improve it, nor hope for such a thing, but for Himself and the glory with Him in heaven. It is the complete new thing, as Stephen's testimony was a transition from the old.

And Saul increased the more in strength and confounded the Jews that dwelt in Damascus, proving that this is the very Christ. From His divine nature, how clearly could he claim Him as the anointed One for them, and for all God's purposes, all titles made good to

Him now through death by His resurrection, and dwelling on high.

Then come discipline and trial. Satan is especially active against this last, heavenly testimony concerning Christ. They lay in wait to kill Saul. The "great things that he must suffer," begin early. God delivers him, though it was by the natural, simple way of his being let down by the wall in a basket. There is no expression of greatness about this one who is to carry everywhere as the chiefest apostle, the last best news from God to man. He is preceded by no announcement as he enters Jerusalem, is even scarcely received by the disciples in Jerusalem. All is human feebleness. Miracles do not characterize his ministry, but the power of the Spirit in the word, uttered in weakness. He is properly introduced among the assembly in Jerusalem, by Barnabas, who gave full satisfaction of his being a disciple, as was due. We are to receive one another as Christ received us, to the glory of God, and he who is right with God can afford to submit to all enquiries on the part of the Lord's own.

In Jerusalem as Damascus, his word brings him into danger of death from the Hellenists, and he is sent forth to Tarsus. "In death oft" is to be his record throughout. The assembly is then left in peace throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and in the precious expressions of blessing, the fear of the Lord, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they walk, and the number increases. Thus the minister of the Assembly, as such, is prepared, and it is only needed that the door should be formally opened to the Gentiles, to bring out the doctrine of the unity of the body. For this opening the Lord has meant the apostle Peter, though himself not teaching of the assembly at all.

Accordingly attention is called to his movements, passing through the country outside of Jerusalem, and coming to the saints in Lydda. We see that *Saints* was and is the title of believers, who are never called sinners. They may not always act in a saintly way; but such is their calling and title, and from this flows their responsibility.

The unity of the work shall be shown in that the apostle of the circumcision shall go first to the Gentiles. And for this he is led to Joppa, till God shall call him.

MEDITATIONS ON SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

WORSHIP.

"And it came to pass when the priests were come out of the holy place; (for all the priests that were present, were sanctified, and did not then wait by course; also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets :) it came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endureth forever; that the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord: so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God" (2 Chron. v. 11-14).

We have had before us the especial place of worship, and who are worshippers, but we have yet to answer, What is worship? The word is familiar enough; we hear constantly of public worship, worship meetings, &c., but still there are but few who enter into the thought of what worship is. If we say, Worship is the highest employment of heaven, the question is still unanswered. Is it praying? No. Is it singing? No. Is it preaching or teaching? No, it is none of these; yet it may find expression in any of them, or it may be perfectly silent. Is it admiration? No, for I may admire an object without worshipping it; and doubtless many admire the wonderful wisdom of the Creator who are in no sense worshippers. Is it gratitude? No, for one can feel grateful without worshipping. What then is worship? *It is the overflow of the heart to One who is seen to be worthy of it.* The heart may acknowledge Him as the worthy One in two ways: as the One who is from His own character worthy, and as the One who is worthy of my praise because of His love to me. And so we find in this type, the priests made one sound to be heard in "praising and thanking the Lord. Praising Him for what He is—'good;' and thanking Him for His grace towards them—'His mercy endureth for ever.'"

It is a very sweet instance of worship that we get in John xii 2, 3. There were those who made the Lord a supper, those who served, and those who sat at the table

with Him. Now all these things were good, right and acceptable, yet another excelled them all. To make the Lord a supper was surely a good thing, and those who, recognizing the Lord in His saints, minister to them are surely doing that which pleases Him; and those who are in active service, too, are fulfilling His mind; we go further still and find those who take their place at the banquet, feasting on what love has provided, sitting at the table *with Him*. This shows a heart that is at home in the Lord's presence and apprehends what grace is. But they were all excelled by her who, having been previously satisfied with the words of His lips, sweeter than a honeycomb as they undoubtedly were, now rises up and, her heart overflowing with the sense of what He was, pours forth upon His head the best she has to give; and, whatever that may have been worth by the estimate of man, the Spirit has shown the Lord's appreciation of it by denominating it "very costly."

This was individual worship, and so must it ever be for we cannot worship by proxy; and yet hearts may blend in worship, and the expression of one's worship may call forth and carry with it the worship of all, even as here the odor of the ointment filled the house; and in a worship meeting it is the united worship that we should expect, the absence of which would betoken a lack of power. And it has been noticed that when there is real power the Holy Spirit will carry all along in one current, one theme, one note, so to speak, of adoration. Thus in this type it was when "the trumpeters and singers were *as one*, to make *one* sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord that *then* the house was filled with a cloud," &c. This reminds one of Hezekiah saying, "Therefore will *we* sing *my* songs to the stringed instruments all the days of *our* life in the house of the Lord" (Isa. xxxviii. 20). Thus can and does the Holy Spirit make use of one to express the worship of many. How sweet to find the same hymn laid upon the hearts of three (as I have witnessed) and when given out, fully carrying up the hearts of all. And here a little word of reproof may be borne with; it is often a cause of grief to find how little this blessed communion of worship is apprehended. How often we see sisters (and brethren, too,) take up their hymn books or bibles, in the little interval

of silence the Spirit gives us in our worship meetings sometimes that we may *all* bow down before the Lord, and begin to read to themselves to while away the time apparently. It may be the Holy Spirit is just tarrying until every heart is in truth *waiting* on the Lord, that He may lead all in some expression of praise. But He waits in vain, for they are reading *to themselves*. Presently a hymn is given out, and they turn to it to sing it. But can they sing it? Nay, it is but a form, for they were not waiting on the Lord for it. How blessed if one could always say, Now "will *we* sing *my* song," being assured that he was but the trumpet for the whole assembly.

Now mark what the theme of these praises and thanksgiving was, "He is good; for His mercy endureth forever." The first place is given to what He is, the second to what He has shown to us. Thus also do the four and twenty elders worship the Lamb. First, "Thou art worthy," and then, "Thou hast redeemed us." This was the *new* song, which only the redeemed could sing, what then was the *old* song? It was the song of creation which angels could sing. "The morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Sin entered the world and we read no more of angels singing. When redemption has been accomplished, the first resurrection taken place, and the Lamb that was slain being about to take the government of the earth on the ground of redemption, on which ground the whole creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption and brought into the liberty of the glory, we read of a *NEW SONG*. *This* song is sung by the church, not by angels, for they share not in redemption. Nor do we (whatever the popular idea may be) ever read of angels singing but on that one occasion already referred to (Job xxxviii. 7). Luke ii. 13 tells us of the heavenly host "praising God and saying." Luke xv. 10 tells of joy *in the presence* of the angels. Rev. v. 12 tell of angels *saying*. Singing comes in where redemption is known, therefore angels cannot sing because they are not redeemed; they could sing over creation when it came fresh from the hand of God, but sin having come in, their song ceases. This is not to say they will never sing again for God will make new heavens and a new earth, but we are not told of that song. Moses and the children of Israel, *being redeemed* (Ex. xv. 13), sang;

their song was unto the Lord (v. 1), of the Lord (v. 2), and of how He had redeemed them (3-13). David sang on the recovery of the ark (1 Chron. xiii. 8); Hezekiah at the restoration of the worship of the Lord (2 Chron. xxix. 27, 28); Nehemiah at the dedication of the wall (Neh. xii. 27); all typical and suggestive of the praise that it becomes us to offer for the truth the Lord has recovered for us. A most remarkable instance of singing is in 2 Chron. xx. 21, 22. Jehoshaphat won a battle by singing, or rather, they were just occupied in singing to the Lord and He won the battle for them. We may learn a lesson from this, too.

This united song of praise ascending for what the Lord was in Himself, and what He was to them, the glory of the Lord so filled the house that the priests could not stand there to minister. When worship fills the heart, self is lost sight of. Thus again with the elders; they *fell down* and worshipped. Prostration is a beautiful figure of what worship is; it is self laid low in the dust at the apprehension of His glory. Worship is not self-occupation but He so seen that self is lost sight of. The queen of Sheba heard, came, proved Solomon, and then, *having known* him, worshipped. "When she was come to Solomon she communed with him of all that was in her heart. And Solomon told her all her questions; and there was nothing hid from Solomon which he told her not. And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers and their apparel; his cup-bearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord; *there was no more spirit left in her*" (2 Chron. ix. 1-4). Here we have a sweet illustration of who worship, how they worship, and what worship is. First, she *heard*, for faith cometh by hearing; then, acting in faith, she *came*, brought all her questions to him and *commun-ed* with him; then *worshipped*. Her need being met, her heart being relieved of *her* care, she is at leisure to behold what he is and has, and the sight of all his glory takes all *her* spirit from her. She acknowledges the truth of the word she had heard, only that words could not convey one-half of what his glory really was; she sees the blessed place his

servants have; blesses the Lord as the author of it all, and sees the spring of it all "because thy God *loved* Israel;" and *then* she gave the king the gold, the spices, the precious stones. Like the ointment that Mary poured forth these spices were appreciated, for the Spirit says of them. "neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave king Solomon." But he that blesses the Lord will surely get blessing in return, for after this, "king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which she had brought unto the king."

The fact that David's singers had harps, &c., is often brought forward to uphold the introduction of instrumental music in christian worship, but unwarrantably, for they are but typical, on the same ground the use of altars, sacrifices, incense, &c., might be advocated; all which belonged to a fleshly worship, and were right because ordered of the Lord. But to us they are not ordered. 1 Cor. **xiii. iv.**, which is full of details as to worship, says nothing of instruments of music, except as types. the only way in which we who live in this dispensation of the Spirit can use them.

In the directions as to a worship meeting given in 1 Cor. **xiv.**, (which we can see it is, for verse 10 speaks of the giving of thanks, and verse 20 of the whole assembly coming together into one place), three things are spoken of, praying, singing, and prophesying, all to be done to edification, and with the Spirit, in like manner the singers were divided into three classes (1 Chron. **xxv. 2**). The sons of Asaph "which prophesied according to the order of the king." These, I gather from 2 Chron. **v. 12** used cymbals. The sons of Jeduthun "who prophesied with a harp to give thanks and to praise the Lord." The sons of Heman, "the king's seer in the matter of God to lift up the horn."

Of cymbals, Paul says, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." Love must be the spring of all service. Alas, that any should take up the ministry of the word as a profession, making a trade of it, or retailing the word of God as 2 Cor. **ii. 17** (Gr.), says; not acting because the love of Christ constrains them, not being simply channels through which

His love may flow, but making a great sound of themselves, the *brass* sounding. Alas! that human learning and rhetoric should display itself under the garb of a trumpeter of God's glad tidings! The sons of Asaph prophesied not according to their mind, but "according to the order of the king." Was it anything for them to glory of that they prophesied? Nay, they but did what was appointed them. All was arranged by the king, he placed some as singers, some as porters, some as governors, &c., as *he* willed.

Of harps, Paul says, "even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction to the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped." The harp is especially the symbol of praise. "To lift up the horn," seems to point to prayer. There must be life for either praise or prayer; one dead in sins can do neither. And they must be used intelligently. Worship must be not only in spirit but also in truth. In Rev. we read of harps in the hands of each class of the redeemed; the church (v. 8), the Jewish Remnant (xiv. 2), the nations (xv. 2); but of no other instrument, for prayer and prophesying will then have ceased, praise alone shall be heard.

It remains to speak of David's division of the priesthood into four and twenty orders. We learn what this means by noticing what our text says of them. "All the priests that were present were sanctified, and did not then wait by course." Though David had appointed these orders, it had not yet been carried out. Thus we see that it refers to a future time; that future is when the church is in glory, for in Rev. v. we find the twenty-four elders. These are the only two places, as far as I am aware, that the number twenty-four is found in scripture, *i. e.*, as having a meaning. One is a type of the other and both undoubtedly refer to the same time. The number twenty-four has therefore only a future application. Twenty-four is composed of two twelves; twelve, as we have before seen is the number of completeness; two, of stability and hence of testimony. Now the body of Christ can never be complete until the last member has been gathered in (Eph. iv. 13), and will then be caught up. Neither is our testimony on earth finished until then; though testimony will not then cease but only change its

sphere. *Now* the church shows forth God's wisdom (Eph. iii. 10), *then* His grace (Eph. ii. 7). Testimony to grace will be ascribed in a two-fold way—to God and to the Lamb. This (the future import and the conjunction of the numbers twelve and two) is shewn forth in the picture of the church in the glory given in Rev. xxi., xxii. She has twelve gates, twelve angels, twelve foundations, is twelve thousand furlongs long, twelve by twelve cubits high, and has in the street a tree bearing twelve manner of fruits. Also a two-fold temple—God and the Lamb (xxi. 22); a two-fold light—God and the Lamb (xxi. 23); a two-fold source of life—God and the Lamb (xxii. 1); a two-fold source of blessing—God and the Lamb (xxii. 3).

We are made kings and priests unto God now; amidst much weakness we exercise our office, our priestly robes often defiled by the mire of this world; as to our royalty it is not apparent, the world knows us not, our crowns are all in the future; but we look forward with joy to the time when the weakest believer, freed from every weakness, shall be enabled to worship God and the Lamb; and in unity, too, the Body of Christ complete, its unity manifest, all the divisions being left behind, for they were of earth, man-made, therefore are they left in the scene that produced them: and moreover worship shall then be presented unto Him to whom it is due, self will have no place, man will have no place, but "Blessing, honor, glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped." Let that blessed prospect reanimate us for His service; and may the radiance of hope illuminate our path with increasing brightness till that path reaches its due termination in the presence of the throne.

C. H. B.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

CHRIST THE TRUE SERVANT.

Exodus xxi. 1-6.

In this scripture we have a type of the servant character of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ. He was indeed the "eternal Word," the "eternal Son," the "Creator," and the "Upholder" of all things by the word of His power; yet He became incarnate—a man—and took upon Him

the "form of a servant." And being found in the place of a servant, He, because of what He was, must be the true and perfect Servant. It matters not in what relationship He stood with God or man, whether as Son of God, or Son of man, or the Servant, perfection marked all His ways.

So then, it is without trenching in the least degree upon what He was as Divine, we can think of Him as the Servant. In fact it is as such the Apostle Mark by the Holy Ghost sets Him forth.

Without recording the facts of His birth, or tracing His genealogy, in this gospel He is introduced to us at the waters of Jordan; and His first act here is that of the Servant. "And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan" (Mark 1. 9). Immediately the heavens open, the Spirit descends upon Him, and God recognizes Him as His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased. Next He is seen in the wilderness tempted of Satan, where His perfections as the dependent, obedient man, were fully put to the test and established. And then He returns from the solitudes of the wilderness—the scene of His victory—to the scenes of life and activity, and "preaches the gospel of the kingdom of God." Thus does Mark present Him. He is ushered upon the scene as the Servant-man; the Servant of the Father's glory. And every step of the way through the gospel by Mark He is presented as such.

Matthew presents Him as the Son of David the son of Abraham, and traces His genealogy up to Abraham; and at the same time giving the details of His birth. Luke, whose province it is to present Him as the Son of man, traces His genealogy up to Adam; and though presenting Him as the Son of man is careful to state, concerning His birth, "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." And in perfect keeping with the purpose of this most blessed gospel do we find such scenes as that of the "good Samaritan," and the "Prodigal Son." Grace extending beyond the limits of Israel, even to the Gentiles. John in his gospel presents the divine side of Christ's character. As the "eternal Word" is He presented: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was

God. The same was in the beginning with God. . . . And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory of the Father,) full of grace and truth " (John i. 1—14).

The Scripture quoted from Exodus xxi. presents the blessed Lord as the Servant in a four-fold way, viz., 1st in life; 2nd in death; 3rd in resurrection glory; 4th in the coming kingdom.

The Hebrew servant that was bought, was to serve His master six years, and in the seventh he was to go out free for nothing. Seven is a symbol of completeness and perfection; and here, it points to the complete, perfect, and yet voluntary service of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ. He had said, "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 written within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, (O Lord, Thou knowest I have not hid Thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving kindness and Thy truth from the great congregation" (Ps. xl. 7—10). Perfection stamped every word and action, yet it was as doing the will of God, having laid aside His own though perfect that was; and when He had completed His life-service, His voluntary service, He could as touching Himself have "gone out free." It was a perfect and complete service He had rendered to God in His life; and God, whose delight He was, failed not to appreciate it.

During that marvelous life, from the "very excellent glory" could God utter His own delight in the person of His dear Son, and His full appreciation of all He did. That twice repeated "In whom I am well pleased," failed not to demonstrate the satisfaction of Heaven. The "perfect servant" upon earth could look up to the Father in Heaven, whose will He was accomplishing, and say, "I do always those things that please the Father." In cloudless communion with God He walked, though surrounded with every element, which if He had not been the perfect One, would have drawn Him aside and clouded His communion. But in Him sin was not; neither was there in that holy Man any susceptibility to what was evil. He was as touching His person and character free

from all taint; therefore, He could render to God a "perfect and complete service." And what an example for us who are made "partakers of the divine nature," and are indwelt by the Holy Ghost. "Follow thou Me," is the word the perfect Servant has left behind for us.

"If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons and daughters. . . . And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door or the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever."

In His counsels God had given the Church to Jesus, the bride, the Lamb's wife; and in Heb. 11. He is found saying "Behold I and the children which God hath given me."

But to have these in the glory with Himself, His service must be perpetuated. Life-service could not effect their redemption, their associations with Himself. The man was brought to the judges and his ear was bored to the door post; and Christ speaking in Ps. xl, said "Mine ears hast thou opened," or, as the margin reads—"digged;" or, in other words, "He must die."

And did He not in effect say, when He went to the Cross, "I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free?" He could have gone out free; for all was voluntary on His part; but then what of His bride, and the children which God had given Him? His service must be perpetuated. He must be brought to the judges, and His ears must be digged; and so it was upon the Cross. The judges dealt with Him, and He was pierced for us. Now He is risen again, and the Church—His body and His bride—and the children, are eternally associated with Him where He is gone in heavenly glory.

In death He glorified God in the eternal putting away of sin, and laid the ground for the righteous carrying out of all the purposes of God with regard to man's redemption.

But, it was forever, the man was to be the servant of his master. And if Christ has finished His work of atonement, and risen and gone to glory, it is to become there the "glory-girded servant." It is to serve the objects of His love, and for whom He died. He there "ever lives

to make intercession for us ; " and when our feet become defiled to take " the basin of water and the towel " and wash away the defilement (John xiii). If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John ii. 1.)

Is it not cheering to know that Christ loves us to that extent that He has entered into perpetual servitude for us. His happiness is bound up with having the objects of His love associated with Himself in the glory. " I will not go out free. "

He has left us here a little while to witness for Him ; but reminds us of the kingdom and the glory. He reminds us of His coming and our association with Him in that kingdom, and exhorts us to be faithful and watch for His coming. " 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 unto 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 to sit down to meat, *and will come forth and serve them.* And if He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants " (Luke ii. 35-38).

" And will come forth and serve them. " How wonderful the thought ! How great the condescension ! He will serve *them*. This is perfect love occupying itself with the objects of its delights in untiring and blessed service !

In the kingdom He will be surrounded with brightest glory, holding the reins of government, swaying His righteous sceptre, the acknowledged King of His rightful kingdom ; and yet, with all this He will delight to serve those associated with Him in the glory of that kingdom. Then shall be known the peculiar place the Church holds, according to the eternal purpose of God : a place of full and blessed associations with Him, on His throne, as His bride.

It is the object of the Holy Ghost to glorify Christ ; and lead us unto every phase of His character, person, and work. Above all else would He ever lead us into communion with the heart of Christ, and to know more

fully the infinite, deathless, and eternal love of that heart—the heart of Him who could say: "I love my Master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free;" and who out of love to them could, and did, perpetuate His service—become the Servant—the voluntary servant—forever.

E. A.

"HAVE YE RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST SINCE YE BELIEVED?"

Continued.

With the thief on the cross, it was not a question of receiving the Holy Ghost—"for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John vii. 39); But it was a question of eternal life, no doubt, as "he that believeth on the Son *hath eternal life.*"

This then brings out another distinction which I find in scripture, and the one with which we began. That a person may be a believer unto eternal life: while as yet he has not received the Holy Ghost. This was certainly true in the Saviour's day on earth—and it was certainly true in the apostles' day, as we have seen (Acts xix). And now the question returns again, "Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?" You cannot probably say as did the disciples at Ephesus, that you have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. But to have heard about Him is one thing; to have received Him is quite another. Is it then, my dear brother, a proper question? Or is it not?

I believe it is, and a very important one, inasmuch as the measure of spiritual intelligence depends very largely upon it—and I do not know but that I might say, *wholly*. In it, there is to me, an answer to this Babel of religious thought and teaching, which prevails all around, and which has been on the increase since the Reformation, and by which so many thousands are made skeptics and infidels. For, without the Holy Ghost, as the one only and exclusive Guide into scripture truth, men are left to what they are, in and of themselves. Hence, human reasonings, and worldly wisdom, take the liberty to teach in the things of God, and everything resolves itself into theory and opinion; and the scripture is without authority.

For, if it is simply a question of opinion; one man has

just as good a right to his, as another has to his; unless you very generously concede that the most profound scholar has the best right to an opinion; or that a certain number of such men are most likely to be right. And this is just what we find. The moment we depart from God's *own, "sent," Guide* and interpreter of His Word, to allow the flesh to come in with its reasonings, wisdom, or scholarship, that moment you have got confusion.

And this, be it remembered, is God-appointed: as the scripture clearly shows. In Gen. xi., "And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech, . . . And they said one to another go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly, . . . And they said one to another go to, let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." Here was unity, and the grand results of human wisdom, reason, and activity combined, are expressing themselves.

"And the Lord said, Behold the people is one, and they have all one language: and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language that they may not understand one another's speech." Does any one doubt the application of this text to the point in hand? The evidence of this truth and its application are right before our eyes, even if we had no Bible. But we have a Bible, thank God, and that settles the question without controversy.

Diversities of tongues was not a human forethought, but a direct judgment of God, upon the pride and self-conceit of human wisdom. Men did not want division, they wanted unity, and they in their wisdom were providing against division. But they did not want God. This was the seat of all the trouble. They wanted unity, but did not want it in God. Just so it is now. And the effort on their part to perpetuate unity without God was only a prelude or prophecy of the judgment which confounded them. And that judgment has never been revoked.

So that to this day the greater the effort on the part of human wisdom and energy to *make* a unity (even in religious associations) the greater the confusion, for when one tongue of division is temporarily *being stitched*, ten new ones are manifest. Hence we find no such thing

in scripture as "endeavoring to" *make* "the unity of the Spirit." For the simplest of all reasons, that the flesh cannot do the work of the Spirit. The flesh can *imitate* the work of the Spirit, and that is just what is going on around us. If you have got the Holy Ghost, you have got the unity of the Spirit; and now you are called upon to endeavor to keep it. If you have not got the Holy Ghost you have not got the unity of the Spirit. Hence the flesh goes to work to make it. And the judgment of confusion is on the wisdom of the flesh. Hence the present state of christendom.

And now comes the question: Where is the remedy for all this? In God, no doubt. But how in God? Let us see. In Gen. xi., God by judgment confounds the language, to scatter the people. In Acts ii., God is seen acting again, as supremely above the confusion, when the Apostles filled with the Holy Ghost "speak with other tongues." And, "now when this was noised abroad the multitude came together and *were confounded*, because that every man heard them speak in his own language." "And thus when God comes in to fill the scene, *confusion is confounded*, and every man hears in his own language wherein he was born." Here is a new thing among men: men of different languages and nationalities are brought together to understand each other, and to be "of one heart and of one mind." The thing which had been impossible in the wisdom of men, since the confusion of Babel, now triumphs by the grace of God.

Men are, by the power of God, united as never before on earth, to be of one heart and of one mind, having one common interest; not of a worldly character; but of a heavenly; not of men building a tower to climb up to heaven; but of one man whom God had glorified and taken up to heaven; and the Holy Ghost by whom they are thus united, and by whom they thus speak, is God's answer consequent upon the exaltation of this one man Christ Jesus. As He said, "And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another comforter, that He may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it seeketh Him not neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you (John xiv. 16-17).

In John vii. we have the statement—"the Holy Ghost

was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified." Chap. viii. opens with "when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father;" and again in the fourteenth chapter, "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 thus, the nearer He comes to the glory the more definitely and clearly are the statements with respect to the Holy Ghost. Thus, "But the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." (John iv. 26). "But when the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father He shall testify of me" (John xv. 26). "But now I go my way to Him that sent me"—"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you"—"Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come; He shall glorify me; for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John xvi).

Note carefully this fact. That these persons addressed were all true believers (except Judas Iscariot) and as such had eternal life; so that the Lord could say, "I have chosen you; your names are written in heaven." "For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." And yet they had not received the Holy Ghost; and, as we have seen, could not, until after Jesus was received up to heaven, as He said "If I go not away the Comforter will not come."

And last of all, when He had "been seen of them forty days," "He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem but wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me; For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." "And when He had spoken these

things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a "cloud received Him out of their sight." (Acts i. 4—5. 9). Then we find ten days later, that is, on the fiftieth day, the Pentecost was fully come; they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts. ii. 1-4).

Mark, the Holy Ghost filled all the house, and filled all the disciples—two distinct things. And here again we see the difference between the Spirit's operation before, and after, the ascension. There was nothing like this before the ascension, though we do get three times in the first chapter of Luke this expression, "filled with the Holy Ghost," as applied to John the Baptist, to Elizabeth, and to Zachariah. And this was evidently the first step in the new dispensation, as John was the first man to introduce it. Beginning at the root of a barren tree (Israel), with the ax of judgment. He said, "Therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and fire." (Matt. iii. 10, 11).

And this is all blessedly confirmed, when on the day of Pentecost, after having received the Holy Ghost, Peter stands up and after quoting from the prophecy of Joel, on this very point,—“And it shall come to pass in the last days saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams. And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit”—and then of the death and resurrection of Christ, he adds “This Jesus hath God raised up whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.” (Acts ii. 17-33).

And now let me call your attention, closely and care-

fully to this point, which I believe to be a very important one. It is this, which we have found: that the Holy Ghost was received by an assembly as such, and by individuals as such, so that there was corporate expression, as well as individual expression, corporate responsibility, as well as individual responsibility. But the point first of all is the reception of the Holy Ghost as a divine personality.

Now I will not say that there were certain conditions, upon which the Holy Ghost was given; because that would not be true. As there were absolutely no conditions upon which God gave His Son, so there were absolutely no conditions upon which the Holy Ghost was given. But I will say that there were certain events, in the chain of God's purposes, which must transpire before the Holy Ghost could be given; which events were clearly and distinctly set forth by the prophets, and which events did come out in their due order according to the councils of God, as we read in Luke xxiv. 45. "Then opened He their understandings, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, 'Thus it is written and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.'" And in Acts ii. 23, Him being delivered by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands, have crucified and slain; "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." C. E. H.

To be continued, if the Lord will.

CHRIST THE ROCK OF OUR REFUGE.

"In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in Thy righteousness. Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be Thou my strong Rock for an house of defence to save me. For Thou art my Rock and my fortress; therefore for Thy name's sake lead me, and guide me. . . . Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy pres-

ence from the pride of man: Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavillion from the strife of tongues" (Ps. xxxi. 1-3, 19, 20).


Having found the Lord Jesus Christ to be the Rock of my Salvation, and finding in Him also that Refreshment which alone can fill the thirsty soul while traveling through this dry and thirsty land where no water is, there is yet a third need of my soul, which can only again be met by Christ as the Rock. I need a place where when storms of trouble come I can rest in perfect peace; I need a refuge from strife, a covert from the storm, a shadow from the heat. All these I find in *Him*, as very sweetly brought out in this thirty-first psalm.

But there must be faith. Christ is all this for every one of His saints, but there is great failure in making it ours, so the psalm commences, "In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust." Do you put your trust in Him? I mean not simply for salvation, but have you placed all your paths, your circumstances, your cares into His hand? "From faith to faith," is God's principle; and though Christ is all that is detailed in this psalm for every child, yet it is only enjoyed by him who put his heart in Him. Do you say, "I intend to wait a little and see how things turn out and then trust Him?" That will not do. But let there be first unqualified faith in Him and *then* surely you shall find every blessed thing in this psalm true for your own soul.

"Let me never be ashamed." How often we come to a pause, and say, Well, I *thought* I was in the right path, I did seek His guidance, yet now it seems that I am mistaken, and shall be brought to shame. Ah! you little know the tender lovingkindness of the Lord. Has He not said that he that asks for wisdom shall have it given to him liberally? If you have committed your way to Him, you cannot be mistaken. He will not let you be mistaken. When He promised to guide with His eye He did not mock us; and now that you have, trusting solely to that guidance, commenced that path that now looks so dark to you, be not afraid, only let your ear be more deaf than ever to the voice of the flesh, and your eyes fixed more earnestly on His, and you *shall* find that they that trust in Him shall *never* be ashamed.

"Deliver me in Thy righteousness." What strength it gives to one's heart just to rest on His righteousness, to

know that for His own glory's sake, for the sake of faithfulness to His own word, He is bound to deliver the soul that trusts in Him!

"Bow down Thine ear to me." The Lord loves this earnest seeking His audience, and He *waits* to be gracious. It may seem sometimes that God has forgotten to be gracious, but He is only waiting until you shall have cast your whole burden upon Him, until you have, in earnest supplication, brought all your wants to Him and—*left* them there. Keep not thy case to thyself, burning as a consuming fire in thy bosom, any longer. but "cast thy burden on the Lord and He *shall* sustain thee." "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." If it did not at times *seem* that He had forgotten you, where would be the *trial* of your faith? Oh! believe it—"He careth for you!" And what is the measure of that care? The Lord Jesus. Thus make Him your Rock in the time of trial: hide you there: know that you are wrapped up in Him. And only  you fix your eyes upon Him can you understand or believe that "He careth for you." We may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper," because *He* has said, "I will in *no wise* loose thee (He has firm hold of us), I will in *no wise* forsake thee." Measure not His love by your own, but *by the Rock!* "When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I."

But I need a refuge not only in times of want, but also in times of trouble. And the secret of peace in such a time is, to know where and how refuge is to be obtained. "In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall He hide me: He shall set me upon a Rock" (Ps. xxvii. 5). Sweet retreat! Hidden in His pavillion, the storm may rage outside, but I am in His presence and on that which can never be shaken—the Rock. And notice—"He shall hide me," "He shall set me." Why? Because (verse 4), "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple." And so He will not disappoint that soul. The desire has been to *dwell* in His presence, to abide in Him, not merely for safety and peace, but "to behold the beauty of the Lord." No longer making

self the centre of my thoughts, but to fix my heart upon Him upon whom God has His heart. The heart has been weaned from earthly things, has been ravished with the beauty of the "altogether lovely" One, and now the desire is to know Him *more*.

"Thou who gav'st the fond desire;
Kindled here this hidden fire;
Weaned my heart from all below,
Thee and only Thee to know:—
Love of Jesus all divine,
Fill this longing heart of mine."

"And to enquire in His temple." If that has been your desire, if to be led by Him is your wish, be sure that He will gratify it. Mistrust not the guidance you get there. Beware of being guided by anything else. The Lord gave guidance to Moses concerning the march of Israel in the tabernacle (Num. i). There, in communion with Himself, He will also guide us. The Lord loves such enquiries, therefore be not surprised if He make your path so that you will have need "to enquire in His temple" each step you take.

He has goodness "*laid up*" for them that fear Him, and "wrought" for them that trust in Him before the sons of men. It is comforting for me to know this. He will never let them that boldly avow that they are trusting in Him be put to shame, for He has goodness already worked out, "wrought" for them; so that however dark may seem the issues I can calmly say, "My times are in Thy hand." It is already wrought, it but waits to be brought forth as need may require, and as the soul is prepared to receive it, for God can answer the challenge of faith (as in Abraham's case, Gen. xv. and Gideon's, Judges vi. 36), but not of unbelief.

And again *He* hides, "Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man; Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavillion from the strife of tongues." Here then we have plainly the place of refuge—"Thy presence." In communion with the Lord, in realization of His presence, is peace. In the other case (the soul desiring to see His beauty) the result is worship, "therefore will I offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of joy; in this case (open, bold, trust in Him), the result is peace. In fellowship with Him, the slighting of the proud cannot touch me, neither the strife of tongues.

Ah, beloved! If there was a deeper realization of His presence, a more constant fellowship with Him, more enjoyment of the manifestations of the Lord's presence, the joint abiding of the Father and Son consequent on the heart cherishing His words, we should not feel hurt at slights, neither would there be such chafing under "the strife of tongues," for the peace of God would keep your hearts and minds in that blessed, perfect refuge in the fiercest storm, the most bitter strife—Christ Jesus.

One more thought connected with the Rock, and then I have done—Rest. "A man shall be . . . as the shadow of a great Rock in a weary land." "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile," said Jesus to the twelve returned from their tour of service; but they found no rest save the rest their souls found in Him, for the people followed them and Jesus being moved with compassion because they were as sheep without a shepherd (although there were hosts of hireling shepherds) taught them, and then says to the disciples, "Give ye them to eat." The Lord makes this a "weary land" for us, a "desert place" so that we may rest in the shadow of the Rock, but there only, for with "Give ye them to eat" sounding in our ears, how can the servant with the love of Christ constraining him, think of self indulgence? If we "sat under His shadow with great delight" in the banqueting house, can we not also find rest in Him in the desert place? When Jesus called them apart He went with them, and though we pass through a weary land the Rock is already there for us to rest under. And surely if *He* has called us apart we will not hesitate to follow. In the banquet house we share in the delight common to all who are made children, but it is in the weary land, in the lonely place we learn to find that rest for our souls that enables us to *keep on* in His service. But I find a tendency in the heart to get occupied with the weariness, to be straining the eyes at every speck in the horizon, looking for ways of deliverance, and thus failing to learn the very thing for which He has brought us there. The *Rock* is there; let us *rest* under His shadow!

"Jesus, Thou spring of joy for weary hearts!

Unfailing fount of life for sinful men,

From the best bliss that this poor world imparts,

I turn unsatisfied to Thee again!

“ Turn just to rest on *Thee*, O blessed Saviour!
 And find however dark my path may be—
 Loosened from every earthly, vain endeavor—
 My heart has rest, unbroken rest in *Thee!*”

C. H. B.

 INTERCESSION.

Our great High Priest is sitting, At God's right hand above, For us His hands uplifting, In sympathy and love :	Heb. iv. 14.
Whilst here below, in weakness, We onward speed our way ; In sorrow oft and sickness, And sigh, and groan, and pray.	Heb. iv. 15. Rom. viii. 23. Rom. viii 26.
Through manifold temptation ; My soul holds on her course, Christ's mighty intercession, Alone is her resource :	Heb. xii. 1. Heb. vii. 25.
Through my Priest's gracious pleadings, Who on the cross did bleed, God's grace, and strength, and blessing. Flow down each hour of need.	Heb. i. 3. Heb. iv. 16.
When Satan me accuses, Before the eternal throne, And sin my heart oppresses, And I seem all alone ; My Advocate there pleading, Answers the hateful foe, My Father then forgiving, Wipes out all care and woe.	Rev. xii. 10. Rev. xii. 11. 1 John ii. 1. 1 John i. 9.
Oh, Jesus, blessed Saviour, We hope to see Thee soon, Who once on earth didst suffer, Who soon for us wilt come 'Twas God's most gracious favor, That gave His Son to die,— To live our Intercessor, Our Advocate, on high.	Rev. xxii. 16. Rev. xxii. 17. Rom. viii. 31 Rom. viii. 32.. Rom. viii. 34.

A. P. O.

“ Lord Jesus! let me all forget
 But that unfathomed love of Thine,
 Which pleased itself to have me set
 In heaven, and in Thy likeness shine.”

THE ACTS.

Chapter x.

The calling of the Gentiles, those who were : mongst the highways and hedges, to the feast of God, must be in accordance with the character of Him who spreads it, and the exceeding riches of His grace. They must be sent specially for, and compelled to come in. It would not answer for them to hear by accident or as passers by, the word that might have been meant for other ears ; what right would they have to take it ? It was a wonderful thing that God had prepared for them that were afar off, and as many as the Lord should call ; and while those in the streets and lanes of the city—the remnant among the Jews—were being added, the word must now be formally sent forth to the world at large.

Accordingly the Holy Ghost here leads us aside to see this great thing (chaps. x–xi, 18). When God called out Abraham, the beginning of forming a people for Himself, there was none to stand to him ; but now having had the Jews as His, and brought to them the new truth of the heavenly calling, He would send the message of peace and grace through one of them, one fully wedded to the distinctive place of the Jew, and ready to fall back into his place as the apostle of the circumcision at once, after introducing the gospel of grace offered to the Gentiles. He would show that it was not of man, nor of his kindness to the lost, but of God exclusively.

Cornelius was one in whose heart God had wrought, so that he had abandoned idolatry, and feared God with all his house. He was born again, and as such his heart was drawn out toward God in prayer, and toward man in giving. But, possessing the knowledge of God that the Jews had, and with it the expectations of a Saviour, he had no knowledge of Him, for any other than the Jews. He could not know anything of salvation ; it had never been proclaimed to him. He owned those who were in external relationship with the Lord, and through whom the blessing to a Gentile world must then flow ; so he gave alms to the people—Israel, like the centurion of Luke vii. Unfaithful as Israel had ever been, salvation was of the Jews. The Gentiles were, in their position, “without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.”

There are many to-day who know the wonderful truth that God has sent, who are quickened, but who do not have the assurance of salvation. In Cornelius's case he had not the *right* yet to take it, for he had not yet heard that comprehensive word "*whosoever*;" but in their case, it is the action of Satan in keeping them from their own right, by bad teaching or otherwise. In him it would have been presumption to have pretended to being saved; but in them it is the proper issue of faith; they *ought* to know it. It is making God a liar to question it. The more simple and humble Cornelius was, the less would he dare to reach forth for such a blessing. The more really humble one is *now* who believes, the more confident he may be that he is saved, for the fullest, richest proclamation has been made. It is well to be clear on this matter. What would have been presumption in Cornelius, as we see him in the beginning of this chapter, is only his right thing in us now; and what was proper in him, the only true place, would be direct unbelief and dishonor to Christ, in us. Doubtless there was faith in him, up to the revelation he had received; but he had not received the knowledge that Christ was for him, and for whosoever believeth. God therefore having all things ready, now opens all fully to him: "To him that *hath* shall be given." He had, in such a way, that he would not have perished, had he died in this state. It was not that he deserved greater things, for it was pure grace to send them to him, as it had been pure grace that had wrought first upon his heart, unsought then, quickening him, and making him "a devout man." But God had the better thing to give, and it came to him who had already used the light he had.

It is all of God. He visits Cornelius in a vision, telling him his prayer and alms are known, and giving explicit directions to seek out Simon Peter; and Cornelius, sufficiently acquainted with God, to receive the vision as his voice, sends to Joppa. We see how God keeps his eye upon the very house in which His servant dwells.

But more has to be done in the mind of Peter to make him ready to be the messenger of this sovereign and wonderful love. At the time of his communion with God in prayer, the Lord takes occasion from his being

hungry, to give him a vision of another feast—His own—in which clean and unclean alike were to share, or rather that the hunger of God's own heart could be satisfied with nothing less than having gathered to Him sinners everywhere, without respect of persons. It was not the Church that was set forth, but rather that what would do for God would do for His servant, and that the time had come for dissolving distinctions of blood, and giving the broad and universal scope of the gospel of grace; as to Paul had been given a token of its height and depth in linking him and them at once with the Lord in glory. What a revelation! Peter little apprehended when he had before been told of the keys of the kingdom of heaven to be given into his hand, when he was later told to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, and when later still, he had spoken of those that were "afar off." And now it is brought to him in its reality, and the interpretation in the words "Arise, get thee down and go with them, doubting nothing, for I have sent them." **Oh** how richly has God seen to our interests, disclosing a heart that could not do without us, those "who are called uncircumcision, by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands!" How exactly He times everything in this incident, making ready both receiver and giver of the glad tidings.

And Peter coming to the house of Cornelius, confesses that this grace was not of the Jew nor of man, but God had shewed him that he should not call any man common or unclean. And he then learns from Cornelius that it was as clearly of God that he should send for Peter who should speak unto him. And so he had well done that he had come.

"Now, therefore, are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." Wonderful change, the Gentiles gathered into the presence of God to hear from Him! Their first knowledge of Him was only grace, that, passing by all that they had done, only delighted to pour out itself according to its own infinite riches. How well are we reminded of that goodness towards us, if we continue in His goodness, in Rom. xi. 22 and appealed to on that ground, in Gal. iv. 9, v. 1.

In like manner, God went out to Israel first in grace,

as we see in Exodus iii, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters: for I know their sorrow; and I have come down to deliver them and bring them unto a good land." Grace is the constant action, for He is love, their failure under the law made Him a Judge, because He is holy. And so with us. How should we remember that He delights in grace: judgment is His "strange work."

"Then Peter opened his mouth and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him." This is the principle of Romans i. However, dispensationally, God might have taken up Israel as a nation, choosing Jacob and rejecting Esau for His special purpose in this respect, it has always been true that he was accepted, *individually*, who acted upon the truth given to him; whether Gentile with his lesser light, or the Jew with increased, or those in this day with the full, clear revelation of all that is in God. And according to this standard each is to be judged, as according to this each is "declared guilty before God," in Rom. i.—iii.

But to be *accepted* as on God's ground at the time, is one thing; to be *saved*, is another, and belongs distinctively to this day. And therefore the centurion must needs wait for words from God to this effect, and the ~~apostle~~ must now announce it to him, for he had no right to it till declared his.

But he had heard of this word of *peace* preached to Israel by Jesus Christ, though he kept his own place simply as a Gentile. So that the apostle could say, "Ye know how that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him." This was of the Jews, it was theirs exclusively. Not so what follows, though at first given to them. They slew and hanged on a tree, Jesus, whom God raised up the third day, and shewed Him openly unto witnesses appointed of God. "And He commanded us to preach unto the people (Israel) and to testify that it is He who is ordained of God, the Judge of quick and dead. To Him give all the prophets witness that through

His name WHOSOEVER believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins."

That word "whosoever" opened all to the needy Gentiles. It was theirs, as well as Israel's. And the Holy Spirit ratifying the word, at once fell on all them who heard the word. They were distinctly set apart by this seal, as Christ's, in receiving the word. They had not been told to do some great, or little, thing. Peace had been preached to others, and brought to their ears, and remission of sins through Jesus Christ raised from the dead. God thus manifested His own estimate of the work of Christ, and justified those who believed on Him. Faith came by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Peter seems to have had the full meaning of that word "whosoever" opened to him also by the Holy Spirit using the vision; this was its meaning. How infinitely momentous for us!

We see that the gospel to the Gentiles was the gospel of assurance, "giving thanks unto the Father who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. i. 12, Thess. i. 4, 5). /

It belongs to us to know that we are saved, because we look back upon the finished work upon the cross, and up to the throne where He sits who has accomplished that work, and because He accomplished it. The cross and the throne where Christ sits, will ever be the clear, unchallengeable reason for our confidence. The work given Him to do by the Father who sent Him, was to give us eternal life. Has He done that work? The resurrection and the session at the right hand of God must ever declare that He has. Hebrew i. 3, tells us that, when He had by *Himself* purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Indeed, if we, believers, do not positively take the place of being saved, and declare it as true of us since we believed, and upon believing, it becomes a serious question whether we have been told, or have received the message that was meant for us, and whether some "other gospel" which is not good tidings, has not been preached, some lower thing, savoring of the law and ordinances, mere "beggary elements," after all, leaving us only on the Jew's ground, with only a hope of salvation, sometime in the future, dependent on our work, instead of an

absolute certainty of it now; and the hope the glory with Christ. And a still more serious question comes whether, not only *we* may not have been defrauded of that which was sent to us; but whether God has not been defrauded of His joy in it all, and of having us all this time knowing the full fellowship of His own presence in light and love.

It did not belong to those who believed before the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ to know that they were saved. They might, taking God's word, look forward with *hope* according to the word that He gave; but it was not the *assurance* of an accomplished redemption. They might have believed as simply and as strongly as we; but the thing told them to believe, was not this. It belongs to the present truth, and not to take it, is to be, in principle, out of the circle of God's action; though doubtless multitudes are saved who fear to say so. But they should say so, on the authority of God.

We see, too, that it was not by the laying on of hands that the Holy Spirit was received, but by *falling* upon them, as upon the Jews at Jerusalem, at Pentecost, thus giving full sanction to the work and attesting the faith, and the saved condition of these believers. "And they of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter because that on the Gentiles also, was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit; for they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God."

Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Baptism was no sacramental means of grace conferred by ordained hands, but the act of others than the apostle, and done as the expression of these having become dead unto their old condition, and alive in Christ through faith in Him. The Holy Spirit had marked them as His. Superstition and sacerdotalism have greatly obscured this rite in later days, but then it was exceedingly simple and natural in the time of the Spirit's unhindered action. As all preached whom the Lord sent, without the intervention of man, so any might be used of the Lord to baptize, the apostles themselves refraining from it at times, the Holy Spirit knowing how grossly this would be abused.

RECOLLECTIONS OF READINGS

At Brantford, Ont., July 6th, 1876, and the following days.

The readings were taken up with the Epistle to the Ephesians, though oftentimes questions were asked which led off into many topics outside the epistle.

The characteristic feature of Ephesians is the unfolding of the purposes and counsels of God; His thoughts and intentions are brought out; therefore it does not take up man in his responsibility as in the Epistle to the Romans, but begins with man as dead. It is not God meeting the *need* of a sinner though that is touched on in i. 7.

It deals with man as dead and brings in a new creation. There can be no question of responsibility raised there, nor does a new creature need justifying. Christian responsibility comes in after all this, viz.: man's responsibility settled and the new creature brought in.

Again, these purposes were before the foundation of the world and are not influenced by the dispensations developed since the foundation of the world: they leap over them all. There is a beautiful allusion to these counsels in Prov. viii., "My delights were with the sons of men," and the angels celebrate the bringing in of the *One* who was the object of these counsels, and utter forth the blessed thought that *man* was the object of God's good pleasure. "Glory to God on high," &c. Not merely good will toward man, but good pleasure in man.

The first chapter reveals two relationships, the one with the Father and the other with Christ. The first, individual, that of sons; the second, corporate, the body of Christ; though perhaps this can hardly be called a relationship. Along with this, when he has settled the place of the saints then the counsels of God about *Christ* are declared, as in verses 9 and 10. Then we find the inheritance which we share with Him. Then the prayer at the end of the chapter.

Christ is exalted, then our union with Him.

In verse 4 you have God's purpose, what is in His thoughts, and that consistent with His nature as God, verse 5 is what suits Him as Father. Wherever you get predestination it is *to* something, not persons. Election is of persons, notice too that the verse 4 is not said to be according to the good pleasure of His will,

but verse 5 is so, because he could not have unholy ones before Him, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," but He could have servants, yet it was the good pleasure of His will to have sons instead of servants. All the thoughts that are abroad on perfection are a delusion, because God's thoughts are that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love and we cannot rightly have lower thoughts.

God's thoughts and purposes concerning us, are distinct from redeeming us. It is what He does with us after paying our debts. Adoption is not new birth, adoption is in the counsels of God, but could not be carried out without being born again. We are adopted and get the new nature to be fit for the place.

Verse 8. Having put us into the place of blessing, He now tells us of Christ. *All things* gathered together in one in Him. In Col. it is bowing to Him; there you have also infernal things bowing; this is different from Eph. There it is all gathered together in one, infernal things not included in this. "Fulness of times," not the same as Gal. iv., where it means the proper time was come, but here it means the "times having then completion or fulfillment in Christ—the millennial glory of Christ. This heading up of all things brings in the inheritance, and we are heirs of Christ, and this is God's inheritance in the saints.

VerSES 4, 5, the call of God, i. e. the hope of His calling. Verse 11 His inheritance in the saints.

Verse 12 is the Jews—the first trusters in Christ.

Verse 13 is the Gentiles, "in whom *ye also*."

The sealing of the Holy Spirit is after faith; it may be immediately after or as is too often the case, there may be months and years between. The believer, a quickened soul, is still in the flesh and not out of Rom. vii. till sealed by the Holy Spirit. Gal. iv. shows that we are sons first, then we receive the Spirit of adoption. We are sons by faith. We have the consciousness of the relationship and cry, "Abba Father," by the Holy Spirit. When Christ breathed on the disciples saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," it was not sealing, it was the power of life,—life more abundantly.

Verse 19: "Power to us ward." Almighty power raised Christ from the dead and *that same power wrought*

in us to put us where *He* is. This is the great truth of this dispensation, alas how lost sight of! Let the reader of these recollections pause awhile and ask if he or she have realized for himself this grand distinctive truth.

Verse 20: Christ as man, and dead, "It is at this point Ephesian truth takes its start. It is not meeting the guilt of man, but God acting in power for man as dead, and it is the man Christ who has gone down into death, and Him *God* raises and sets far above all."

Verses 20, 22, is the fact accomplished, all things under his feet, &c., the purpose of God. "Filleth all in all," as Redeemer. He is truly God, but it is not simply as being God He filleth all in all, but as Redeemer. see (Chap. iv. 9-10). "Descending first so that He might fill all things"—not "fulfil:" this was put in the margin because the translators did not understand this filling all things. The prayer in chap. i. looks at Christ as man, the prayer in chap. iii. looks at Him as Son of God.

Chap. ii. Union with Christ—no such thought in scripture as union with God. The truth in the beginning of this chapter, is positive proof that the Church could not exist before the exaltation of Christ. There is real union of soul with Christ the Head in heaven, which could not be possible before the Head was there.

As to the word in Greek for Church, it means an assembly of citizens called out, apart from the people not citizens.

In Rom. viii. 9. the expression "none of His" means that such a one was not in Christian standing. It is the state of one not sealed by the Spirit, though possibly quickened. It does not mean absolutely that such an one is not born again.

This chapter develops the 19th verse of chap. i. "Greatness of His power to us ward." "Dead," *our state*, not the question of responsibility raised here. There is no movement toward God, and we cannot be *awakened*. Man's life is toward *sin*; He is *dead* towards God. Conscience is in everybody; that is not life towards God. Conscience is not law. Law is a rule for conscience, conscience is the faculty to discern good and evil.

Verse 2, the Gentiles; verse 3, the Jews, whose nature is same as others though ecclesiastically brought to God.

Verse 4 throws it right over to God, does not bring man to God, but God comes to man. Divine love is free and sovereign—never can belong to us, we walk in love; we are not said to be love, but we are light in the Lord.

Verse 5. "By grace are ye saved." The Greek here means actually and fully saved, not the mere statement of a principle how to be saved, but the *fact* that we are really and fully saved.

In *Philippians* "Work out your own salvation," is quite another thing, and besides that is the book of experience, experience in power of the Spirit of God, a person living in the power of the Spirit of God and running on to glory. The experiences of the wilderness are no part of God's counsels. (See *Exodus* vi. 6-8). God's purpose had nothing about the wilderness. *Deut. viii.* gives the object of the wilderness lessons. "Thou shalt remember," &c., to prove thee, &c., &c. God takes the thief to paradise without wilderness experience. In our going through it we gain knowledge and there is progress, but it has *nothing to do with making fit.* (*Col. i. 12*), "*Hath made us meet.*" There are no ifs in God's purposes, but in connection with my path here I have ifs, but with them I get the assurance of God's faithfulness which puts me into the place of dependence, and the place of dependence is the place of safety. In *Philippians* it is the power of our walk that is brought out. In *Hebrews* we are in weakness and in difficulties, and we have the Priesthood, excepting the day of atonement. *Heb.* does not speak of Priesthood about our sins, but for our infirmities. In *John* we get the Advocate with the Father, if we sin, He being the propitiation and the righteous One, my standing cannot be touched, though my communion is necessarily interrupted. Non-imputation of sin to the believer because of the one offering is a truth lost sight of in Christendom. Hence so many are without settled peace, always in fear lest after all they should be taken with sin laid to their charge.

Verse 5. "Quickened together with Christ." "Together" is Jews and Gentiles together. Christ was dead; that closed all connection of God with man down here, that is man in the flesh as born of Adam. The Christian's place is a *totally new one*, after sin had taken effect having wrought death, and God comes in and quickens and

raises. It is not simply forgiving sins, but putting into an entirely new place when all is over with man as such.

Verse 6. "*Sit together in heavenly places.*" No running to get anything, *sitting* in Him in heavenly places. Associated with Him in heaven *now*. It is not the kingdom but divine power coming down to us and putting us in Him. Power raised Him and set Him above; the same power sets us in Him.

Verse 7 accounts for such grace, such wonderful grace. The riches of this grace will be displayed then. "Kindness." This word is not merely what we commonly think of kindness, it has a sweet force we cannot express—it is a kindly word.

A question was asked here. Can one maintain his standing in this truth when all the rest are not up to it? Yes, and he can realize the place for them, but he cannot raise the praises of the assembly unless he has power to raise their realization of it for themselves. There can be communion up to the point they have realized.

Is there not a consciously standing on earth in a new place without realizing a standing in heavenly places? Yes, that is *Colossian* ground. In *Romans* too, this has its place.

Would two or three in *Ephesian* standing, be dragged down by others only in *Colossians*? They ought not to be, they ought to lift the others up.

Verse 8. Saved, fully as in verse 5. Faith is the gift of God. "*Set to His seal that God is true*"; that is faith.

Verse 10. "*His workmanship.*" The first man was not the man of God's counsels. Christ the second man is the only man of God's counsels. The importance of not considering Adam when first created as holy, righteous, &c., but only innocent, is that Christianity is not the restoring man to his first state, but the substituting the man of God's counsels for the fallen man.

The good works ordained are not the works of each individual ordained for him in detail. It has a more general meaning. We are created unto good works, such a character of works as are consistent with this new order of things, this new creation and it is ordained that we should walk in them.

It is of a far higher order than works under law.

MEDITATIONS ON SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

THE OFFICERS.

“And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed; for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord. And behold, the courses of the Priests and Levites, even they shall be with thee for all the service of the house of God; and there shall be with thee for all manner of workmanship every willing skilful man, for any manner of service; also the princes and all the people will be wholly at thy commandment” (1 Chron. xxviii. 20, 21).

It is noticeable that the phrase “be strong and of good courage,” is used especially in connection with heavenly truth. Moses, in his charge to Joshua, uses these very words, together with the promise of the unfailing presence of the Lord. He is the only source of strength. Then in Eph. vi. we get the word, “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.” We overcome the flesh by the realization of our weakness, (“when I am weak then am I strong,”) prayer being the confession of it, but to be able to maintain the resurrection ground we need boldness, given by the knowledge of our place in Christ. Neither Moses nor David says, “Try to be strong, or pray to be strong, or be as strong as you can,” but “*Be strong.*” To tell one to try to be strong, is to throw him back upon himself; but “*Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might,*” takes one outside of self entirely, and shows us where the power lies—in the Resurrection of the Lord; “That ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power *which He wrought in Christ* when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places.”

“In the Lord,” is no empty phrase; it points to an unfailing treasury. In Him the Church is endowed with all she can ever need. If we are seeking “to do the best we can” to work up things after our own ideas, we shall but be showing forth our weakness; but to fall back on Him and recognize what He has endowed His Church with, is indeed, to “be strong.”

David foreseeing that the coming temple would need many skilful men in the building of it and much and

well ordered service, that all the varied needs of a ritualistic worship might be carried on, on a scale consistent with the glory of the building, fully provided for this; and when he gave Solomon the Divine instructions, and commended the work to him, he also handed over to him the service of the Levites that he had arranged.

Similarly has Christ received (Ps. lxxviii. 18) and given (Eph. iv. 8) gifts to His Church. He has fully endowed it with what is needed "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," that is, until the Body is complete.

These gifts were apostles and prophets, (for the founding of the temple) evangelists, for the building of it; and pastors and teachers for the service of those composing the Temple. Just as we find that David handed over to Solomon, not only materials for the building, and skilful workmen to prepare the stones (1 Chron xxii.) but he also provided porters and officers (1 Chron. xxvi.) for the service of the Temple when finished. In these, I think we get types of every gift the Lord has given to the Church.

We have these gifts enumerated in Rom. xii., 1 Cor. xii., and Eph. iv., and we see them in exercise in Acts. In Eph. iv. we have apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. These are spoken of here as gifts, not merely that they had a gift, but they themselves were gifts to the Church. The man himself is a gift. In 1 Cor. xii. where ministry in the Assembly is spoken of, we are told of "spiritual gifts," but in these gifts that will last as long as the body of Christ is on the earth, the man himself is given. Thus Paul speaks of being separated from his mother's womb (as also does Isaiah and Jeremiah). The man whom God has chosen, He also prepares. His fitness consists not simply in a readiness of speech, a knowledge of the word, and love for souls, but in all his training; his rejection, sorrows, contumely, weakness, all are needed to make him fit. And then, being given, he is no longer his own. It rests not with him to choose whether he will serve or not, *he is a gift*. It is not for him to labor for pay, or to expect a reward,

he is a gift. He is not to expect love for love, *he is a gift.* He should not have any thought of himself, *his* needs, *his* things, he is not his own, *he is a gift.* Therefore he must be prepared to be poured out upon the sacrifice and service of their faith. This is so of every gift, and especially of a pastor or teacher.

The apostles and prophets are passed away. They were foundation gifts for the Church, yet we still have them, for we have their writings. Everything must stand upon the scriptures given through them.

The evangelist's field of labor is not in the Assembly (therefore he is not mentioned in Rom. xii., or Cor. xii.) but in the world. He is a gift to the Body, but not for work in the Assembly. He goes forth as a bearer of glad tidings to those who are strangers to God. The character of his work is shown by his very name—herald of glad tidings. He is a preacher, not of law, nor of anything on the principle of law, but, impelled by the love of Christ, he goes forth into a *lost* world, proclaiming God's love to the sinner and the way of salvation: His *gift* of eternal life.

As he is a vessel of life from the Son of God, it is of the utmost importance that he be free from all human trammels, that he may be perfectly free for service wherever and whenever the Lord wants him. We see this very plainly in Philip. He was in the midst of a great revival in Samaria, when the Lord sent word for him to go to a desert. This was the "call" he had; not from a small city to a large one, but to a desert. Not being under the control of a conference, synod, presbytery or bishop, he was free to do the Lord's bidding. He went; his mission was to one man. That man was already awakened, so he simply "preached unto him Jesus." This shows what the evangelist's work is. And there is great need of evangelists now; there are multitudes of awakened souls, but few indeed to carry the good news of a *finished* work, an *accomplished* redemption, a *given* life. The fields are white, but reapers lacking. His work being over, the Spirit caught Philip away, and he was found at Azotus, "and passing through, he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cesarea." This gift we have typified in the skilled workmen.

The eunuch went on his way rejoicing, but he was but

a babe, he would need now the service of pastors and teachers. Did Philip hand him over to some assembly? We read of no such thing. He left him with the Lord. He had preached the gospel to him and baptized him. This was as far as his work went. In like manner the need of teaching amongst the Samaritan converts was supplied by the Lord in sending them Peter and John.

The pastor comes before the teacher in Eph. iv. for the young convert needs very tender care. He is but a lamb, he needs much shepherding. This is distinct from teaching (although the gift may, in some cases, be combined).

The work of a pastor is to tend and care for the flock of God. He was made a pastor by the Holy Ghost; His work was to be done freely. These, I think, we have typified in the porters. Porters have to bear burdens, and a true pastor will be a bearer of his brother's burden; he will be able to sympathise with weakness, to share sorrow, to bind up the broken hearts, to encourage the young, watch over the weak, and seek the straying. He may be all this, and a most perfect pastor, and have no gift in preaching or teaching (i. e. publicly) whatever. This is not a ministry that can be bought. It is a ministry of love which only one who is in fellowship with the great shepherd of the sheep will be able to do.

Of teachers and teaching we have abundance of illustration. Barnabas and Saul taught a whole year in the assembly at Antioch (Acts xi. 26). Also Acts xviii. 26, and many other passages show us the work of a teacher. The same remarks apply here as well as to the two preceding gifts. There was perfect freedom to go anywhere the Lord bid. It was done from the Lord and of the Lord. Nowhere do we read of a "minister" paid to preach, shepherd, and teach by any assembly. Of course it is the privilege, as well as the duty, of any individual saint, or assembly, to contribute to the support of those whose time is given to the Lord's service, but this is a very different thing from an assembly hiring a man to be their "minister." We read that Elisha accepted the provision made for him by the Shunamite woman because he was a "man of God" (2 Kings iv. 9), but he refused to accept Naaman's silver offered as *pay* for his

service. The teachers, I believe, are typified in the keeper of the treasures (1 Chron. xxvi. 20).

Besides these, we have those who attended to the wants of the people (1 Kings iv; 1 Chron. xxvii). These answer to the ministry of Rom. xii. 7, which is ministering to the needs of the saints, as Phebe, "minister of the church at Cesarea," and the house of Stephanus, who "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints" (2 Cor. xv. 15). See also 2 Cor. ix. 1; 2 Tim. i. 8; Heb. vi. 10.

Then we have officers and judges "for the outward business over Israel" (1 Chron. xxvi. 29). These answer to the gifts of ruling (Rom. xii. 8) and government (1 Cor. xii. 28).

David gave all to Solomon, and the Lord has given these gifts to the church, and we still have them. Men may set them at naught, and appoint a humanly trained "minister" to take their place, but it can never be done. Those amongst them who are qualified by the Holy Ghost, retain the gift, although its free use is hindered by the system built up by man: and those who are not gifts can never be made to be by human training. There were plenty of men amongst the "sons of the prophets" in Elijah's day, yet the Lord passed by them all and called Elisha from the plow. The "sons of the prophets" were not in the secret of Elijah's rapture (2 Kings xi. 16) nor could they heal the water (2 Kings ii. 21), nor supply the need of one of their own widows (2 Kings iv. 1), nor cure the deadly pottage (2 Kings iv. 4), nor recover the sunken ax (2 Kings vi. 5). And it is worthy of notice that those by whom the Lord is teaching the truth of the church's rapture, the gifts of living water, the abundance of grace, the new creation, and recovered power, are outside of man's systems.

If we could manufacture evangelists, pastors, and teachers, we should be independent of the Head; and when the members of a man's body refuse to obey the will of the head, and have a will of their own, they are in a sadly paralytic state.

It is remarkable that those porters and officers are described as "mighty men of valor," "able men for strength," "strong men" &c. For the building of the temple there were needed "cunning men," for the ser-

vice of the temple "strong men." And so it is with the Lord's work. Strength is needed to bear one another's burdens, and valor to hold the ground against all the wiles of the enemy.

C. H. B.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

"HAVE YE RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST SINCE YE BELIEVED."

(Concluded.)

We have seen that the present interval between the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and the translation into glory ("the rapture") of the church, may be called the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. And that this dispensation differs from any of the former dispensations, in this particular thing: that now God is acting towards sinners, upon the ground of pure sovereign grace, because of having found in Christ the Son of His love, perfect delight as to His walk down here; and perfect satisfaction according to the measure of His own holiness, as regards the question of sin, in the death of Christ, and that when he had been thus glorified in Him. He will straightway glorify Him; and henceforth God's "purpose in grace," is to put every sinner who believes in Him unto eternal life, into the same glory with Him.

"I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, oh, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John xvii. 4, 5.)

"And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them" (John xvii. 32.)

We have seen that the Holy Ghost came down on the day of Pentecost, consequent upon the resurrection and exaltation of Christ into glory. And that He filled those who were thus in expectation of Him, even the hundred and twenty who had returned from the ascension of Christ to wait for His promise. So that it was not all believers, as all of the brethren who received the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, but only those who were assembled *and in expectation of Him*. For the apostle Paul tells us "He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once" (1 Cor. xv. 6.) And out of this five hundred, only one hundred and twenty were

ready to receive Him when He came on the day of Pentecost. They might have received Him afterwards, doubtless they did; but this only proves that all believers on the day of Pentecost were not in a position to receive the Holy Ghost when He came.

So that now again, as before, we have seen that persons may believe unto eternal life, and yet not be in a position to receive the Holy Ghost. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3.) Here, then, is the knowledge of God in Christ, and this is eternal life. No vagueness or uncertainty about it; all is clear, distinct and definite. But the Holy Ghost is not thereby received, because, as we have seen, the receiving of the Holy Ghost depends on the apprehension of another and distinct line of truth, viz: That same Jesus, in suffering and death on the cross, and thence His blood a perfect answer before God for sin and sins—sin as to an evil nature, and sins as to the fruit of that evil nature—while He, Himself, "having purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high," and from thence, having sent down the Holy Ghost, a distinct and divine personality, to abide and dwell in those who receive Him, *forever*. And vagueness and uncertainty will not do. To confess to vagueness and uncertainty about having received Him, is to confess that you have not received; as the confession of vagueness and uncertainty about Christ, as to His divinity, and the efficacy of His atonement, is to confess that you do not know Him, and have not got eternal life. For it is the believer's privilege to know, on the unfailing word of God, that he has eternal life; and it is also the same believer's privilege, on the same unfailing word, to know that he has received, *and has the Holy Ghost*. For there is no such thing in scripture as losing the Holy Ghost after having once received Him. "He shall abide with you forever." "My spirit shall not always strive with man," was not spoken to those who had received the Holy Ghost. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption," was spoken to those who had received Him, and hence were in danger of grieving Him by allowing the flesh to act—the flesh, that principle of sin in man, which constitutes his self-will, the very energy and life of this present age.

And now, beloved reader, what is the answer of your heart to this question, "Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?" I do not ask you for an answer from your head. I am not writing for controversy. This subject has been on my heart for years, and I have written because I could not help it. Not absolutely! But such was the interest and importance attached to the subject that I was constrained to write. And I will add one word of exhortation to any who may read these thoughts and be able only to witness the truth, that all is vague and undefined. And that is this, dearly beloved. Do you know that you have eternal life? This must be the first step. Rest not until you can set to your seal that God is true. Then with the knowledge of Eternal life, remember there is the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Two gifts—the gift of God is *eternal life*, through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. vi. 23); "because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the *Holy Ghost*" (Acts x. 45).

C. E. H.

CHRIST THE FIRST FRUITS.

Lev. xxii. 1; 1 Cor. xv. 23.

They keep the festal tide,
The budding corn they wave;
'Tis shadow of the truth that lies
In Jesus' open grave.

In vain the feast is spread,
The typo has passed away;
In Jesus risen from the dead
Jehovah rests to-day.

To-day the heavenly gates
Lift up their heads with joy;
To-day triumphant songs of praise
The angel choirs employ.

To-day, ere yet the sun
Had climbed the eastern sky,
The mighty Conqueror had won
Eternal victory.

The earth in twilight shades,
Lies wrapped in slumber deep,
While softly in her deep green glades
Ten thousand dew-drops weep.

Alone upon her sod,
Beneath that starry dome.
Stood the Incarnate Son of God,
Now risen from the tomb.

Tremble, ye powers of hell,
The Substitute is freed ;
Ye heavenly choirs your anthems swell,
The Lord is risen indeed !

Fulfilled the law's demands
In Jesus' precious blood,
A kingly Priest henceforth He stands
Before the throne of God.

My Substitute was He,
My punishment He bore ;
For me He lives at God's right hand,
For me for evermore.

I wait to see His face,
Who hath redeemed me :
I sing the sonnets of His grace
Who died to set me free.

Low at His sacred feet
My holiest praise I pour.
A little cloud of incense sweet,
To rise for evermore.

Jesus, my highest heaven !
Jesus, Thou lovest me :
Jesus, Thou Thine own Self hast given
To gain my liberty.

Lord Jesus ! list the song
Of thy loosed captive bird ;
Who from the prison bars of earth
E'en to Thyself hath soared.

There would I build my nest,
And never thence remove
My spirit flutters to her rest,
The bosom of Thy love.

Oh, Jesus, Saviour, Friend,
Dwell in my heart for aye,
Be Thou my God, my aim, my end,
To all eternity.

R. M. W.

Henceforth that farewell word of Thine
Shall bid each earthly memory flee ;
Joyful I take the bread and wine,
And thus, my Lord, *remember Thee.*

THE CHILD OF SIN, AND THE CHILD OF GRACE.

Their origin and end, as illustrated in the history of David and Bathsheba—2 Sam. xi. 12.

The Apostle James has, by the Spirit, given us a word which we will do well to look at in connection with this history. "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: but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err my beloved brethren. Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures" (James i. 13-18).

It is a most horrible thing for man to dare to blame God for his sin; **ye** this is becoming very common; it is the tendency of scientists, especially phrenologists; making sin a mere matter of temperament, and certain developments of brain; ignoring the fact of man having a will; excusing him thus from responsibility; and throwing the blame of the sinfulness upon God for having made him. "Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God," says Paul; and now a-days we have especial need of that word of authority to meet all man's impious reasonings. "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." Who but David was to blame for his sin? Had he been in the field meeting Israel's enemies, instead of indulging in slothful ease, he would have escaped this disgrace. Man has no one to blame for his sin but himself. The root of all his sin is his own lust; it is the evil heart bent on mischief and desperately wicked. "Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin." This is the fruit; the origin was lust. The evil is deep-seated.

Thus it is that Rationalism cannot meet man's need, for it ignores a fact of which all reasoning cannot destroy the consciousness that he is sinful, dislikes God, and yet will have, some day, to meet Him. It deals only with the intellect, and no cultivation of the intellect can cure the malady of an evil heart. Nor can Rationalism help

him, for this deals but with the external man, and seeks to satisfy the conscience by a devotion to ceremonial religion, which leaves the seat of the malady untouched and uncured, because it is unrecognized. Like a physician who deals only with the effect of a disease seen on the surface, leaving the cause untouched, to break out afresh, in other ways, with recuperated vigor.

Thus much as to the origin of (the child of) sin. Now, what is its end? "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." This is the end of sin, and (strange as it seems, at first) God's remedy. God had sent the word by His prophet Nathan, "The child also that is born unto thee shall surely die," and although David fasted and prayed seven days, that word must be fulfilled. "The wages of sin is death," and death alone can pay it.

It was too late for fasting and praying. If David had been fasting and praying instead of walking on the roof of his house, this might never have happened. *Now*, it is too late, death must follow. And so it is vain for a man to think that his prayers can do aught to remedy the evil already committed (as to the exercise of conscience resulting in prayer, we will have a word to say at the close). Habitual prayer will preserve a man from temptation *after* he is saved, when he can pray, like Moses, seated on a rock, but as a means to repair the evil already done, it is useless; and worse than useless, for it preserves a gleam of hope in his breast, when what he needs is utter despair, that he may be cast upon one "mighty to save."

David's prayer cannot avert it—the child dies. The origin of the child of sin was lust, springing from man's own heart; its end is death. And this is not only God's punishment of sin, but also His remedy. It may seem strange, but thus it is, as Rom. viii. 3, states, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, (the law was holy, just, and good, but powerless to produce any good fruit on account of man's utter inability to refrain from that the law condemned—lust) God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh (not being Himself a sinner, but taking upon Him a human body; just as the serpent at which the bitten Israelites looked and lived, was not a real serpent, but a brass one)

and for sin (that is, in lieu of sin, as a substitute, taking the place of sin), condemned sin in the flesh (not excused, but condemned, put to death on the cross, thus paying the wages of sin for us) that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." This is God's remedy, sin condemned in the cross, and a new life given by the Spirit.

Thus the new child is entirely distinct from the old. It is not the old child made sick and revived by prayer, but the old child, the first child, the child of sin, *dies*. Now, in *grace*, God gives David a *new* child, born in wedlock, against whom there is nothing. This, I say, was grace. "The wages of sin is death, but the *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Sin earned the first child, which its wages—death—removed. The second child was a gift from the Lord.

Let us keep this clear. All I can *earn* is death. I earn it by sin, for I (unrenewed) can do naught but sin, my very righteousness is filthy rags, and the worst kind of sin, for it springs from pride—the devil's sin. Whatever then I get new is purely a gift from God; as our quotation from James goes on to say, "Do not err my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. *Of His own will* begat He us (us who are believers) with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures."

The gift God gives to him who confesses himself as a lost sinner before Him, is a new life in Christ, Jesus, the second Man. He is now my life, and against Him there is nothing. Being in Him there is therefore now no condemnation for me, for He bore the condemnation of the flesh on the cross.

David named this new child, Solomon, "which means peaceable," but the word of the Lord by Nathan the prophet gives him a higher name, "Beloved of the Lord." Thus I may say peace is the great thing the soul first apprehends that he gets in the second Man, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God." But the Lord has something more for us, not only have we peace in Christ, but we are also "accepted in the Beloved." How blessed for me to know this. My old

self put in the grave, and life given me in God's Beloved One! The name of the first child we are not told here, but James has told us. "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth *sin*." Sin is the name of the first child, and that we read in Rom. vi. is paid by death. To the believer the death of Christ is reckoned as paying it; to the unbeliever the lake of fire which is the second death.

The destination of the child of grace—Solomon—was the throne of glory. This too is our destination, sharing the throne of glory with Christ; not saved for earth, but saved for the glory. "Whom He justified, them He also glorified."

And now as to the exercise of the sinner's conscience. This also is plainly illustrated in this history. David being charged with this sin by God, confesses it fully and frankly. The *moment* he does that, he is forgiven. "The Lord also hath put away thy sin." But David has to learn by the experience of his soul what sin was. He spent seven days of bitter sorrow. I may say it illustrates the seventh of Romans. Not knowing what grace will do, he makes every effort to have the child's life preserved, as in Rom. vii. it is all the good or evil that "*I*" do.

Suppose God had answered David's prayer in that way, and preserved the child's life; the brand of shame would always have been upon it. And increased power given to "*me*" in Rom. vii. would still leave "*me*" but a sinner after all. But grace has something better for the poor struggling soul altogether. The old "*I*" passes out of existence before God, and the new child takes his place.

But how does the sinner get this? He is born as James says "with the word of truth." I confess my sin before God. His word tells me of sin put away in Christ. I believe it. Then I am born again by the word of God, the incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth forever. By His word I learn what I am—a lost sinner. By His word I learn also the remedy that grace has devised, life in the new Man Christ Jesus. I receive it, believe His record and thus am born again, and "accepted in the Beloved" and hope for the glory. May the Lord bless this attempt to show what His grace has done. Amen.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A few words with reference to the suggestion of "E. G. T." in *Sound Words* for March, page 84.

The city (in Deut. xxi.) nearest the slain man, is held accountable for his blood, but on taking the ground of ignorance over the heifer *they* (the people) *have themselves slain*, the blood is *forgiven them*. Judgment falls on the heifer, they are free. A gracious alternative left for the people which slew the Innocent One just outside their city (Luke xxiii. 34; Acts iii. 17); but they rejected the door of grace (Matt. xxvii. 25) defiantly, and deliberately (Acts iv. 1-22). The murderous act which slew Him drew forth its own expiating stream, and when He comes in glory a remnant will avail themselves of it, will "look upon Him whom they have pierced," and say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Identifying themselves with the slain One, the efficacy of His death becomes theirs. As to Saul and David. In the first place God was king; to desire another was the highest treason (1 Sam. viii. 7; xii. 12). He would have been perfectly justified in setting Saul aside at any moment, in grace he was put there and in grace he was retained there until the second act of rebellion (xiii. 13, 14; xv. 10-29). His duty was to abdicate the moment he was rejected and his successor found (xv. 28, 29) but Saul was a rebel (v. 23). Man's best man (ix. 2; x. 23, 24) (type of antichrist) but a seeker of asses, one who slew the priests of the Lord (xxii. 18, 19) called God's people (Heb. xiii. 3) and consulted familiar spirits, for which he died (1 Chron. x. 13, 14). He was clearly a usurper after xv. 28, 29, and Samuel was correct in anointing David when he did.

But the people were away from God, having rejected every link by which Jehovah had sought to bind them to Himself, Priesthood, Prophecy, even God Himself. How then can He, consistently with His righteous character, let His grace flow out to them again in giving them the man of His heart? (Type of the rejected One of men but chosen of God and precious). Only on the ground of the blood of the heifer can he establish that throne which is to endure forever (2 Sam. vii. 16). Here as in Deut. xxi: it is not bringing a people into relation-

ship, but cleansing from the defilement which has intercepted an existing relationship, hence a heifer is slain.

Yours affectionately in a rejected but risen Christ.

J. B. J.

Fall River, Mass., July 1876.

FRAGMENT.

The resurrection of Jesus, like the passage of the Red Sea, tells its own glorious tale. I gaze behind into His empty tomb, and find in it the ending of every foe. The end of the sins committed, and the nature which offended God, and broke my heart with its vileness. The end of Satan's power. He has no power farther than death. I have died with Jesus there. If I revive myself He still has power. If I am practically dead His power is gone. I have passed by the resurrection of Christ, into new ground. A shout of victory in my heart for the ending of every foe. I have peace with God, when the judgment is past. But here the type fails to show the magnificence of the victory which I enjoy. It was the *same flesh* which came out into the wilderness, through the depths of the sea, in Israel. We can say, now on the other side of his empty tomb, "when we were in the flesh" (Rom. iii). *When the flesh was myself!* Now I have got *another* life, a new life in Christ raised from the dead; which walks in perfect liberty, and brings forth fruit to God.

Beloved reader, the resurrection of Christ has these two aspects. *To the Christian*, Jesus risen is the eternal witness that our sinful nature and our sins are put away, and that it is God—our God—who has done it in love. *To the world* it is the solemn witness that God has "appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, *in that he hath raised him from the dead*" (Acts xvii. 31).

Like the presence of Jehovah on that day of the Red Sea, it was "cloud and darkness" to the Egyptians; it was "light by night" to Israel. To the one it was a savor of life unto life—to the other, of death unto death.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

10. "W. G. M." asks in regard to Rev. xv. 6, 7, as to the time when the action of those verses takes place.

In Rev. i. 19, we have the division of the book into its subjects, viz.—1. The things that John saw. 2. "The things that are," that is the Church time and action in responsibility in the earth, in chapters i. ii.; and 3. The things that shall be *after these*, (not "hereafter"). This begins immediately after the Church time is through, and 1 Thess. iv. 16–18 has taken place. The scene of chapters iv. and v. is in heaven and the opening of the seals, and the blowing of the trumpets and the pouring out of the vials, are future, "the things that shall be" as is said in iv. 1 *end*, reading "after these" instead of "hereafter." In chap. xv. there is the most solemn announcement of the seven last plagues, the pouring out of the seven vials, in which is filled up the wrath of God—completing His judgments upon the earth, preparatory to Christ's coming down to take His place and reign. And we know from 1 Thess. v. that we are not to be in this time, as well as from Rev. iii. 10. These judgments are of very severe character and follow each other very rapidly, succeeded by the coming down of Christ with the armies which are in heaven, the saints which have been with Him since the end of chap. iii. and were seen in the heaven in the twenty-four elders. Amidst all the terrific judgments on the earth, they have been calm around the throne, occupied with Him who sat upon it, and with Him who opened the sealed roll.

11. "S. H.," Juniata, Neb., asks concerning Dan. ix. 24–27.

The "seventy weeks" here are seventy periods of seven years. The time of their beginning was "the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem," which was in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes (Neh. ii). The end was "to make an end of sins and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy"—the final result of the death of Christ to that nation, and the bringing in the millennial glory. These are divided into three periods:

Seven periods of seven years.....	49 years.
Sixty-two " "	434 "
One " "	7 "

terminating in 1, the building of the street and the wall, in troublous times. 2, the cutting off of Messiah who "shall have nothing" (margin), rather than, "not for Himself," and 3 the confirming of a covenant (v. 27) by the prince (Antichrist) of the people that should destroy their city (the Romans). From the commandment to build the city until the death of Christ covers the time of the sixty-nine weeks. And then came in desolating wars, God no more having to do with them as His people. During this interim another thing comes in of which Daniel knew nothing—the church. One week (seven years) yet remains to them before the accomplishment of all the prophecy. This will have its place after the

church is taken away. Then, gathered back to their land, the Jews will covenant with Antichrist, for the seven years. In the midst of this, he will break his covenant and bring in the grossest idolatry in the holy place, having thus three and a half years (42 months, time, times, and the dividing of time, 1260 days) as the period of the most terrible conflicts and judgments, when at the end Christ will come to the earth. The subject is too large to be taken up here, but this cursory glance is given as a suggestion to aid the enquirer.

Matt. xxvi. 36. Why "The dividing of His disciples into two companies, and taking the lesser with Him in His bitter hour of sorrow?"

It was not so much the dividing into two companies, but calling out as chosen vessels apart from the others these three, Peter, James and John, that they might bear witness here, as they had been eye witnesses of His majesty on the Mount. They had there seen His glory, unable to endure it as here unable to endure and so falling asleep in both. We find these three especially mentioned in "The Acts" in their work, and doubtless they were chosen for special testimony to what pertained to the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow. The Lord chooses His vessels according to His own wisdom.

12. "V. D." "The reason why worship is to be to God the Father" is that we are told in John iv. 21-24, that the Father *seeks* worshippers. God is a Spirit and they that worship *Him*, must worship Him in spirit and in truth. It is as sons that we are worshippers, knowing God as our Father, through the Lord Jesus Christ. We are in Him, brought to God, and on the ground of what Christ has done, we delight in Him who commended His love toward us in sending Him. It was the will of the Father who sent Him that we should be brought into the holiest, and this was done by His death. We worship God who is now revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but God known in love, bringing us into relationship as children, and therefore, not the Father, as separate from the Son, but God Himself as our Father, as He was the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the title of Christ as a man. Worship is always spoken of as being to *God*. "We are the circumcision who worship God in spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. iii. 3). In Heb. ix. 14, our consciences are purged from dead works to serve (*worship*, the same word as in Phil. iii. 3) the living God, and so in Heb. xii. 28, we may serve (*worship*) God acceptably. In Eph. ii. 18, through Him, (*i. e.* Christ Jesus, as the way) we have access by one Spirit unto the Father. (*i. e.* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ). The object of Christ's work was to bring us there, and worship involves the full revelation of God, as He is, whom we praise and adore for what He is, and what He is unto us, and all that He has done for us. And this is the highest thing, and all we receive of the knowledge of Him, is but to make us the more intelligent, and happy, and profound worshippers.

THE ACTS.

Chapter xi.

We see a confirmation of the fact that the giving of the gospel to the Gentiles is altogether of God, in this chapter. Peter, who had to be specially directed to go to them, now finds that his act is called in question by those "of the circumcision." Doubtless, our God would have us draw from this the thought of His purposed grace. He Himself was for us. What an infinite resource we have in Him!

Peter, therefore, rehearsed the whole matter from the beginning, showing his own zeal to keep up the middle wall, and to keep the flow of grace within the Jewish limits; but that God had broken down the wall, and given the Holy Spirit freely to those outside. Even as he began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as on those of Jerusalem at the beginning. And this was considered the clear adoption of them as the objects of His heart, in the promise "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit." "Forasmuch, then, as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was *I* that I could *withstand* God?"

God was meeting lost sinners as such, wherever they were; and as the vision had been of a sheet let down from and drawn up to heaven, there was doubtless the expression of the heavenly nature of this calling, and that there no middle wall existed. It was of God, and to heed the vision was but to act in the manifest revelation of God. "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." The gift of the Holy Spirit was the token of this: it supposed repentance, which was by the Spirit too.

Another fact of exceeding interest is given, as denoting the free action of the Holy Spirit in grace towards the Gentiles. The Lord, in a formal manner, made use of Peter to open the door to them; but He was free to use others, about the same time, who may have known nothing of Peter's lesson nor work, though the latter was needed to gather those of the circumcision heartily into fellowship with the work that was now everywhere to open among the Gentiles. Having, by one open, unusual manifestation, given not only His sanction, but actually

made the way for the outcast heathen, He may have led these simple and less prominent servants of His to act in the same line, by the more quiet promptings of their own hearts, in the midst of circumstances that naturally suggested the work. For among those that were scattered abroad after the death of Stephen, some went as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the word to none but Jews. And some of the men of Cyprus and Cyrene, when they were come to Antioch, preached the Lord Jesus to the *Greeks*. It should be understood that these were not Grecians, who were Jews who spoke Greek, and were of the provinces outside of Judea, but *Greeks*, really Gentiles. These men had actually entered into the mind of God in a simpler way, and moreover the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed, and turned to the Lord.

The work was fully inaugurated. In Jerusalem, the Jewish centre, they had accepted it as of God, and now find out, that, in this important city of the Gentiles, the Lord has already been before them, preparing a people that had never known Him. And they accept this also, and send forth Barnabas, a man of Cyprus, whom the Spirit characterizes as a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith, goodness and faith being the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22). God would preserve the unity of the work and manifest that of the assembly thus, by this dear servant in whom all had confidence, going forth to test the matter. When he perceived the grace that was of God, he rejoiced and exhorted them with full purpose of heart to abide with the Lord. Apart from Him there could be no fruit, no service, no testimony; and this must be the expression of their being called out of the Lord. A large number was added to the Lord, not left loosely, simply as quickened, but added, or brought together in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And then we see how clearly the Spirit brings out everything according to His own mind. Barnabas seeks for Saul, who has already been marked out as the apostle to the Gentiles, and the minister of the gospel of the glory that is to go to all the world, and of the Church. Following his own mind as to the fitness of things, Barnabas might have sent for Peter, who had lately, in so marked a way, been sent to a Gentile. But it is for

Paul to have to do with first Gentile assembly, instructing them according to the free revelation that was given him. Paul was not with them at Jerusalem, may not have heard of the mission of Peter, but it was all ordered naturally of the Spirit, it was the natural work of Paul. Thus we see, on the one hand, miraculous interposition and special call, in the case of Peter and Cornelius, who was a devout man allied by his works to the Jews; while, on the other, it is but the simple outflow of grace by the apparently ordinary action of the Holy Spirit, in these disciples going to the Greeks at Antioch, and then Barnabas seeking for Saul. Jerusalem sinks into a more obscure place, and the work of God among the Gentiles and the special vessel for that work, Paul, are brought into the front place.

"And it came to pass that a whole year they assembled themselves with the Church, and taught much people." The assembly at Antioch was formed as in Jerusalem by the word adding; there is no human joining nor organization. The divine thing is there, the members of Christ meeting together as one company.

"And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." In Jerusalem and among the Jews, those who believed among them were called "Nazarenes," (see Acts xxiv. 5). The Jews wilfully ignored the resurrection of Jesus and the title "Christ" which was announced after His resurrection. They spoke of Him as the Nazarene, for He had lived in Nazareth, and the name of Nazareth had been put on His cross, and they would, and as blinded could, go no farther. He was of the past and thoroughly despised. So they attached this name to His disciples. But how sadly they told out their own unbelief and rejection of Him, determined to reject all that He was as offered to them from the dead. But in Antioch, the risen name of Christ was the only one the heathen heard, and it would be but natural to be calling a people that were always speaking of Christ and referring everything to Him, and especially who were taught by Paul, whose life was Christ, and whose word was that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, "Christians." But the Holy Spirit records it as timing especially with the other new things of this most interesting chapter. The truth of Paul among the Gentiles,

the revelation of the mystery to them, was "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. i. 27). The name, therefore tells of the character of the testimony. Among themselves (v. 29), they called one another "Brethren," as expressive of something real in relationship. They were members of the same body, and of one another, "those in Jerusalem and those in Antioch," and the Spirit brings that out for our learning in the believers at Antioch reaching out their hands with gifts to those of Jerusalem. The middle wall of partition was broken down. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the *brethren*, which dwelt in Judea. The relationship was real, and the famine that was foretold served to bring out this testimony. Famines had served in other days, in the Old Testament times, to test those who had to do with the land of Canaan. The fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had each to have a famine to prove him, and to bring out some new and precious thought of God; and in the days of Elimelech and Elisha, the famine gives us sweet stories of grace or life and resurrection power.

And the dearth that was to be in those days gives us the practical exhibition of the heavenly tie, and as in the other cases, adds a precious truth. It was not with the Gentile believers as with their earlier brethren from the Jews, that they sold lands and possessions, for lands and possessions with them had been no sign of earthly blessing, they were without God altogether. But this declares oneness. If one member suffered the whole body suffered.

We see that the door being opened outward towards the Gentiles, those having the mind of the Lord to impart, as His gifts—prophets—came from Jerusalem to Antioch. The gifts are for the whole body, not for specific localities, and they move and act in individual responsibility to the Head, who ministers to the body through them, for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body in love, and for the work of the ministry in preaching. Sweet, simple, perfect, and natural, was the action of the Spirit who dwells in the Church in this gathering of the first local assembly among the Gentiles, linking them in grace to their older brethren of the Jews, and guiding all in harmony and unity

RECOLLECTIONS OF READINGS, WITH J. N. D.,

At Brantford, Ont.—Continued.

Eph. ii 11, and following verses. Gentiles in the flesh were without Christ afar off, but *now* in Christ Jesus *are* made nigh by the blood of Christ; the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile is taken down and both are made one, the enmity, the law of commandments in ordinances is abolished, the whole system, law, ordinances, &c., is set aside for to make in Himself of twain, Jew, Gentile, one new man. Not only are the two, Jew and Gentile, reconciled to each other, as in verse 14, but both are in one body reconciled unto God by the cross, and peace is preached to both, and not only that, so completely is the old order of things set aside, that instead of a middle wall of partition and barriers to access to God, now, through Christ, both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Blessed privilege! May the saints fully realize the preciousness of it.

Ver. 19. We enter now upon an entirely different character of the church of God, though founded upon the same truth, the setting aside of the whole system that separated Jews and Gentiles; they are now no more strangers, but fellow-citizens and of the household of God; but it is not here the Body united to the Head, but the Holy Ghost having come down forms God's house on earth. Union with Christ is consequent on His exaltation. There is no church till then, palpable proof that it could not exist because the Head was not there to be united to, and besides it is founded upon the breaking down of the middle wall of partition; it could not have been formed at all if that wall remained. What would they have thought if Paul had preached this breaking down the wall in Nehemiah's time? It would have been impossible then, contrary to all God's thoughts at that time. But in these verses we have the thought of a house or dwelling place, not a Body.

God did not *dwell* with man till redemption was known. (Ex. xix. 46,) "And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt that I may *dwell* among them, I am the Lord their God." Now full redemption is accomplished in Christ, God comes and dwells in the church. As regards the church this is a crucial test. Take christendom

at large and see how both accomplished redemption, and God dwelling with his saints, are utterly lost sight of, and consequently a going back to the system that had been abolished in order to set up this new thing.

Ver. 20. The apostles and prophets are the foundation, Jesus Christ the chief corner-stone. That these apostles and prophets are all New Testament ones, and not of the Old Testament, is plain from verse 5, chap. iii.

We now have in these closing verses of this chapter the House looked at in two distinct ways. 1st. The building in progress, not yet finished. 2d. "Are builded together," properly set up. Man's responsibility in building is not in view here; that we find in 1 Cor. iii. We have these two things in scripture: Christ building; He says, "upon this rock I will build my church," and in 1 Peter ii. chap. we see that building composed of *living stones*. no one's ministry spoken of; this is Christ's building. The other thing is man's building, and he is warned about building wood, hay and stubble which will not stand the test of fire.

But in Ephesians we have God's side of the thing. 1st. The building growing unto a holy temple, which will be seen complete in the glory. 2d. A present complete thing on the earth, God's habitation. [This subject led to much inquiry on various points, which somewhat lead away from the chapter under consideration, and I can only here give brief hints on them as my notes are but few.]

As to the Body spoken of in 1 Cor. xii. This is the Body administratively on the earth only. Eph. i. gives the Body in the counsels of God, complete in the glory. Are the dead saints now in the Body? They are like military men on furlough, preserved unto the end, still they are members. Is the great house still the house of God? Yes, but the individual is responsible to purge himself from the *vessels* of dishonor in the house, he cannot leave the house, where is he to go to? The Lord knows His own. At first it was said, "The Lord added to His church daily," now it is, the Lord knows His own. "Great house" is only a comparison. In a great house there are," &c. It does not say the house of God is now a great house, but compares the condition of the house with a great house having vessels of dishonor as

well as vessels of honor, and insists upon the individual having an exercised conscience to purge himself from these vessels to dishonor.

The camp is not the house. Protestantism is not Babylon. House is where God dwells. The kingdom where the king rules. The kingdom is set up in power when the house is pulled down. It is "the house" till God judges it.

When I speak of the house, I speak of the Holy Ghost; when I speak of the kingdom, I speak of Christ, the King. The notion of the kingdom is nearly lost. God was going to set up a kingdom with Christ, but he was rejected. In Matthew xiii. chap. we get the kingdom without a king.

Eph. iii. In the first chapter we have seen the counsel of God toward us, and in second chapter the operation of God in quickening, raising and setting us in Christ in heavenly places. The third chapter is parenthetical. Paul made a minister of these things by dispensation of the grace of God given him toward the Gentiles. Ver. 3, "as I wrote afore," &c., means as he has written in the previous part of the epistle. That Paul was specially chosen for unfolding this mystery is clear from verses 3 and 4, though verse 5 speaks also of its now being revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. Col. i. 25 is very distinct as to Paul's mission, the teaching of the doctrine of the church being committed to him "to fulfill," or (as it should be translated) fully preach the word of God, *i. e.*, the plans of God are fully revealed, there is nothing more to be unfolded. We have other inspired writings after Paul's, as the "Book of Revelation," but they reveal no new counsels of God, no further mystery brought to light, for Paul has "fully told out" the word of God as to all that. In the passage in Col. there are two ministries committed to Paul, verse 23, the ministry of the gospel, verse 25, the ministry of the truth concerning the Body, the church. The hope of the gospel is not the coming of Christ, though connected with it; it is the hope laid up in heaven whereof they heard in the gospel.

Why does the apostle say, "if ye continue," &c., in xxiii. chapter? You do not get any "ifs" in the epistle to Ephesians, because you are a man in the counsels of God,

the good pleasure of His will can have no "if" connected with it. But when you get christian walk and responsibility or the ways of God with us, then you get an "if;" but at the same time we find that in this we are thrown upon God as our resource and are put into the place of dependence. We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation (1 Peter i.) and Christ tells us in John x. 23, we shall "never perish," "none shall pluck us out of His hand." We do not keep ourselves, so then when I meet with an "if" I am made to feel my dependence and responsibility, and in that is my safety and power. If you connect "if" with salvation, you deny that God has brought you to *Himself*.

Verse 14 and following. This is the prayer as to our state, it is a question of power, not of knowledge, as in the chap. i., where the prayer was that we might *know*; it was objective, but in this second prayer it is subjective—Christ *in us*.

The measure of the power prayed for is nothing less than the riches of the Father's glory. Christ is the centre of all that glory, and being strengthened with might in the inner man by the Spirit we can have Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith. It is not simply Christ known as a Saviour, nor is it Christ in you by the Spirit which every believer has, nor in the same sense as in Rom. viii. "if Christ be *in* you the body is dead," &c. It is not our being in *Him*, but Christ dwelling in our hearts.

It is a special thing looked for, it is the realization of His presence in our hearts. Having this, we have the consciousness of God's love, and are rooted and grounded in it. Reader, have you realized this? If so, the next thing is "able to comprehend what is the breadth, length, depth and height," but there the apostle stops, it is so big he cannot tell of it. It is not the breadth, &c., of love; it is all that in which He displays His glory, who can tell that? We might be lost in this wonderful glory, so He brings us back to what we are at home in—the love of Christ. But lest we should think we had come to something less, He says it passeth knowledge, it is divine love. "Filled unto all the fulness of God" is not exactly God dwelling in us and we in *Him*, as in

John, which is nature, but God fully revealed in all His glory in His counsels and plans fully developed, of which Christ is the centre and in which the unlimited extent of His glory shines forth so that He in all His fulness of glory is manifested, and we are filled into His fulness. This is a most wonderful prayer when we see what fulness it brings us into.

A mistake is often made in the use of v. 20, as if the apostle's desire were that God would do *for us* more than we can ask or think. It is, however, a desire that there should be glory unto God in the church according to the power that worketh *in us* not *for us*. And this glory is unto God in the church by Jesus Christ in all ages, both the present one and future ones. The church is, we learn by this, a distinct thing throughout "all ages, and without end." The Lord, speaking of His disciples, says, *I am glorified in them*, a present thing. He ought to be glorified in the church now, and we may count on Him to preserve a remnant to give Him glory. It is a humbling thing to look at this, and then to look upon the state of things around us.

Eph. iv. "The vocation wherewith ye are called." The vocation especially refers to the habitation of God through the Spirit, though not excluding other things brought out in the second chapter. The apostle beseeches us to walk worthy of this vocation, appealing to their affections by the fact that he was a prisoner of Jesus Christ for the Gentiles, and further his imprisonment was no dishonor to the truth, he was a prisoner of Jesus Christ, not for any crime or illegal act that lawfully subjected him to this punishment. We find three ways of walking worthy: 1. Walking worthy of God (1 Thess. ii. 12). 2. Walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing (Col. i. 10). 3. Walking worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called; this is corporate calling, not individual calling.

It is a great thing to see that the measure of what is right is God and not man. I should walk worthy of Him, not worthy of man. I must be fit for the presence of God, or I will not be happy.

Ver. 2. Before he gets to anything that is elevated he exhorts to all lowliness and meekness, &c. The consciousness of being nothing is the first thing worthy of God in our walk; this is lowliness. Meekness is gentle-

ness toward others; how very negative the scriptures are in insisting on the exercise of grace. 1 Cor. xii., on love, is nearly all, if not all, negative. "Envieth not, vaunteth not, not puffed up," &c., &c. Self should never stir when love is there. Have nothing to do with self, but with God. When in the presence of God there is the circumcision of the heart—Israel always went back to Gilgal, the place of the circumcision, after their victories. The fact is, the Lord's presence was there. Where there is subjection, there is patience. "Let patience have its perfect work." Patience is the great test of a broken will. If I have no will of my own, I can wait patiently on God. The proof of power in the saints is in *patience*. "The signs of an apostle were wrought in all *patience*."

Ver. 3. "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." The many questions and variety of thoughts upon this verse showed how evidently all felt the importance of the exhortation, especially in these days of disunion and alienation. I can only give very briefly the pith of what was elicited. May we all, however be taught of the Spirit, practically to carry it out even though it may be only among twos and threes gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The unity of the Body cannot be broken, that is dependent upon the one Spirit who formed the Body, but keeping the unity of the Spirit depends upon our diligent watchfulness, and the only way to keep it is by carrying out the exhortation of verse 2. I need constant self-government, continual diligence, lest by allowing self or the flesh to work I mar this unity. We see an example of this unity of the Spirit in Acts ii. It is more than being one in spirit, we might say it is that unity and fellowship in the Spirit which *manifests the unity of the Body*. This does not mean that it makes the Body manifest. This is impossible now; but the truth of the *unity* of the Body may be owned and two or three may walk in that unity which is the power of that Holy Spirit who unites the whole Body into one Body.

Meeting together owning the unity of the Body is not in itself the keeping the unity of the Spirit, those so meeting may be having contentions, and thus the unity of the Spirit be marred. Each one must have done with self and be walking in the Spirit. If I am thoroughly down be-

fore God, I cannot be wounded in my pride. You cannot knock me down if I am down. It is called the unity of the Spirit, because the power of the Spirit produces it, and the bond of peace is that state of soul that becomes it.

This exhortation is founded upon the actual unity presented to us under three different aspects. First, Internal unity, connected with the Holy Spirit. Secondly, Public profession connected with the Lord. Thirdly, Universal, connected with God the Father. Each of these unities has a limit of its own, the first limited by the extent of the members of the Body. It cannot be more nor less than the Body. But the second, which is profession of the faith, not the mere fact of believing to the salvation of the soul, but owning that system of teaching called the faith, which may be professed without any real saving faith in the heart. This second unity embraces a wider sphere than the first, because it takes in all professors, some of whom may have no part in the Body at all. The third unity is wider still. God is above all, through all, and in you all, *i. e.*, in all Christians. It is interesting to notice how these three persons in the Trinity are connected with gifts in 1 Cor. xii., as they are here connected with the unities. (Ver. 4.) Diversities of gifts, but the same spirit. (Ver. 5.) Differences of administration, but the same Lord. (Ver. 6.) Diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

. REDEMPTION.

To know and enjoy the forgiveness of our sins, is the portion of every child of God. An unforgiven child of God is unknown in Scripture. False theology may and has darkened the souls of His people; or they may never have known the light. Still, forgiveness is their portion, they *are* forgiven, whether they know it or not; but God would have them *know* it as well, and when they receive forgiveness, He gives them the Holy Ghost. It is no matter of attainment, but of simple faith, taking God's thoughts and giving up our own. "Abraham believed God;" that was faith. Experience will often contradict what God says, but faith is not experience, and we are

saved by faith, and not by experience. "The full assurance of faith" is the only normal christian state. It rests upon what Christ has accomplished; what the Holy Ghost declares in the word of God. Unbelief may reject it and be lost: but faith—childlike, christian faith—believes God; it "sets to its seal that God is true," and God, too, sets His seal (the Holy Ghost), on him who believes.

But to know forgiveness is not to know redemption. A man may know his sins are forgiven for which he would have been judged, and in conscience still be in Egypt. He may think himself merely "a sinner" still. He may suppose he is still a child of fallen Adam, and, therefore, he may have no sense of deliverance from that state at all. Now it is one thing to know that I had *sins*, and that I had earned judgment for those sins, and that grace stepped in and sheltered me by the blood of Christ, both blotting out the sins forever, and delivering me from a judgment to come; but it is quite another thing to know that I have been wholly delivered from a present *state* before God—that of a responsible and sinful child of Adam, and that I am now a forgiven child of God, and never can be a child of Adam any more!

Here the truth of redemption comes in, and we have both. "We have redemption through His blood, (and) the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. i. 7).

It was one thing for Israel to know that they had been *safe* from judgment on the night of the Passover, and quite another to have been *saved* out of Egypt. They *had been* slaves there, making bricks without straw. They *are* God's freedmen, as they sing the song of Moses on the wilderness side of the Red Sea! Here is where so many err. They are trusting in Christ as their only hope; they may know, too, that their sins are pardoned, but they go on all their lives through, perhaps, crying out "miserable sinners," or "sinners." Plainly they do not know where redemption has set them, or they could not do this.

Suppose that an Israelite, instead of singing Moses' song of redemption, was crying out (because he found himself the same person still when he looked at himself), "a poor slave in Egypt;" what would you have thought

of his folly? Yet there are plenty of the people of God in no better a state. How thoroughly dishonoring to the work of Christ! But it satisfies systematic religion, and ministers to it. Redemption is ignored in its true force; I do not say in words, for alas, that is one of the most successful plans of the enemy, to use orthodox words without their true import, and thus blind the souls of the people of God as to their real meaning, keeping them in darkness and uncertainty all their lives.

An Israelite who was redeemed, was dealt with from that moment on an entirely new footing. Never as a slave in Egypt again, but according to the new place and relationship in which he now stood with God, and so it is with the christian.

And now comes another thing altogether: not merely have we to learn what we have *done*, and the *forgiveness* we need for this, but we have to learn a far more trying lesson—what we *are*, and the *deliverance* we have in Christ. We never get thorough deliverance from what we are until we are forced to cry out, "Oh, wretched man that *I am*, who shall *deliver me*?" Forgiveness may be known at the same time, as we have seen.

This is unfolded in Exodus xiv. They started to leave Egypt, but the bitter lesson was then learned that they could not deliver themselves. Forgiveness does not give strength, nor does the possession of life. And here comes in *experience*, but experience before deliverance, and therefore not yet on proper christian ground. Experience will never give deliverance; it will "bring me into captivity," but it will never set me free (see Rom. vii. 14-24)—that must be the work of another.

On the night of the *Passover* it was a question between God and Israel; on the day of the *Red Sea*, between God and the enemy. Was God or the enemy to have those whom blood had purchased? In the salvation of the Red Sea we learn in type the efficacy of Christ's *death* and *resurrection* in delivering from the world, and Satan's power who had formed it as a sphere in which to please the flesh in man. The blood of Jesus answered for our sins before God as a Judge. His death and resurrection takes us clean out by redemption into a new place, delivering us for ever from the attacks and accusations of the enemy. God counts to us in grace, and

we possess by faith the efficacy of what Christ has passed through for us.

The children of Israel had encamped at Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. Pi-hahiroth bears the significant meaning of *The opening of liberty*. Here Satan's power is put forth in a final effort to frustrate "The salvation of the Lord." All His hosts are marshalled against the people, who are "sore afraid." But the Lord permits this pressure which eventuates in their learning Him in a far more blessed way than as a Judge. They experience what souls do who find that a day of quiet slavery to Satan was more easy to be endured than the pressure of his power against them in their first efforts to escape. They may have dreamed of escape in days gone by; but now the trial comes, will Satan permit it? The bondage of the Egyptians was preferable to this trying moment: "For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness (v. 12). Death was before them, and up to death Satan wields his power. Once that death is past Satan's power is over.

Now God's resources are seen; the blood which had answered for our sins has come from the side of a dead Christ, but He has risen, and left the whole domain of Satan's power—nullifying death for him who believes. "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord . . . The Lord shall fight for you, and yeshall hold your peace" (vv. 13, 14). And Moses lifted up the rod of judgment, and divided the waters of death; and the people passed over to the other side through death, which stood before them a moment before. The Lord has gone into the last stronghold of Satan's power, and wrought complete salvation *for* His people. A very real work may have to be done *in* them, that they may know themselves, and that when put into the pressure of such a moment they may be forced to find that all must be of God. But the Lord has wrought the work of salvation *for* us, and what He has passed through is counted to us in grace. It is not merely that His blood has cleansed us from every sin and saved us from judgment to come, but He has died and risen, and left the whole sphere into which He entered; we have died also to the sin and sinful state for which He died in putting it away before

God, and now He liveth unto God. "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also (*i. e.*, count it true in faith, what God has counted to you in grace) yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ^r our Lord" (Rom. vi. 9-11).

How, then, can Satan touch or accuse? If we have died with Christ, out of the scene into which He entered in divine love, we have died to it forever. Satan may try to follow (as Pharaoh and his hosts), and find that there is his ruin. He put forth his worst, in leading on the whole world against Christ to drive him out of it; but therein Christ destroyed his power. His accusations are over; his attack frustrated. He might accuse and attack one who is alive; but we have died with Christ, and this he can do no more.

If we were simple this truth of deliverance would be simple too. But, alas, we are not simple, and hence the bitter experiences we have to pass through, till we cry out, "Who shall deliver?" Then all is clear. We have been translated completely out of the place and condition in which we committed the sins, and as cleansed from them, put into a new place "in Christ" risen from the dead. By no efforts of our own could we ever reach this place. It is by complete surrender, and by giving up every effort, that we get this deliverance in Christ, who has accomplished it all, and who now stands in this new place Himself.

You find this experimentally described at length in Rom. vii. 14-24. Not that these verses give you the experience of any person at the time they were spoken. They are the *past* experiences of a *delivered* man, who had struggled for freedom until he found he was rather getting further from *deliverance* than nearer the goal. He is now standing on dry ground, so to speak, and describing what he was before he was free.

You see a remarkable illustration of this in Jonah, (c. ii). He is put into the place where none could avail to deliver him but God alone. In the "belly of hell"—as he describes it. Three times over he promised what he would do if he could only get out: "I will look again

toward thy holy temple." No; vows and resolutions will not do. "But," he cries, "I will sacrifice to thee with the voice of thanksgiving." Will this set him free? No. Again he cries, "I will pay that I have vowed." All in vain! Promises and vows, efforts and resolves which are made in such a state will not do; they all come from "I," and as long as "I" is recognized, you have not given up "I" as one in whose flesh "dwelleth no good thing," and turned the eye upon Christ.

"Well," said Jonah, "*Salvation is of the Lord!*" Ah, Jonah, you have found out the secret; you have touched the spring of the lock, and you are standing on dry ground the next moment! How simple, and yet how blessed to find the eye removed from self—hopeless self—and turned in the sense of utter, helpless weakness upon God. Then all is done, and we are free!

There are three steps in learning the bitter experience of Rom. vii 14 24. First, the hopeless evil of the nature of the flesh, in which is *no* good; not merely that the tree has produced evil *fruit*, but that the *tree* itself is corrupt. Then, secondly, it begins to dawn upon the soul that, after all, there are good desires, and earnest longings to do the right thing for God. The very aspirations of a new nature, which is sanctified to the obedience of Jesus Christ, are there. The first cry of the quickened soul is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" But oh, what distress of soul, to find that even with good desires and earnest aspirations after God, the evil nature is stronger than the good, and leads me captive, so that I do the thing I hate, and I detest and abhor the thing I do. Bitter lesson, but useful to learn. Lastly, then, I learn that I have no power over it, and some one else must come and set me free. Sad enough to find its total evil; sadder still to find that it is not myself, and yet I am captive to its desires. But the moment I give up "I," and cry, "Who shall deliver?" my eye has turned away from all the efforts of "I," and I am free. The Lord has been there in the depths, and the evil nature has been completely condemned in Him, so that I can reckon myself dead by *faith* and for deliverance; though in *fact* and *experience* I find the nature alive, and its tendencies unchanged, still I am entitled to treat it as "not I" but as an enemy to overcome and subdue.

Thus we are "in Christ"—not "in Adam" at all, and now, for the first time, God will have fruit from us. All this work of redemption (Ex. xii.-xiv.) is what God has done for us. The experience we pass through is a work in us, that we may enter upon what He has accomplished. Now, for the first time, the mouths of those who in solemn silence ate the paschal lamb on the night of judgment, whose cries of fear had been silenced at the Red Sea by a God of salvation, are opened in a rich song of praise for what the Lord has accomplished in His delivering grace.

Sins, and death, and judgment, are all behind the delivered soul. The sins are gone—for Christ has borne them. Death is past for us in Him. Through it we pass (if we have to die physically), into the presence of the Lord, and "death is ours;" not now the wages of sin—but Christ having taken its wages, we are free, and instead of sinful man's portion, "after this (death) the judgment" (Heb. ii. 27), it leads us to the glory where Jesus is. Judgment is past, for He has borne it, and he that believeth "hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24).

And "The waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. There remained not so much as one of them." "Thus the Lord saved Israel!" (vv. 8-30). The same waters that silenced the foe, flowed back into their mighty channel; there was no retrogression—no return. Redemption once accomplished is accomplished forever! The waters, flowing back in the channel, precluded the possibility of returning by that pathway into the land of slavery and sin! • •

HOME, SWEET HOME.

My home, sweet home, it is not here—

This is no home for me :

I'm deaf to all its songs of mirth,

However sweet they be ;

The home I love is far away,

Beyond all mortal sight.

But faith, with its unflin'ring gaze,

Can pierce the starry height.

HOME, SWEET HOME.

Sweet home! the word is joy to me—
A home that never fades;
Unfailing brightness ever dwells,
Amid its peaceful glades,
And all unlike the homes of earth,
A changeless youth is there,
No shadows gather on the brow,
No eyes grow dim with care.

My home, sweet home, is with the Lord,
Who doth in glory bide—
Cleansed by His blood He shelters me
Safe in His pierced side;
'Tis He who makes so richly gleam
Its golden rays divine,
Whene'er I think of all the love
And grace that make it mine.

My home, sweet home! 'tis Jesus gives
This blessed home to me,
'Twas with His blood He purchased it,
Then made it mine to be;
The title deeds are all secure,
His fingers on the seal,
That sealeth irrevocably,
My everlasting weal.

My home, sweet home! I soon shall be
Within its jeweled walls,
A little while, I wait and watch,
And listen till He calls:
Then shall the hosts of God's elect
Shine out in Christ their Head,
And nations walk within the light
Of those who once were dead.

My home, sweet home! no mortal tongue
Its wonders e'er can sing,
But soon shall heav'n's eternal arch
With hallelujahs ring,
When Christ returns with all His saints
Within the heav'nly zone,
And when He gives the kingdom up,
That God may reign alone.

Oh, sweet beyond what words express,
The home Christ is to me,
Oh pure and perfect happiness,
With God in Christ to be!
Oh, wondrous work of love and pow'r!
Oh, glory in excess!
When in the flash of joy we see
Him in His holiness!

Sweet home! where shortly I may stand
 Before the Saviour's face,
 Shall know Him, as myself am known,
 Partaker of His grace.
 As son within the Father's house,
 Shall all its treasures see,
 At home with Christ, at home with God,
 Throughout eternity!

J. T.

MEDITATIONS ON SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

SOLOMON'S PRAYER (2 Chron. vi).

Many and various as are the lessons we may learn from the typical import of the Temple and its contents, we must not forget that, after all, it was a literal temple, built by an earthly king, for an earthly people's worship.

We are forcibly reminded of this in reading the prayer of Solomon at its dedication. And we will take occasion by this to notice the great distinction between the earthly calling and position of the Israelite and the heavenly calling and position of that Body of which we have been taking the Temple as a type.

It would be impossible to apply this prayer strictly to the church. Doubtless there are many things in it from which we can learn the principles of God's government and mercy, but yet all through it there is such a distance recognized and kept up between him who prays, and Him who hears, that makes us feel that we profit most from it with the prayers that the Spirit gives for the believer in this dispensation.

"Hearken therefore, unto the supplication of Thy servant, and of Thy people, Israel, which they shall make toward this place! hear Thou from Thy dwelling place, even from heaven; and when Thou hearest, forgive." And thus all through the prayer, every petition is couched in similar terms; "Then hear Thou from heaven, Thy dwelling place."

While this mode of supplication, and no other, was, of course, just the right one for a people whose position was earthly, whose whole promises and curses were pertaining to the earth (as see in this prayer), it is ill-suited to be the language of one whose place is in the heavens in Christ. Were a christian to adopt this language in prayer, the result would be that he would fail to realize his right as to entrance into the holiest by the

blood of Jesus, his relationship with the Father would not be enjoyed, he would feel at a distance from God, and his eyes would be turned from heaven to earth, and he would become very much like a Jew in his aims and hopes.

And this is just what has happened. We find Christians everywhere praying, not indeed Solomon's prayer, but one very similar, what is called the "Lords prayer" (called so in mistake, for the *Lord's* prayer is found in John xvii, and does not bear much resemblance to the *disciple's* prayer of Matt. vi. and Luke xi.), in which the same distance is recognized. The Jewish disciple being on earth, and earth being the place of his hopes, looks upward and says, "Our Father which art in heaven." In its main import that prayer is very like Solomon's. It is all for earthly deliverance, and earthly blessings. The "kingdom" is looked for, the happy time when God's will will be done on earth as it is in heaven. The christian, of course, is awaiting no such event. He knows from the prophetic scriptures of the New Testament that no such thing can happen while he is on the earth. He looks only for the "Son of God from heaven," to snatch him away from the scene of man's will altogether. And although he fully believes that that prayer will be answered, it is not *his* hope, but the hope of the Jewish remnant in that time called in Rev. vii., "the tribulation, the great one." Instead of looking for deliverance from evil and escape from trial, the Holy Spirit prays that he may be strengthened "unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness." He is to count it a precious privilege not only to believe in Christ, "but also to suffer for His sake."

Moreover, in that prayer forgiveness is only prayed for, there is no confession of what the work of Christ has done for us; and this, of course, for the simple reason that when that prayer was given there was nothing done, the cross was yet in the future. But now that redemption has been accomplished, and the Holy Spirit descended, how much fuller indeed must be the utterance into which the Spirit would lead our hearts. Just contrast the prayer given to the disciples with that written by the Spirit in Col. i., where deliverance from Satan's kingdom (13), redemption and forgiveness (14),

are acknowledged as realized facts, and request is simply made to be filled with the knowledge of His will (9), and for strength to suffer with joyfulness (11).

All Solomon's requests were based upon the condition that the children of Israel should walk before Jehovah with all their hearts, or, should they sin against Him, and He in anger should deliver them as captives to their enemies, that they might confess their sin and turn to Him with all their heart. This they did not do, and the prayer became a prophecy of the fall of Israel, and of future deliverance, when, by the power of the Lord, they shall turn to Him with full confession.

A little over four hundred years and the temple was burnt by the king of Babylon, and although rebuilt, it was but temporary: the nation repented not at the call of the Baptist, and rejected their long promised Messiah.

But by the sure promises of God made *unconditionally* to David, we know that that people shall be restored and the Temple rebuilt. "If his (David's) children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. *Nevertheless* my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer *my faithfulness* to fail. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto my servant, David, his seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me" (Psalm lxxix. 30-36).

As to their restoration, surely the prophets are full of it, but lest any should say that their application is past, see the explicit declaration of the apostle in Rom. xi. 24-27, "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 to Israel *until* the fulness of the Gentiles should be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins."

That the Temple will again be built, and its ritual restored, the last eight chapters of Ezekiel plainly show. Its size will be about the same as the first one (compare 1 Kings, vi. 17; Ez. xli. 2; and 1 Kings vi. 20; Ez.

xli. 4). This will be, of course, after the church has been caught up.

In bringing our meditations on Solomon's Temple to a close, it may be permitted us to take a brief retrospect of the lessons we have endeavored to gather therefrom:

Commencing with the foundation, we saw that our salvation and all the blessings that flow from it rests, not upon aught that we have done, or can do, but upon the all-sufficient, eternally-efficacious sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Next, we saw that we are joined to a Risen Christ; we have been made one with Him, not in His birth, but in His resurrection. The Good Shepherd first laid down His life for the sheep, and then he makes them partakers of His Divine life. So that the life the believer has is Christ; he has been joined to Him in resurrection life.

Then from the differences in the dimensions of the Tabernacle and Temple, we learned the distinction between being a pilgrim in the wilderness and a resident in "the land." That while the knowledge that "our old man is crucified with Christ," gives us the Red Sea deliverance, and the presence of the Spirit in our hearts gives us the power to journey through the wilderness, it is our being "quickened together and raised up together with Christ," that brings us through the Jordan of death into heavenly places. And it is the knowledge of this resurrection truth, that will enable us to maintain that place against those with whom we war—"wicked spirits in heavenly places." Going a step farther, we learned the importance of "holding the Head," that to see what He is and to give Him His place, is everything to the soul.

Then from the difference between the exterior and interior we drew a contrast between the *converted* man of Peter, and the *risen* man of Ephesians. From the Oracle we learned the blessed truth of the presence of God in the Church, thereby making it His dwelling place. From the Ark we saw that we have but one centre of gathering given us, and that is Christ, and that which convenes the saints of God together in assembly is, or should be, the Lord's table. In the vessels of brass we saw set before us the practical truth of self-judgment; in the vessel of gold we saw that the truth

rests upon a divine platform, the testimony is of divine power. From Solomon's singers we gathered a few thoughts as to worship. The officers that David appointed showed us the gifts with which Christ has endowed the church, and the command, "Be strong," shows us the necessity of courage in maintaining the heavenly ground. And in this last chapter we saw what a distinction there is between the earthly calling of Israel, and the heavenly calling of the church.

Solomon's temple retained its pristine splendor but thirty-three years, when it was plundered by the king of Egypt, and after standing about four hundred and twenty-four years it was burned to the ground.

While we rejoice to know that the Temple built by the Holy Spirit can never be destroyed, yet, alas, how short a time was it ere the temple of God was defiled! Solomon's temple was rebuilt by Zerubbabel, and again by Herod—by the latter on a scale far exceeding the original. It was built of marble, the stones of immense size, and glittered in the sun like a mount of gold and snow; but what was it to God? Outwardly it was glorious, but that which denoted the temple as the dwelling place of God was lacking. The ark and mercy seat, the Divine presence or visible glory, the holy fire on the altar, the Urim and Thummim were gone. There was a time when the church was a "little flock," gathered round one Shepherd; now, alas, wolves have arisen and hireling shepherds spoil the sheep. There was a time when they could be called "the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth:" now, alas, we know it is a "great house" (the apostle does not say "*God's* great house"), and the Lord, instead of being the centre of a "little flock," stands *outside* knocking at the door of a great, opulent, self-satisfied, self-seeking, world-loving thing (Rev. iii. 20).

But in the time of ruin, the blessed word "Be strong" is again heard, but with a sweet addition. Now it is not simply "Be strong in the Lord," but "Be strong in the *grace* that is in Christ Jesus." We have His *grace* to fall back on; what a resource is that! The church has utterly failed in her testimony, what then? Why we have that to fall back on that will never fail. We stand in grace, and that is inexhaustible. The more we learn

of His truth, the more we shall see our own wretched failure, but He would not have us turn away in despair, but rather turn to Him with full confession of the ruin, and find His grace that which can alone strengthen us to hold fast the Divine Truth regarding His church, even though it be in contradiction to all around. He cannot alter the words that have gone from His lips; the lukewarm thing shall surely be spued out from His mouth, but His grace is the refuge for those who with but a "little strength," seek to hold fast His word and not deny His name.

C. H. B.

OCCUPATION.

My fellow believers, let me ask you what is your occupation? Is it business, getting a place in this world, riches, fame, or any of the things which Satan parades before the eyes of men to attract? Ah! if this be the case, let me ask you, do you find joy, real joy in any of it? Do you get peace of heart, while you are striving for these things? The answer of every honest heart, before God, will be, no! "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." I know it, you know it, and every child of God who has any idea of the place the Father would have His children in will give the same answer. "We find only disappointment in all these things." The reason is this: God would have us occupied with His Son. He will never allow one who has been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ to find satisfaction in anything down here, for any length of time. We may wander, but He is faithful. We may change, but He never.

It is God's will that we should be rejoicing in Christ Jesus, that we should be above the things down here, that our conversation should be in heaven; what a privilege and what a place we have! Oh, that we could let go the things of this sin-cursed earth, and enjoy what God has given us in Christ Jesus.

What a testimony it would be to those with whom we come in contact if we were always rejoicing in the Lord. This is our privilege, why will we not enjoy it?

Now let us ask you what testimony are you giving? Are you walking as becometh saints? As those who are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, is there

any difference between you and your neighbor who does not profess Christ, or who is only a professor? It is to be feared that there are those who have taken upon them the name of Christ who are, as far as the eye can discern, not a whit behind the world. What would a man of the world say to see one professing such things as we do, dressed in the height of fashion, bedecked with gay clothing and loaded with jewelry? Where is the testimony? Put the thing home to your own conscience, *am I as acting with God in doing this.*

Only a few days ago, a lady, a child of God, told me she was reproving her daughter for wearing so much jewelry. The daughter replied, "Mother, you set me the example!" The mother had nothing to say; she wore only a small cameo brooch; but it had encouraged the daughter in her extravagance. With what carefulness we should walk. What is the secret of a true walk before God? Just being occupied with the Lord Jesus and none other. If I am in this place, the things of this world will have a very small place in my heart. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body will be full of light" (Matt. vi. 22). If my eye is set on the Lord in the Glory at God's right hand, joy and peace shall reign.

A man said to me, "Do you have the joy you talk of?" "Yes," I said, "when I take the place God has given me through Christ Jesus." It is always so, beloved. There can be nothing but joy in God's presence. Sin brought in woe. God cannot look upon sin, and our place is before Him. "Not a cloud above, not a spot within." May God in his rich grace, grant that we may be in this place, not having our hearts set on things down here, that we may be ready at His bidding to do His will, and surely we will be so if we are occupied with His Son, looking for His coming to take us unto Himself. Surely we could say, "even so, come Lord Jesus." H. R. R.

The sovereign will of God is not the rule by which I act. It is not with me a question of what God *does*, but of what is revealed. What has He written? Hence the revealed mind of God—not His sovereign will—is the guide of my life. God can do as He likes; I can only do as I am bid. Christ is my Master, I am His servant, and it is the perfection of a servant to do as he is bid.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

12. "One Desiring Light." In Ephesians iv. 5, "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism," have to do with individual confession. With the one Spirit in v. 4, there is the one body, formed by His being down here, and the one hope of our calling, the heavenly purpose of God in regard to us, and our place. These are connected distinctly with the purpose of the Holy Ghost here now. Then in verse 5 there is that which has to do with our individual relationship to the Head, the Lord. He is Lord to us individually, Head to the Church. In connection with this, there is faith, binding us to Him, and it is *one*. There is not one kind of faith in one and another in another. It is the faith in Jesus Christ that makes us His. So baptism is one thing. It is a confession of Him as Lord, external, because we have come out of all other allegiance, to Him, as faith is internal. It can have but one meaning, having to do with Christ as Lord, to the individual believer. This is, of course, baptism in *water*.

1 Tim. v. 24. Timothy is told not to lay hands on any one hastily, and especially, lest he might give countenance and sanction to that which was evil in any one, and be a partaker in the mischief that he might do. Certain moral characteristics were carefully marked out to be possessed by those upon whom he was to lay his hands. It might not always be easy to know of evil in one at first. In some it would. Some men's sins were open and proclaimed beforehand the judgment that awaited them. In others the sins were hidden, and would only be discovered at the great day. So with their good deeds.

13. "E. B." Please explain 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21.

In 1 Timothy the Church of the living God is called "the House of God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth." And the man of God is told how he ought to behave himself in it. The "body" is there recognized as the same as "the House," and all is right. But in 2 Timothy, apostacy and ruin are looked at and individual responsibility in the midst of it is pointed out, "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord withdraw from iniquity, or stand aloof from unrighteousness. There He does not call this apostate thing "the House of God," but speaks indefinitely of "a house," to express that it had lost its character. It is compared to a house in which there are vessels of honor and of dishonor. Whose house had it become? Without doubt it refers to Christendom as it is now. The "vessels" may be men or systems of men, from which if a man purge himself he shall be a vessel to the Master, prepared for every good work. In the preceding verse, for his own individual conscience and walk, he is told to depart from evil; here it looks to being fit for service. If a man stays with that which is defiled and defiling, he cannot be used. Separation from evil, on the ground of God's holiness, is the principle of fellowship and service.

Verse 21 goes further, and shows this detached one, how he may meet the mind of God in keeping the unity of the Spirit, which is the responsibility till the Lord comes. It sets a guard upon his conduct in the whole matter, that he shall not have separated himself in mere wilfulness or the heat of youthful desires—"Flee also

youthful lusts—but follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those calling upon the *name of the Lord*, out of a pure heart," i. e., where nothing but the Lord is before them. Thus if one is to withdraw from and purge himself from evil for righteousness' sake, he is to gather with those who maintain God's ground for the truth's sake. It is what is left us now.

14. "W. R." Is it scriptural for a christian who has withdrawn from the sects, and does not recognize their ministers, to get married by an Alderman?

Marriage has been legalized by the State authorities, and they have vested the right to marry in certain civil officers. It is the command of the word of God that we be subject to the powers that be, for they are the appointment of God, i. e., He instituted civil government. On this ground of obedience to the laws, it is proper, therefore.

15. The writer of the article referred to by "W. R." and several others, in his desire to check any liberty of the flesh, that will be allowed by those abusing the "liberty of the Spirit," which is asserted in our *not* being "*under the Law*," has taken a different method from that of the Holy Spirit in the Epistle to the Galatians, which is to place the believer entirely out from under the law, and put him into Christ, and then to negative license forever, by telling him, "if we walk in the Spirit we shall *not* fulfill the lusts of the flesh. The believer in Christ is not under the law, because he is *dead*, he becomes dead to the law by the body of Christ. Law, as a principle, is not the same thing as "the Law." The former is the sense of responsibility to do God's will, and we are not delivered from that surely, let it be made known in whatever way it may, anywhere in His Word. The latter is the prohibitory code given to man taken up in the flesh, aimed against all that it would bring forth in the form of sins or transgressions. Against the flesh, whose works are manifest in all evil and only evil, the Law was written. Against the fruit of the Spirit there is no law. There is no law to say we shall not love, or have joy, or peace, or gentleness, &c. This is the new man in Christ, and he is certainly bound to obey Christ, to act in Christ, to walk as He walked. The apostle Paul could say in 1 Cor. ix. 21, that he was not lawless to God, but under law, or properly subject, to Christ, not "*the law*," "*the*" should be left out. That is our place. We are subject to Christ, not to Moses. We are free to act in the Risen Man, not under curbs and restraints in the old. If we sin, we are not to judge ourselves by "*the Law*" for condemnation, which would only work wrath and condemn without giving peace; but we are to judge ourselves by the cross, which *has* put us to death. When I sin, the thing is not only morally bad, but it is out of place, out of character, an impertinence, a thing that belongs to the man that I ought to reckon *dead*, not the living one. It is a denial of the cross of Christ, and is the more heinous. Sin is infinitely more judged by the cross than by "*the Law*." Hence a person who esteems "*the Law*" as his guide for life, will be dull in his estimate of sin and low in his walk and living.

But the thing that would stumble and injure in the article referred to is the use made of the quotations from Rom. and Gal. to prove

that "the Law" was given to others than Israel, that the Gentiles were "under the Law." It could never be said, (Ex. xi, 2) to the Gentiles, I am Jehovah thy God, that brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." In Gal. iv 3, 4, they are spoken to, not only as not having known God, but absolutely (dispensationally) not having been known of Him. Rom. ii, 14, does not intimate nor imply that they were "under the Law," for it says the reverse, they had not the law. But by doing the things that the Law said, being virtuous, honest, &c., they show the work of the law written in their hearts. Joseph, without any seventh commandment, said, how can I do this thing and sin against God? He had God's mind, and feared God, as did Job and Cornelius, and was accepted of God. In Gal. iii, 13, although the Epistle is addressed to Gentile saints, there is the distinction between the Jew and the Gentile specially marked in this chapter. "We" and "you" give this distinction, as will be seen in the latter part of the chapter from verse 19 to iv. 10. In Rom. ix, 4, "the giving of the law" is spoken of as one of the advantages of the Jew, as in Rom. ii, 17, it is that of which they boasted. Gal. iv, 5, is referring only to those who were under the Law, the Jew, who had been put under the schoolmaster, up to Christ, and when the fullness of time was come, they were redeemed from under it and its curse. Rom. vii. 6, in which we were held is explained by verse 1, "I speak to them who know the Law." He is referring to the Jewish portion of the Church at Rome, though the Epistle was addressed to all, both Jews and Gentiles.

With most of what follows in the article, there is no need of being occupied, the conclusions being illogical in many cases and very confused. The purpose to make the Christian know that he is under the Law, is as poorly carried out as that the Gentiles were under the Law, the quotations not teaching that at all. Heb. xiii, 8-10 refutes the very thought that it is brought forward to uphold that "the Law" is for saints now. The quotation from Jer. xxxi. there, is to show that the covenant should be of a new sort altogether, to show that even then there would be a change. But verses 6, 7 show that the change now is to altogether a superior thing, a new covenant. Ephes. vi. 2, quoted from the Ten Commandments is but a parenthesis explaining the word "it is right," and by no means puts a Christian under those Commandments. "Obeying parents in the Lord" is vastly higher. Though it is impossible to follow all the confused statements in this place, the word is clear, that the Christian is "in Christ," not "under the Law," and it is equally clear that no allowance of sin is to be, for a moment, because we are not under the Law. Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage. You have been called into liberty, the liberty of the new man, not the bondage of the old. Only use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh. The principle of law must ever apply. Christ is our law. He is our life, He is our all. We dare not sin, lest we make Him the minister of sin. In no way should the responsibility of the Christian to be holy be weakened, but surely it should be maintained according to the Spirit's teachings, and not by making him a Jew—in whom no holiness could be found.

THE ACTS.

Chapter xii.

The last chapter told us of the acting of the Spirit outside to the Gentiles, and the extending of the church to Antioch, and the sweet bond of fellowship and unity that was manifested in the grace that opened the hearts and hands of these new born ones towards them of Jerusalem, and thus led us back with Barnabas and Saul as they bore this token, to the brethren in that city. And here God has something yet to show us of His ways in connection with the Jews.

As the "bloody house" of Herod was introduced in connection with the birth of Christ and His crucifixion, and in the beheading of John the Baptist, so now we find it still active according to its own nature persecuting unto death. Herod the king, grandson of him who slew the children of Bethlehem, thrust forth his hands to harm some of those of the assembly. "And he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword; and because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also."

He stands as the type of "the king," the wilful one that is to come and to be found in the last days persecuting and fighting against the Remnant. Then, as here, it will be acceptable to the Jews, over whom he will reign under the support of the Gentiles, as did Herod.

James is the first of the twelve to give occasion to bring out the action of the authorities outside of the Sanhedrim and the Jews. The persecutions had been from the religious leaders in the case of Stephen, and that which followed which drove the disciples abroad; this is political and from motives of policy, to placate the Jews, who would condone many a crime and outrage against themselves in consideration of this greater crime against God's children.

There is something of the melancholy of a death knell in that word, "it was pleasing to the Jews." God had been minded to have them enjoy with Him the exaltation of His Son, as set forth so graphically in Matt. xxii. He had sent out His servants in the time of the prophets, of John and Christ Himself among them that they who were bidden, the chosen people might come to the wed-

ding, His grand, glorious figure for the full manifestation of His own joy and His Son. In all that rich and wonderful season of grace they had no heart for Him—they would not come. Again He sent forth other servants, and these were to tell them that were bidden, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner;" all was done. Christ was now crucified and risen, "my oxen and fatlings are killed and all things are ready, come unto the marriage." It was the everlasting kindness and faithfulness that could rise above their wilfulness and rejection of all other pleas, and press its own accomplishment of everything—the finished work of Christ. The messengers of this blessed announcement were the apostles from the day of Pentecost, beginning at Jerusalem, what was even yet going forth among them.

"But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise. And the remnant took His servants and entreated them spitefully, and slew them." This was accomplished now. And henceforth there remained but one terrific consequence, "The King was wroth and sent forth His armies and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city." Then He said to His servants, "The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy; go ye therefore unto the highway, and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage." These are the Gentiles, which henceforward in the following chapters are the special object of grace, while the city is but little mentioned, and is given over soon to destruction, and the nation to be scattered.

Peter, James and John were taken by the Lord into a special place of nearness as witnesses of His glory on the mount and His sorrow in the garden. Peter and John were set apart to distinct testimonies dispensationally in John xxi., the former connected with death to have a testimony with the remnant that should drop off by death, the latter with the coming of the Lord. And James has the quiet place of passive testimony in being put to death by the sword, first of those who had journeyed with Him in all His ministry to join Him, waiting above with Him.

But while James is a type of those who shall be put to death, Peter is the type of such as passing through the

strait times shall be delivered. The Lord preserves the vessel He has chosen to shepherd His scattered sheep till His own time shall come for him to put off this tabernacle.

He is arrested, put in prison, and delivered to four quarters of soldiers, Herod intending after the feast of the *Passover* to give him up to the people. That is man's idea of securing a person, bolts, bars, walls, doors and soldiers. But all must yield when God determines.

Prayer was made earnestly by the church unto God for him not unto Herod, which would seem the natural thing to man. We learn thus of prayer meetings and of their character; a distinct matter being laid upon the heart by the Spirit and brought before God in fellowship with His own mind in regard to His church's need.

But Peter was asleep in perfect quietness of heart. The matter was between God and Herod, and he could rest in peace with a slumber that was broken, not by the rough hands of soldiers to lead him out to trial or death, but by the angel of the Lord. There are special marks of the Jewish character of this incident, in the introduction of an angel as well as mention of *two* chains and the *two* soldiers, the sufficient testimony of his being perfectly bound, as out of the mouth of *two* witnesses everything was to be established. The Holy Spirit describes with peculiar minuteness, as if to call attention to the manner of deliverance. The angel is most prominent and his care particular. When God gives His angels charge, it is their characteristic work to do His commandments, hearkening unto His words. Everything yields to him, and doors open of themselves. How absolutely safe were Israel with the angel of the Lord encamping around them. How surely shall their angel prevail, as the messenger of the might and grace of God.

Peter thought that it was a vision. "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream," is the sweet outburst of the delivered Remnant in the day when their mouth shall be filled with laughter, and their tongue with singing (Ps. cxxvi. 1, 2). A vision doubtless resembled reality, as he thought it was the former. Considering these things he comes to the house of Mary, where they were still in prayer. to confound them with the answer to their

prayer, too sudden and wonderful to be believed, until they themselves saw him. God often rebukes our little faith by the largeness and grandeur of His answers. How little our prayers measure Him or His resources.

We see that though the Holy Spirit was there acting in power among them, the disciples do not ever address prayer to Him, but to God, though the Holy Spirit is God. He might act in new expressions of power in answer to prayer as He did in chapter iv., but they had access by one Spirit, through Christ unto the Father, and in case of providential government and action, God is appealed to. He was their resource in every time of weakness, and the appeal is according to His will. Christ has said, "If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask *what ye will*." Wonderful compass and reach, one might think; not our will, but what we will, when His words form the mind altogether. Our own will would not only be evil and destructive, but limited to the things of man.

We see in this place that they received more than they could at first believe, possibly more than they had faith to ask for. Peter showing himself to them, tells them to report to James (the Less) what had occurred, and then goes elsewhere.

And now the Spirit leads us to see the terrible end of this sad image of the wilful one, who shall "sit in the temple of God, showing **himself** that he is God." Herod having pleased the Jews and conquered those outlying provinces, and receiving their obedience, appointed a day for his exaltation. But just at the height of his power and confidence, in one hour he is smitten down by an angel of the Lord, because he did not give the glory to God, and, being eaten of worms, dies.

Peter here retires from the record, save as he gives a word of testimony to the matter of God's grace among the Gentiles in opposition to putting them under the law who had been called of God among these, in chap. xv., and the testimony specially gathers around Paul and those with him. At first there is a partial link with the Jerusalem character of the work, through Barnabas and Mark, but soon this is broken, and the full, rich, free work among the Gentiles, according to the gospel of the glory is accomplished.

RECOLLECTIONS OF READINGS WITH J. N. D.
AT BRANTFORD, ONT.

Eph. iv. 7. Now we have individuality taken up; "unto every one of us is given," and the measure to each depends upon Christ. It is His gift, and these gifts are founded upon the fact that He has gone down under Satan's power and broken it. He went below the creature in death, and is now far above all heavens and so fills all things. "He led captivity captive; this is a Hebraism, see Judges v. 12, "Arise Barak and lead thy captivity captive." "Captivity," the power that held man under its bondage, is vanquished by Christ and led captive. Having delivered a people out of Satan's power He makes them the vessels of His gifts and ministry. Binding the strong man does not refer to the cross but to His triumph over Satan when in the wilderness in conflict with him, and He was spoiling Satan in His healing of the sick, removing every effect of sin that was in His way, and in casting out demons, showing that His power was above the power of Satan. "Prince of this world cometh." Satan comes in another way, meeting Christ with the terrors of death. But Christ not only overcomes Satan, He does another work, He puts away sin itself, not merely the effects of sin. He ascends to glory and receives the Holy Ghost as *man* and for *man*.

Verses 9, 10, bring out the character in which Paul knew Christ in contrast with the Messiah character, the Person of Christ alone coming down, alone until He died and had glorified God, then becomes Head of the Body and fills all things. Wonderful thing, God came as man, but here it is redemption side; Christ fills all things as Redeemer. He took the form of a servant. He ascends that He might fill all things; goes down to death, then ascends far above all heavens. Instead of remaining Messiah on earth He goes down to the bottom, to the lower parts of the earth and then up to the throne of God. He does not fill all things as being God, all in all, but in the power of redemption He fills all things. Christ will rule in His mediatorial kingdom, then when all things are subdued He gives up the kingdom to God that God may be all in all.

Verse 11. "He gave." He is the depository of gifts, and is on the Father's throne giving gifts. In Corinthians we get the power to exercise various gifts regulated and subjected to order. "God is not the author of confusion," and the gifts come from the Holy Spirit. "He divideth to every one severally as He will."

Here in Eph. they came from Christ, as Head, the fruit of His love and care for the church.

Verse 11, are permanent gifts; v. 16, you get what every member has.

Apostles and Prophets are the foundation; we do not look for them now, the foundation is laid, the other gifts remain to the end. The object of these gifts is for individual work. He gave them for the perfecting of the *saints*, you come to the binding together afterward. Here the apostle does not recognize any gifts till after Christ's ascension, even the apostles he dates from that event. The prophet is one who tells the Word of God direct with authority. The woman of Samaria said "Lo, I perceive that Thou art a Prophet." It is not "Thou hast told the truth." She perceived the capacity of Christ to tell her what she had done. You read the Word, it tells you all that you have done, you perceive that *it* is the Word of God.

It is possible a man might prophesy though not a prophet. But these two gifts and others in 1 Corinthians, called sign gifts, have ceased, and much of the power of the others is lost. The Church is in a fallen state, so God will not put her ornaments on her. Gifts in 1 Corinthians show power, there is no mention of continuance, but in Ephes. sign gifts are left out and continuance promised; "till we all come," is the proof that the gifts will remain. The prophets of the Old Testament never performed any miracles, at least the exception is very rare. Moses did because the word had to be confirmed.

Verse 12. The purpose of those gifts is the perfecting of the saints, each individually and for work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the Body of Christ till we all come, &c.

Verse 13. "Till we all come," that is, individually, it is looked for that each realizes all that Christ is, and be formed by this. This is being accomplished in a wonderful way at the present time. The fullness of Christ has

been revealed, and, realizing this, we grow unto the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, formed by the knowledge of all this that has been revealed in Christ; and this keeps us from being tossed about with every wind of doctrine.

Verse 15. "Speaking the truth in love." Christ is the Truth. If we might coin a word, it might be read "Truthing in love." "Love in the Truth," not merely loving sincerely, but must have the truth for me to love. We cannot love in truth if no truth be there. Christ was here above all misery, yet in the midst of it in love, full of grace and truth. We should grow up into Him in all things who is the Head, even Christ; we should grow up so as to be the expression of what He is, in His likeness. Here in the Head we have the source of all that is wanted for the increase of the Body unto edification of itself in love, and this supply flows through all the members. More than the permanent gifts of verse 11 at work here. Individuals may be quietly and unobserved supplying that that edifies the body. They may be invisible, but, like oil in the machinery, would be missed if not there. In Colossians "Holding the Head" is essential, it makes it impossible to increase if off the Head. The church has sadly failed to manifest this unity and this compactness, but the Lord has not failed as the Head and source of nourishment and growth, and He still works through the members for the blessing of the church He loves. It is well to remember this and not to think that because we are in a more true position, ecclesiastically, therefore through us only the body can be truly nourished. He has His own everywhere, and He ministers to them as He knows how: still there can be no question that failure to apprehend the unity of the Body and to keep the unity of the Spirit involves a great loss of blessings to one's soul as to communion and enjoyment of one's portion in Christ.

The secret of everything is lowliness. "He resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." Mere knowledge puffeth up, it must be *inward* and form my character, that I may *be* the thing I learn. Our souls should look for these things. Suppose all were united and edifying each other in love, what a blessed thing it

would be. You are talking about churches and such things, ye are carnal and walk as men. A question was asked what was meant when God said "By my name, Jehovah, was I not known to them," when that name was often used long before that time. Answer.—His name was Jehovah, but was not a name of relationship till so taken in relationship with Israel. In the family, we are in relationship with the Father: in the body, we are in relationship with the Lord: in the house, we are in relationship with the Spirit.

Verse 17 begins exhortations connected with Christian life; the beginning of the chapter gives ecclesiastical exhortations. Here he contrasts old and new persons in heavenly places. Are contrasted with wickedness of the flesh. Gentiles walking in the vanity of their mind, but ye have not so learned Christ. It is of great moment that we should get hold of this, that (verse 23) is not an exhortation to put off, but it is abstractly stated that the truth in Jesus *is* the having put off. Colossians makes this plain, where it says (iii. 9) "Ye have put off the old man." Old man practically same as flesh, but here looked at as Adam in us put off. I do not own him any more, we are not living by the Adam life. *Deceitful* lusts do not *appear* to be enmity against God. Eve lost confidence in God before lusting after the fruit by listening to Satan. It is when we get away from God that we lose power. The first thing in restoration of soul is return of confidence in God. "Have put off," have done with it, practical truth (verse 23), present tense, renewing is going on, keeping fresh in the soul what we are brought into: cannot live on forgiveness, cannot always live on old truth, new truth makes old truth more precious.

Righteousness the maintenance of all that is due in our relationship according to the mind of God. God's nature is righteous and holy. He is righteous, not merely in judgment but in blessing. It differs from holiness, for holiness is abhorrence of evil and love of purity. It is not a question of relationship, like righteousness. "The new man is created in righteousness and holiness of truth." It is a dependent thing, does not act independently of Him, who is the source of this new life. It partakes of the nature of Him who created

it. Then follow exhortations suited to this new nature, which is divine. "Putting away lying." Lying, violence and corruption are the three characters of practical sin. "Be angry and sin not." If I allow anger to rankle in my mind after the cause of it is gone, then it becomes sin. If I am not patient I am not competent to judge. "Neither give place to the devil." Do not give him a door to come in by, do not give him an opportunity.

Verse 28 gave rise to a pretty full consideration of the question of giving to those that need, and concerning the collections spoken of in 1 Cor. xvi. No rule could be laid down as to the manner of collecting or of giving, but it is clear from the word that all saints should esteem it a privilege and duty to help such as are in need, and especially the Lord's servants laboring in the Gospel. Dear reader, permit me while writing these "recollections" to put in a word, and ask you if you are working with your hands to give to him that needeth; remember that there are devoted men gone forth to serve the Lord, and ask *Him* to show you how and when to give.

But to return to the "recollections." It seemed conclusive that the word only gave two things to work for, viz.: to provide for wants and to give away. Each one must be exercised for himself with the Lord as to the real measure of his wants and as to the cases to serve. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit." He dwells in us, is the seal and by Him we are sealed unto the day of redemption. We shall enjoy His indwelling through eternity. That He dwells in the risen man is proved by Acts i. 2. Christ, through the Spirit, after His resurrection, gave commandments.

It is remarkable how we find God brought forward in this epistle. Here the apostle sets Him forth as having forgiven us in Christ, and thus a motive for our cultivating a forgiving, tender hearted spirit. Observe, it should not be translated "for Christ's sake;" that was a little bit of the translator's theology. It is what God has done in Christ. He has revealed Himself in Christ as a forgiving God, and has really forgiven.

It was not a forgiveness got from Him with difficulty through another's intervention.

Chap. v. God is Light and God is Love. These two names

run through all these practical exhortations. The new man is after the image of him that created Him, hence we are called to walk in love, and to walk as children of light. When these two things are together it is the mark of a true conversion. When a sinner is brought to the light he sees his sins and discovers his true condition; then he finds that God is love. But we have more here, positive relationship; we are "dear children." We must be in the consciousness of the relationship to walk according to it. What is Abba Father but the cry of relationship. When John has the children in question it is always the Father, and he tests all accordingly; with the Jews it was relationship with Him as Jehovah. Jehovah is a name especially connected with the promises, and in government Father is a name in government of children only. The christian should be walking in the consciousness of being loved as the Son.

Verse 2. A principle of immense importance here; Love gives itself up for us, but in doing this it is devoted to God's glory, and yields the sweetness of an offering and a sacrifice *to God*; this should be true in us.

We are not said to be love, but we are said to be light in the Lord. It is striking how we are said to be the thing we are *in*. We are light when we are in the light, and if I am a christian, I am in the light and a partaker of the divine nature. We are to walk as children of light, proving what is the mind of God. If I do not know the mind of God, I look to Him to teach me; if I do know His will I do not need thus to be enquiring what to do. Legality is connected with a dread of not doing His will and not being caught tripping; true obedience springs from love, not from the fear of being found out. There is patience in obedience, patience in having no will, will entirely broken. We may have a desire to go ahead, and go all wrong because of not having patience. It should be with us "Tarry thou the Lord's leisure" (old version of Psalm). We cannot hurry things with God. He will have His time—"Let patience have her perfect work." It is not how things will turn out that I should be occupied with; we must leave results with God, trusting in Him. Read v. 9., "fruit of the light," not "of the Spirit."

Verse 14. When we sleep, practically the light in us is no

use to us; if awake and up from among the dead, Christ is our light; the revelation of all that God delights in is seen in Him. Light proves every thing that is acceptable as well as unacceptable; it tries whether Christ is the motive.

v. 15. Watching for snares, &c., in the world, lest I be taken in them. Verse 16. Seizing the opportunities that present themselves of doing good and serving the Lord. Verse 17. The Lord's will, the good and perfect and acceptable thing sought after.

Verse 18. Not external excitement, one has a horror of that, but there is such a thing as being beside ourselves to God; but, on the other hand, sober for others' good. We are apt to live out of the spirit of christianity that is of its power. Christ came down to work for us, to do us good. We are very slow to do as He did; we think so much of and for ourselves; but our blessed Lord was always thinking about others. He sought not His own good, but the welfare of others. We, too, often think about others in a wrong way. "Be filled with the Spirit," we cannot fill ourselves, but we should seek it and look for it, and watch not to grieve the Spirit who dwells in us, giving thanks always for all things. We must have done with self to be able to give thanks for all things, even for things that are fruit of evil. We may not know what He is after in His chastisements, yet we do know that it will be all right. God was behind the scenes in Job's troubles. If I do all in the fear of the Lord my will will not be at work. What was the beginning of wisdom with Paul, but the getting outside his own will, when he said "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Verse 21. Will is gone when we can submit to one another. I cannot submit to have Christ dishonored, but ought to submit in everything personal, even though I may know that I am right. Patience can leave it with God, if my will is at work I cannot so leave it.

The following fragmentary thoughts were noted during the consideration of this portion of Chapter v.

Satan can take up one isolated truth and use it for his purpose, but he does not take up the counter check "Let no one deceive you with vain words, for on account of these things the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience."

It is eternal life to know the Father, but it does not say it is eternal life to know the Almighty; truly Old Testament saints had life; but till He who was the Eternal life came it was not revealed, life and incorruptibility were brought to light by the gospel. Eternal life is in the Son, not in Adam. The three witnesses that eternal life is in the Son, not in Adam, are the Spirit, the Water and the Blood, (see 1. John v. 8).

In the gospel we have not merely a settling of accounts, paying off debts, but Christ bringing us into the same place as He is in Himself. Profession and sacramental relationship are no security. Men will be judged for their works as well as for their unbelief; the ground of judgment is according to works.

The difference between atonement and substitution is that the blood was put upon the mercy-seat, the blood of the goat that was the Lord's lot, and the blood being presented to God thus, we can go to all the world and declare this propitiation. But substitution is the fact that the Lord Jesus represented us, took our place and has borne all our sins as typified in the scape-goat. Reconciliation is the effect produced by bringing me to God through the propitiation. Every question of good and evil brought to the test at the cross—man's enmity and hatred in their worst form, Satan's power leading men to slay the Lord Jesus, man's perfection, seen in Jesus the perfect One wholly devoted to the glory of God, God dealing with sin in righteousness, God as Love, Holiness, all brought out in the cross—God Himself absolutely glorified.

Chap. v. 25. Here we have another aspect of the Church: we have seen it as the Body. Now we see Christ's love for it and the relationship in which it is set. God loved the world and gave His Son—Christ loved the Church and gave Himself. Three things flow from Christ's love. 1st. He gave Himself. 2d. He sanctifies it. 3d. He presents it to Himself a glorious church.

He gave Himself, not merely His life. It was more than loving the Church as He loved Himself; giving myself is a different thing from loving another as myself; the character of Christ's love was a self-sacrificing love. He gave Himself, all that He was, all His fullness is here. He displayed the highest degree of confidence in God

by going through death to win the church. He counted on God to raise him from the dead.

Sanctification is never distinct from glory, it has no other measure than the glory, to be with Him in glory is the full measure of it. We shall see Him as He is and be like Him. The Word, the means of this sanctification, the Word is the revelation of all the thoughts of God, and herein is presented to us the person and glory of Christ, and this forms the soul. The divine glory of His person is seen in the fact that He presents her to Himself. God presented Eve to Adam, but it does not say God will present the Church to Christ: He being divine presents her to Himself. He has sanctified her and made her meet for himself, He must have her suited to His own thoughts and answering to the delight of His own heart. What a comfort to know this purpose of the Lord Jesus and that, in spite of all our failure and ruin, He never fails, and will assuredly present His church to Himself glorious, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Dear reader: Seek to have fellowship with Christ in His thoughts about the Church if you have not already done so, and have no fellowship with that which mars the unity of the Spirit and robs saints of the knowledge and enjoyment of this relationship of the church of Christ.

Chap. vi. 10. Sitting in heavenly places brings us into warfare. Crossing Jordan is not entering heaven when we die; for then we do not enter into conflict. Israel had to fight, and so here we have to carry on a spiritual conflict. The first thing is "Be strong in the Lord." The strength and craft of the devil is too much for us, but in the power of the Lord's might we prevail, but we must have on the armor—"Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Ours is not a flesh and blood conflict like Joshua's; but it is a spiritual conflict. It is a conflict not for progress, but for holding one's ground, "that ye may be able to stand." "Having done all to stand," "stand therefore." Darkness is ignorance of God. War goes on always. In Canaan the sword is drawn—all is war; (see Joshua v. 13). "There stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand." The answer is not what I need to stand in before God, but what I need for resisting the devil.

The first thing in the armor is "the girdle." We get the defensive complete before we get the aggressive, and then the two are used in dependence with all prayer. And again, I must have the *whole* armor to be able to stand.

"The girdle of truth." "Thy word is truth." I need all truth, especially the truth of this epistle, not merely knowledge, but *truth applied*, on hearts laid hold of by it; the loins embrace the heart with its affections and workings, and truth keeps these affections and activities in their true places; they are to be formed and governed by it, not by their independent inclinations. So kept, Satan has no chance. As to evil suggestions from the enemy, "I was once in a house where a swarm of mosquitoes rushed in, and the master at once said, 'who has left the gate open?'" The fact is the cattle had come in, and the gate being left open, they came up to the house bringing the mosquitoes with them. So with evil suggestions, we have left some opening where they can come in. We must keep our loins always girded, not sometimes off and sometimes on. With this girdle you get the *heart* kept straight. the next thing is "the breast-plate of righteousness:" here you get the *practice* kept straight. Before God, Christ is our righteousness; we are righteousness of God in Him. Here we do not need the armor. But in conflict with Satan we need maintain practical righteousness, or he will find a point of attack, and we shall lose courage.

Ver. 15. We have the character in which we walk; we walk in peace, we have peace, we enjoy peace, we walk in peace with others. Then with "the shield of faith" your confidence in God is unshaken, and if you have this confidence, the devil may fire away, but in vain. Then having "the helmet of salvation," I can hold my head up. I have got salvation; it is sure, and I am bold. I can now use the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, but it is only in the power of the Spirit I can wield this weapon successfully. In the desert the Word is a sharp two-edged sword, used to search me out when I have to do with Him before whom all things are naked and open. But here in this heavenly conflict it is a weapon in my hand for defensive and offensive use against the enemy. But all this is in the spirit of dependence. Praying always

with all prayers, and that not occasionally, but "watching unto it." In all the circumstances of the conflict looking to God.

G. G.

FORGIVEN AND FORGOTTEN.

Man says he can forgive, but cannot forget. Not so with God. He can forgive and forget, too. And surely this is a wonderful thought for the doubting soul. To believe God, to receive His testimony, to set to our seal that He is true, is to have our sins forgiven and forgotten, forever. And the word of God asserts: "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. x. 17).

Now all true believers are spoken of in this very precious verse. They not only have the right to *know* that their sins are forgiven, but that they are also *forgotten*. They have been so perfectly put away, that the mind of God is not henceforth charged with them. They have been borne by the Divine scape goat into a land not inhabited—the land of forgetfulness—eternal oblivion. (Lev. xvi. 20-22). God has blotted them out; He has cast them forever behind His back; they are lost in the depth of the sea. Every figure is used by God to express how completely the believer's sins have been met and put away out of His sight.

But how could God speak thus? The simple answer is, that Jesus has died and bare in His own body *all* the sins of His people; and as this Divine scape-goat He has borne them away into the land of eternal forgetfulness. They are lost, and can rise no more against those whose sins they were. Blessed thought! "Jesus died for our sins according to the scriptures; and was buried and rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4). This is the answer to the question, "How can a holy God act thus with the believing sinner?"

Now what perfect peace this affords; what repose this imparts to the soul. To know one's sins to be forgiven and forgotten, must fill us with "joy and peace in believing." Especially when we know they have been atoned for, and borne away out of God's sight forever, by the precious sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. All is divinely and righteously done, and Christ is now in glory. What about us who *have* believed? We have only

to enjoy the fact, to rejoice in the truth of what God says. Does He say, He gave His Son to die for sinners, and consequently for *me*? Then I am to rejoice in it. Does He say that Jesus bare my sins in His own body on the tree? Then I am to rejoice in the fact that He did. Does He say that Jesus is raised from the dead and crowned with glory and honor at His own right hand? Then I am to rejoice that all is done—done as God would have it done—done to His eternal satisfaction and glory. Does He say that I as a believer in the Lord Jesus am pardoned, justified, accepted, and saved? He does most undoubtedly. What then remains for me to do? Simply to rejoice in it.

All this is very simple and blessed, is it not, beloved reader? To rely upon what God says in His word is to have assurance that we are pardoned and saved. As a young lady said some time ago, "Thus I am to believe it simply because God says so." My answer was, "Yes, just so."

This must ever be the ground of assurance. Not my works, but the word of God; not my feelings, but the word of God; not myself at all, but the word of God. That word in the power of the Holy Ghost bears witness to the infinite efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ—tells out God's thoughts and appreciation of the work and Person of His dear Son, and shows how righteous He is in pardoning and justifying the ungodly who believe. "It declares His righteousness, that He might be just, and the justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26).

Here is the secret of the enjoyment of peace. God rests in Christ who has accomplished a work by which He is glorified about sin. The believer rests where He does—in Christ. God has expressed His delight and satisfaction in the work of His Son in raising Him from the dead and giving Him glory. We rest in that expression of divine delight and satisfaction. The infinite height of divine glory to which Christ has ascended, expresses the Divine estimate of the work of the blessed Lord Jesus on the cross. We rest in that estimate. What must be the result? Sweet and cloudless peace. Standing in God's favor we can think of His holiness and give thanks. Nothing can disturb our peace. It is peace founded on the Divine estimate of the sacrifice of

Christ. We repose there, and with respect to the question of sin, death, and judgment, nothing can disturb our repose. Blessed thought! Happy people! Happy portion!

What follows? A life of self-surrender, of devotion, and of consecration to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. To live no longer to ourselves, but to another—even our adorable, risen Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

E. A.

CORRESPONDENCE ON "HAVE YOU RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST," &C.

MY DEAR BROTHER:—Many brethren here have been exercised as to the "Sealing of the Spirit." Your paper "Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" in "SOUND WORDS" has caused the interest in this subject to assume a definite shape. The difficulty I have, and I speak for others as well, is this:—A Soul quickened by the Holy Spirit is a believer and has new life: and yet not knowing death and resurrection has not deliverance according to your view and the views of others, one not delivered one not sealed. Sealing is the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

Am I, as a member linked to the head by the Spirit dwelling in me (Romans viii) or being quickened by the Spirit and born again? (Romans vii.)

If the former, only those who have deliverance are of the body. If the latter, the sealing is a thing outside the truth both of relationship and of the body.

If the former, it does not seem possible that one born again during this dispensation is not of the body. Could I call one in the 7th of Romans a brother?

Your paper has certainly given farther light upon this subject, but yet the fact of there being, unfortunately, so few who have deliverance, causes the body (if the indwelling or sealing of the Spirit is what is meant by being baptized unto one body) to be so narrowed down that an answer personally to me by letter for the perusal of all interested will be a great favor.

B.

Dear Brother B.—Your note of inquiry is received, and I take my pen to answer *in part*.

You say "according to your view, a soul not delivered

is a soul not sealed." I beg your pardon, my dear brother. I think I did not discuss the question of sealing; neither the question of deliverance. The question of sealing and of deliverance comes in, no doubt, but these must be known as doctrines before they can be intelligently entered into, and a man must receive the Holy Ghost, before he can take up either of these doctrines intelligently. And this question of intelligence in the truth I did discuss, though not directly. But it will not do to confound a cause with its results. The hundred and twenty received the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. That is a fact; but the doctrines of sealing and of deliverance, were developed afterwards. For the one to whom the *Holy Ghost gave to develop these doctrines* was not there at all, nor for some time after converted, and it is quite probable that the doctrines of sealing and deliverance are among the *things* to which Peter refers when he says "our beloved brother Paul has written some things hard to be understood." So of membership in the body, the heavenly character of the church, and the Headship of Christ.

The doctrine of relationship, is the first developed after the Holy Ghost is received, and the first result of death and resurrection. "My Father and your Father, my God and your God." Peter, James and John, and the hundred and twenty doubtless, all got that.

But quickening is still another thing and precedes all. "The Son quickeneth whom He will." This was going on all the time while Jesus was working, preaching and teaching; and doubtless in connection with John's preaching, and also the twelve and of the seventy. The case of the Samaritans shows it clearly in John, iv. 42. And the case of those who were casting out devils and yet "*who followeth not with us.*" (Mark ix, 38.)

Their conversions come out afterwards. I then went on the day of Pentecost; and at Samaria under Philip's preaching. The 7th of Romans is simply deliverance; not a question of receiving the Holy Ghost at all; yet doubtless those who have received the Holy Ghost will be led to understand it.

I could not say, that one not sealed, was not a member of the body, neither could I say that one not hav

ing received the Holy Ghost, was not a member of the body. What I get in the Cor. xii. 13, is the doctrine stated. It is God's thought about it. It is the fact as to what belonged to every believer, though there might have been many of the Corinthians who had not received the Holy Ghost; judging from their conduct we should say that they had not, and yet, I would not say that, because, it is evident from Scripture that persons who have received the Holy Ghost, may grieve Him, and we cannot set bounds as to how far a person may go in grieving Him. It is not absolutely certain that a person who has received the Holy Ghost will always be led by Him, either into truth or in his walk. That is clearly his responsibility. *But we all fail.* And this is the place for our failure, since we are not yet made up in His image, or rather the image of His glory.

You ask "could I call one in the 7th of Romans a brother?" Jesus owned them as brethren while as yet they had not received the Holy Ghost. And the apostle acknowledged them as brethren in the very chapter where he develops the doctrine of deliverance. Brotherhood springs out of relationship, not out of deliverance, nor out of sealing, nor yet out of having received or not, the Holy Ghost. Relationship is *by birth*, but of course must be known before it can be owned.

In dearest christian love.

C. E. H.

W. M. asks, "On what scriptural authority the following statement rests, viz.: The receiving of the Holy Ghost depends on the apprehension of another and a distinct line of truth, viz.: That same Jesus in suffering and death on the cross, and thence His blood a perfect answer before God for sin and sins—while He Himself having purged our sins sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, and from thence having sent down the Holy Ghost, a distinct and divine personality, to abide and dwell in those who receive Him forever."

It is often true that we do not see the improper way in which a statement is put, until some one has found fault with it. So I find in this statement. Now when I say another and a distinct line of truth, the expression supposes a first line of truth of which I had been speaking. See SOUND WORDS for October, page 270. "So that now again, as before, we have seen that persons may

believe unto eternal life, and yet not be in a position to receive the Holy Ghost." Here, then, is the knowledge of God in Christ, and this is eternal life. No vagueness or uncertainty about it; all is clear, distinct and definite. But the Holy Ghost is not thereby received."

Now I believe that the receiving of the Holy Ghost does depend on the *apprehension* of another and a distinct line of truth; but you must not confound this thought with another, viz.: intelligence in the truth, or perhaps better expressed, *a certain amount of intelligence in the truth*. For there can be no doubt but that the Ephesians had received the Holy Ghost and were sealed before they saw or heard the epistle written to them; and when the epistle was received their spiritual intelligence was greatly helped, no doubt, yet their receiving the Holy Ghost did not depend on their spiritual intelligence; but their spiritual intelligence did depend very much, to say the least, on their having received the Holy Ghost; and their receiving the Holy Ghost did depend on their having heard about Him (the Holy Ghost) and having believed what they heard. As Acts ix. clearly shows.

Hence when I had said, "another and a distinct line of truth," I ought to have made it more definite and less wordy, for the way I worded it savors more of intelligence in the truth, than *an apprehension* of a distinct line of truth. But what I do insist upon is this: That a soul may have life (quickenings), faith, repentance, conversion, and not have received the Holy Ghost, and the scripture authority is: That the "above five hundred brethren at once" (1 Cor. xv., 6), had none of them received the Holy Ghost at the time of which the apostle speaks, and that only one hundred and twenty were in a position to receive Him on the day of Pentecost. And, pray tell me, how did Paul know there were above five hundred brethren at once who saw Him after His resurrection? For Paul was not one of them, was not there at all. And moreover the apostle himself was a quickened and converted man when he said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" But he received the Holy Ghost on the third day after (Acts ix. 9 and 17). The distinct line of truth then is this: That which brings out the divine personality of the Holy Ghost is the Comforter promised by

the Lord (John xv. 26), received on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii.) at the house of Cornelius (Acts x.), at Ephesus (Acts xix). And when we examine these chapters we find in the ii. and x. the rehearsal of a *distinct line of truth* concerning the One who had come according to promise and prophecy, had been denied, rejected, crucified and buried, whom God raised up and gave Him glory, *i. e.*, had taken Him up to heaven. But mark you, this line of truth does not stop at the cross, nor until it fixes your eye on "the Man in the glory." So that a gospel preached by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, is a gospel sent forth from a Man in the glory. The Man in the glory is a divine reality; the Holy Ghost is a divine reality, not an influence, as is so often erroneously expressed, but a DIVINE PERSON down here in this world; and must be believed in as such, or He is not received. I said the Holy Ghost is not an influence; He can and does influence, no doubt, but as a man is a distinct personality aside from his influence, so is the Holy Ghost. So a man may feel the influence of the Holy Ghost while he resists Him (Acts vii. 51), but when He is once received, He is no longer resisted, but He may be grieved (Eph. iv. 30); this is an individual act; or He may be quenched (1 Thess. v. 19), and this would be an assembly act, but whether quenched or grieved, "He shall abide with you forever." If you quench or grieve Him, you lose the blessing of His ministry, but not Himself. There is unspeakable blessing in walking with Him unhindered.

C. E. H.

FRAGMENTS.

"Go in peace." How differently we should go about the world! What could ever disturb a heart that could fall back and say, I know the One my heart is bound to, I know His love, and the sort of person He is; and I can go in peace, in a world where there is no peace.

Identify yourself fully with those suffering for the testimony, and whatever your doing so may cost you, it will be an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God; and Paul's God (Phil. i. 19), will fully fill up your every need, according to His wealth in glory, in Christ Jesus.

CHRIST OUR HEAD.

Lo, high and lifted up,
 The Lord in glory see,
 'Tis He who drank unto the dregs
 The cup of wrath for me.

Between the earth and heav'n,
 Upon the cross He hung,
 Despised, rejected, crucified,
 Reviled by every tongue.

While on the cursed tree,
 " 'Tis finished " He cried,
 The mighty work He undertook—
 Then bow'd His head and died.

Now high and lifted up,
 Upon His Father's throne,
 He there in pristine glory waits,
 'Till earth be made His own.

Soon we shall see Him there,
 No more cast out and slain,
 But glorious in His majesty,
 O'er all, as Lord, to reign.

For ever, evermore,
 Shall we, who once were dead,
 Live with the Christ, the glorified,
 Our everlasting Head!

J. T.

A LETTER TO ONE TRIED FOR THE TRUTH'S SAKE.

You have fallen heir to that thing that the Lord spoke of as our portion here, trial, and even persecution, it may be. It is all right, a mark of the true pathway. Outside of that pathway you will encounter none. Go along with the religious thing of the day, and you are free from it. Will you venture that?

Do not forget that the word is "Blessed is the man that *endureth* trial; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." What would you be without the testing? The truth that you hold is worth it; let it be tested, count it *all joy*. You are to stand simply, just to go on, and not for all possible ease, or social comfort, or affection, yield the ground that

God has given you to stand on. As to others, leave them with Him. You cannot step away from Him, to wait for them to get right; but *stay with Him*, counting on Him to bring them. "Let them return unto thee, return not thou unto them (Jer. xv).

The more you are with Him the more clearly you will see how to act. Getting off His ground would be to lose fellowship with Him, and then you would be in darkness. Light is in His own presence. And I am sure, if you stay in His company, you will better know how to act in grace towards your dear ones, for He loves them better than you do. Yielding to them is but the amiability, or indolence of nature, and is not at all grace. Grace goes with righteousness. "Behold we count them happy who *endure*." Let patience have her perfect work. God has an "end" in view. You would not run away from *that*?

All your former place and testimony were not worth Satan's bothering himself about. It did him no special harm. But the heavenly truth, and the precious testimony of the church, invade his dominions, and of course he will be stirred. Stand fast! Stand girded, helmeted, shod, shielded, breast-plated. Stand, and then withstand!

Ah! my dear brother, I greet and congratulate you in this position. The line of witnesses has had the difficult times, the rough places, the hard speeches. They, through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, *out of weakness* were made strong, waxed *valiant* in fight, *turned to flight the armies of aliens*. They "obtained a good report." What shall be your "report?" I know; *He* will cause you to stand.

The one of whom you inquire is staying away from hearing the truth, is, I fear, turning away from it. Both Ruth and Orpah kissed Naomi, but Orpah's kiss meant "Good bye," and Ruth's fellowship, and taking the God of Israel as her God forever. Orpah went back to her gods, away from following Naomi to God's ground. Ah, well! God loves His own, and they may be slow, but He has the more to do in dealing with them. It has all to be confessed, and these are yet to be brought to glorify Him.

Soon the Lord will come. How it breaks down the heart to think of that. He will not leave us longer than to allow us to know just a little of the crack and strain of man's enmity against His truth, and *then!* The very sigh that we breathe out to Him will be cut in two in the middle in a twinkling, to be ended in the joy of His presence. Be patient, for His coming draweth nigh.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

17. "Young Pilgrim," 1 Cor. xi. 33, "When ye come together to eat, tarry one for another," is the direction of the Spirit to those who had so grossly dishonored the Lord at the table that He could not call it the Lord's table at all. They were, first of all, partaking in divisions and as sects, doubtless those sects spoken of in chap. i-iv. one of Paul, another of Cephas, &c. From this came the evil in a grosser form, one was hungry, another drunken, showing that as their breaking bread had ceased to be the expression of the unity of the Body that "we being many are *one loaf, one body* and are *all* partakers of that *one loaf*," so it had ceased to be individually showing the Lord's death, and the fellowship of *His* body and blood. They are then rebuked on this very point of sects, or eating apart from each other, and told, "He eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, who eateth and drinketh *not* discerning the body." It was on this account that they were told to tarry for one another, as the bread was not to be eaten separately from the assembly as such. This would help us to test what is the "Lord's Table now." The more truly we are broken before Him, to feel the sad departure from the word that is everywhere manifested, the more careful will we be that all shall be as He has set it forth.

As to the other questions, our correspondent will see that it is not the most gracious way to bring them into a public journal, unless others who may be involved unite in such queries. In general, the answer may be given, however, that prayer and thanksgiving in the assembly are addressed to our God and Father, and not to Christ who is addressed in addressing God. And especially a clearer intelligence in the mind of the Spirit will perceive that all epithets of endearment as "dear Jesus," "lovely Master," are aside from the word, and savor of the sentimentalism of the flesh, the "honey" which is not allowed before God. Christ is not *our* King, but our Lord and the Head of the church. It might be well if one were to refrain from the attempt to lead the assembly in prayer and thanksgiving until there is a clear knowledge of whom he is addressing, and an apprehension that there is really no looseness in the teaching of the Holy Spirit in regard to the titles of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, nor in regard to the Persons. We are not left to the warmth of our affection nor to the vagaries of our own fancy or imagination. We are to worship "with reverence and godly fear." A word given in a gracious way may help much to set a brother right in these things. Let all be done in grace.

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It would be a great convenience if those desiring to have SOUND WORDS for the next year, would send their subscriptions very early, or give some knowledge of that desire, at once. This would help the publisher in the knowledge of the number of copies to be printed.

In this connection, we would ask those who delight in the truth of God, the spread of which is the only aim of this periodical, to have fellowship with us in prayer for it, and in individual efforts to spread, to an enlarged degree, its circulation.

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